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**Difficulties Encountered by Students in  
Learning the Productive Skills in EFL  
Classroom and the Relationship between  
Speaking and Writing: Case of First Year  
LMD Students at Abou Bekr-Belkaid**

Extended Essay submitted to the Department of English as a Partial  
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## ***Dedications***

*To my mother and father, source of my happiness and success in life and to my Grandmother whom I considered as my second mother. May Allah bless them all.*

*To my brother Azzeddine, and to: Ikram and her husband Abdelhamid, Fatima Zohra and her husband Reda and their little angel Mohammed Louey for their unconditional support and encouragements to pursue my interests.*

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## **Abstract**

When teaching a foreign language, the teacher deals with the four skills with much emphasis on the productive skills mainly speaking and writing in order to facilitate the task of communication by using the English language in a target situation. Most students at Abou Bekr-Balkaid University have a weak speaking performance in contrast with their level in writing and vice versa. The presented study aims at displaying teaching/learning situation of the productive skills at the University of Tlemcen. It has been achieved through a quantitative and a descriptive analysis. In order to collect data, the researcher used more than one research tool; an interview has been addressed to EFL teachers and a questionnaire for first year EFL learners in the Department of Foreign Languages (section of English) at Abou Bakr-Belkaid University in Tlemcen. The results reveal that most of the EFL students face the same problems and difficulties in both speaking and writing. In the other hand, teachers agreed that students are lack motivating and that they do not give importance to the techniques of writing and this would not help them in teaching. To conclude both EFL teachers and students confirmed that the productive skills are important ones and they are closely related since one skill can improve the other and vice versa. As the last step, some suggestions are proposed to improve the learning and teaching of both skills by encouraging the learners to write outside the classroom and to give them the opportunity to express themselves in real-life situations.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**A.F:** Absolute Frequency

**R.F:** Relative Frequency

**OP:** Oral Production

**WP:** Written Production

## General Introduction

It is usually said that the ability to use a language is called language skill; and the fundamental element of a language that the majority of learners need is the communicative skills. These skills which are termed as the productive skills are helpful for learners since they need to articulate words and write to produce the language especially for those who are studying English in non-English speaking countries. The two skills have many differences in terms of mode and aspects but they are regarded to have the same aim which is expressing oneself.

Although there are some EFL students still have problems in communicating and sharing their ideas and thoughts orally inside the classroom, they are able to express themselves in the writing form. This work attempts to give a clear picture of the productive skills in teaching/learning process to EFL learners with reference to some problems and difficulties faced by both EFL teachers and learners at Abou Bekr-Balkaid University.

The present study endeavors to find answers to the following questions:

1. Why some students' performance in speaking is weak in comparison with their writing performance and vice versa?
2. What is the relationship between speaking and writing?
3. Is there any principles or methods that can be used by the teachers when teaching speaking and writing?
4. What are the strategies used by University teachers to develop the speaking and the writing skills interrelated and make their students motivate?

From the above mentioned questions the following hypotheses have been formulated raised:

1. Most common students' problems while speaking are shyness, Lack self-confidence, afraid of making mistakes, feeling anxious while speaking. However, some students have problems with writing as: fear of failure, ideas freezing, grammar mistakes, spelling.
2. There is a close relationship between speaking and writing; in spite the fact that they have differences.
3. The teachers use several methods in order to teach writing and Speaking.
4. In order to enhance the learners productive skills, EFL teachers have many strategies. Some of them are helpful in teaching speaking and writing as separate skills and others to teach and improve the two skills interchangeably.

This dissertation consists of two chapters. The first chapter represents the main theoretical aspects of the speaking and the writing skills and it is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the main concepts of the speaking skills, principally, its definition, importance and its teaching situation. Additionally, it describes the main features of the speaking skills and as well as some factors that lead to the difficulties faced by first year EFL students in the speaking skill. Furthermore, it deals with the main strategies that seem to be helpful used by teachers for EFL learners.

The second part of the first chapter gives information about the writing skills. A broad definition was provided firstly, and then it offers data concerning the teaching methods used by EFL teachers in addition to writing's types and purposes, its importance and the most strategies used by teachers to help their students enhancing this important skill. In the last part of the first chapter, the researcher discussed the relationship between speaking and writing by investigating their similarities and differences in addition to some strategies to improve both speaking and writing interrelated which appear to be useful for EFL learners.

The second chapter is the empirical phase of this study, in which data were collected through the use of two instruments of research; the questionnaire for EFL students and the interview for their teachers and then this data have been analyzed and discussed. The obtained results allowed the researcher to bring forward some suggestions and recommendations for both EFL teachers and learners that seem to be helpful for the development of the productive skills teaching and learning processes.

# **Chapter One: Literature Review**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

Language plays a vital role in the development of human ability since it is the major means to communicate effectively in a target situation. When teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), the learners need to master the four language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in order to achieve a high level of abilities in producing and receiving the target language in its oral or written forms. Students encounter difficulties in speaking and writing as productive skills and they consider them as the main skills that should be improved.

In this chapter, light will be shed on both speaking and writing skills through three parts. The first part includes the main concepts related to the speaking skills containing its definition, importance, main aspects, students' difficulties in this skill and some principles used in teaching speaking. The second part consists of the concepts connected to the writing skills in which the researcher provides its definition, methods to teach this skill, its importance and purposes as well as some strategies to enhance the EFL learners' level in the writing skill. The last part deals with the correlation between speaking and writing skills including the similarities and differences and the strategies used to improve both skills.

## **1.2 Part One: Speaking Skills**

### **1.2.1 Definition of speaking**

Speaking is one of the four skills that are considered to be the fundamental product of building a language however, it is seen as a complex skill that is unique to human. (William Levett, 1989). Speaking is a process of sending and receiving messages by using verbal expressions, in this seek Ur (1991: 120) said: **“Speaking is the productive aural/oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning.”** However, the use of non-verbal symbols like gestures is also considered as a part of speaking.

Cameron (2001: 40) says: **“speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them”**. That is to say that speaking is the major way for understanding and expressing meanings to interact with others. On the other hand, speaking is the skill by which people are judged while first impressions are being formed.

### **1.2.2 Teaching speaking to EFL students**

For many years, teaching speaking has been taught by repeating words and sentences or memorizing dialogues. Actually and according to some teachers in the department of English at the university of Tlemcen learning speaking can be achieved through interaction and the use of CLT which is based on the real life situation; in the same vein of thought Thornbury (2005: 95) says: **“Speaking tasks should have some relation to real-life language use”**. That is, the teacher needs to build an environment where students have real-life communicative situations which help to express themselves fluently and effectively in the target language.

It is said that teaching speaking is an easy and simple process while it has a vital role in the educational system which is clearly observed in the organization of the EFL students' thoughts in a logical structure. The use of language quickly and confidently with limited unnatural pauses, namely fluency, is also observed when evaluating students' speaking ability.

### **1.2.3 Importance of speaking**

It is known in the field of didactics that people who master speaking are considered as if they master all the other language skills. It generally helps the speaker to communicate his thoughts and ideas. This has been pointed by Ur (2000: 12): **“Of all the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as „speakers“ of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing.”**

Teachers expect from students to use the language properly and correctly in order to speak confidently in order to attract the audience who provides a great opportunity to convey the message. Baker and Westrup (2003: 5) stated that **“a student who can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion.”** that is, speaking is important not just inside the classroom but also outside where most of the companies and organizations look for people who master a foreign language and have a good speaking ability.

#### **1.2.4 The Aspects of Speaking**

The two major criteria in the foreign language proficiency are fluency and accuracy. These two aspects both are the crucial purposes of language learning that is why students need the opportunities to enhance and develop these criteria.

##### **1.2.4.1 Fluency**

When teaching speaking, teachers have the same goal to achieve which is oral fluency; the main important trait in performing. Fluency in the view of Hedge Tricia (2000: 54) is the ability to know how to put words, sentences and ideas effectively together in an appropriate way as he said: **“The term fluency relates to the production and it is normally reserved for speech. It is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate showiness, or undue hesitation.”**

According to Hughes (2002), fluency is achieved when learners are able to express themselves in a clear and reasonable in order to be understood without hesitation otherwise the listeners will lose their interest.

It is assumed by the majority of EFL learners that being fluent in speaking is that you need to speak quickly without pauses. However, Thornbury (2005) didn't neglect the idea that speed is an important factor in fluency but he also didn't neglect pauses because speakers need to take breath. Native speakers also need pauses to let the listeners get the idea.

##### **1.2.4.2 Accuracy**

Learners give much importance to fluency without paying attention to accuracy that is why teachers focus more on accuracy in their teaching. Without accuracy in the speaker will produce incorrect utterance while speaking and he will not be understood by the listener so this later will lose interest.

Accuracy has been defined by Skehan (1996 quoted in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005: 139) as referring to **“to how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language.”** Thus, students need to pay attention to the grammatical structure, vocabulary and pronunciation in order to perform an accurate and comprehensive language.

#### ✓ *Grammar*

The Grammatical accuracy refers to the ability to use the grammatical structure in appropriate ways and situations including the control of length and complexity of the utterances as mentioned by Hughes 2002.

Thornbury (2005) makes a difference between the spoken grammar and the written one and comes up with the following list of spoken grammar:

- ❖ Clause is the basic unit of construction.
- ❖ Clauses are usually added (co-ordinate).
- ❖ Head+ body+ tail construction.
- ❖ Direct speech favored.
- ❖ A lot of ellipsis.
- ❖ Many question tags.
- ❖ Performance effects (hesitation, repeats, false starts, incompleteness, syntactic blends).

#### ✓ *Vocabulary*

By choosing the necessary and appropriate words while speaking, he/she may achieve the vocabulary accuracy and he/she will be able to transmit his point concisely.

Students often find some difficulties when they try to convey a message and they misused the words like in the case of synonyms that do not have the same meaning in all contexts. According to Harmer (2001) the knowledge of the word classes also allows speakers to perform well formed utterances, so students should be able to use words and expressions accurately.

#### ✓ *Pronunciation*

To be able to pronounce words accurately, learners should be aware of different sounds with their features, words' stress and intonations (falling /raising ones) and this may help them in developing their speaking skill. Redmond and Vrchota (2007: 104) argue that: **“It is**

**imperative that you use the correct word in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation. Pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood.”** That is, if the pronunciation is incorrect, the speakers will not be understood and the message will not be conveyed in an appropriate way and therefore accuracy is not achieved.

### **1.2.5 Speaking Difficulties Encountered by EFL learners**

EFL learners often encounter some difficulties while dealing with such a difficult skill, even those who have a clear idea about the language system face the same problems. According to Ur (2000), there are four main problems in getting students speak in the foreign language in the classroom.

#### **1.2.5.1 Inhibition**

When students want to participate in the classroom, many of them experience inhibition which is caused by many issues as shyness and fear of making mistakes. In this perspective Ur (2000: 111) states that: **“Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Worried about, making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.”**

Bowman et al. (1989) agree on this view and argue that when the teacher deals with speaking, he might ask his students to express themselves in front of their class mates which can lead to stressful and anxious situations while performing oral activities.

#### **1.2.5.2 Nothing to Say**

When students are obliged to share their thoughts and talk about a given topic, most of them prefer to keep silent while others might say *“I have no idea”* or *“No comment”*. These expressions are due to the lack of motivation in expressing themselves on the chosen topic. The teacher may ask his students to talk about an uncongenial topic or about an unknown subject, thus, they have nothing to say whether in the native language or foreign one. (Rivers 1968)

#### **1.2.5.3 Low or Uneven Participation**

Participation has been defined as **“the number of unsolicited responses volunteered”** (Burchfield & Sappington 1999: 290); and low participation is about the amount of each student’s time of talking. There are some of them tend to be dominant and take the place of others who prefer to keep silent or they are uncertain whether what they will say is correct or not and the situation will get worst. So, Classroom discussion is dominated by a minority of

talkative participants and contributions are not evenly distributed. This may be due to the mixed ability groups.

#### 1.2.5.4 Mother-Tongue Use

In cases where the majority if not all the students share the same mother tongue, they prefer to use it outside and even inside the classroom rather than the target language since they feel more at ease.

According to Baker and Westrup (2003: 12) **“barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language.”** Therefore, the learners will find it difficult to use the target language correctly if they keep on borrowing words and terms from their mother tongue which is a result of target language vocabulary lacks.

#### 1.2.6 Principles for teaching speaking

According to Nunan (1991) language is acquired as learners actively engage and interact with each other to communicate in target language. The ability to communicate effectively is significant in relationships, education and work. So, in order to improve learners’ speaking there is a set of strategies:

✓ *Choosing interesting topics:*

It is up to the teacher to select the appropriate topics that have connection with the students’ real-life situation and the things that may stimulate them to participate because sometimes the topics selected by the teachers are not interesting and attractive. So, students may feel bored to participate and they may use the knowledge that they already possess to steer him toward an exciting topic. (Lauren H. Uhlig 2012)

✓ *Assessing their prior knowledge:*

Students come to the classroom with broad pre-knowledge background, skills, beliefs and attitudes, which influence how they attend, interpret and organize incoming information and **“If a student’s initial ideas and beliefs are ignored the understandings that they develop can be very different from what the teacher intends.”** (Bransford, et al. 1999: 10) Thus, the teacher needs to be aware of his students’ level of knowledge; this could be done simply by asking them *“what do you know about (topic)?”* then he may write their answers on the board. The teacher could also try a pre-test, a graphic organiser, portfolios or auditions.

✓ *Motivating students to speak:*

The teachers have to make sure that all the students are engaged and prepared to answer the questions because those who have lack confidence in their ability to interact in oral sessions often listen in silence while others are talking. So, the teacher needs to provide opportunities for them to speak and tries to involve each student in every speech activity in order to help them overcome their fears and shyness since they will display more motivational benefits from teachers they like over teachers they dislike. (Montalvo, 1998)

✓ *Calling for specific students:*

To make sure that all the students are listening and following and in order to enhance participation during the sessions, the teacher should call on those that he thinks will be able to answer but he should first call the name then asks the simple question, clear and direct because students get knowledge through comprehensive questions for example, “*Farida, could you comment on the last point?*”

✓ *Students’ self-confidence:*

Student confidence is a serious and a dynamic factor in educational success. Many students have developed the habits that if they participate within the classroom, the teacher will tell them that they were wrong. When students give a wrong answer, teacher should return the question back to them with more explanation. So, by building confidence in students, teachers can protect the most important ingredient to success: motivation that has been defined by Gottfried (1990: 525) as: **“enjoyment of school learning characterized by a mastery orientation; curiosity; persistence; task-endogeny; and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks”**

✓ *Encouraging the students:*

Students need to be encouraged by the teacher who may provide them with positive verbal statements like “*Your presentation was really great, it was a good job, I really appreciate your efforts...etc.*” So, they will be more willing to volunteer and confident when completing exercises. The power of praise in changing student behavior since rewarding students for their academic performance or behavior conforms to teacher expectations (Burnett, 2001).

## **1.3 Part Two: Writing Skills**

### **1.3.1 Definition of writing**

Beyond the four vital language skills in the language learning process, “**competent writing is frequently accepted as being the last language skill to be acquired for native speakers of the language as well as for foreign/second language learners.**” (Hamp and Heasley, 2006: 2).

Writing is seen as an act of typing letters and characters on different materials such as paper, wood and under the purpose of recording the thoughts and ideas. (William & William 1809). It includes encoding of a message of some kind that people are able to translate their thoughts into written language. (Byren 1988)

The process of writing is taught in both public schools and colleges for the sake of developing individual learners which may help them in their roles in society and to improve their skills in the work place for the future, besides, it is a major cognitive challenge since it is considered as a test of memory, language, and thinking ability.

### **1.3.2 Teaching Writing to EFL Learners**

For many years, the emphasis was just on the oral approach rather than on the written one which was almost neglected. This was partially due to the influence of many linguists from De Saussure to Chomsky who considered that the spoken language is at the first position whereas, the written one at the second position in terms of importance. (Brookes & Grundy, 1998).

So, teachers have the duty to explain and impart their students the effective way to write successfully through the selection of excellent resources and ideal materials that may provide the necessary help to succeed.

### **1.3.3 Methods of Teaching Writing**

The development of several methodologies of teaching writing skill was an important aspect of the learning theories. The direct and the audio-lingual are two methods that regard writing as a reinforcement of what had been already learnt in the speaking phase of lessons. In addition, the Audio-lingual activities emphasize on the absolute correctness rather than communication. This type of activity as Brookes & Grundy, 1998 called “**writing things down**” is used to help language learning and it is needed to be differentiated from composing.

The major reason that led to the recognition of the real importance of teaching writing as a skill is the extensive adoption of Communicative Language Teaching. According to Mauk and Metz this approach focus on a number of strategies which include:

- a) *Planning*: Before starting to write, the students should set the purpose behind this writing and the audience they are writing for since the prior planning makes the work easier. The teacher may play the role of the guide in which he can help his students by providing them with some ideas on how their planning should be and what should be included. Brainstorming is one of the numerous ways that help the students planning their writing. They may work in pairs or groups because this strategy will help them come up with many and different ideas through discussion.
- b) *Drafting and revising*: In this step, it is better to start with the body. The students should develop the general ideas that have been gathered by writing a paragraph about each main idea since each paragraph should contain a topic statement that help the reader to understand what this paragraph is talking about. The teacher should explain to them the way to write a draft by giving some piece of advice like telling them “*Don't worry about style or the spelling while writing your draft just let the ideas flow*”. Then the student needs to write a conclusion in which he will summarize the content of the body and an introduction to say what your essay will be about. When finishing drafting, the teacher should explain to his students that the next step is revising what they have collected and examine the content of their writing for the sake of clarifying, crafting and considering changes that would improve the piece of writing.
- c) *Responding to student's writing*: The teacher may help his students by reading their draft and then make written suggestion about how the text could be reordered (Harmer, 2004). He is able to help them by writing out his own version of how a section of text might look better. However, he can ask students to have a look at their colleagues' work and let comments or respond in their own way.

#### **1.3.4 Types and purposes of writing**

The exchanging information with others is usually directed by numerous purposes or goals. People may want to express their feeling and emotions or want simply to explore a thought. Others may want to inform or explain ideas, that is why there are different purposes for different writings which include various types of writing and knowing the features of each one may help the learner to select the appropriate one in the appropriate context.

### 1.3.4.1 Narrative writing

Usually tells story events, the narrative writing is considered to be the easiest type of writing since it conveys what exactly happened. It talks about real life situation and it must have a clearly defined setting, characters, plot and point of view, including an introduction, a climax and a conclusion. The purpose behind such kind of essays is to convey a message to the readers or an important lesson that the writer wants from others to learn such as the importance of respect.

### 1.3.4.2 Descriptive writing

The descriptive essay is used to describe or create a vivid image of a person, place or thing in the reader mind to enable him sharing the writer's sensory experience. For a perfect description, Terwilliger (2011: 1) in her book structuring a Descriptive Essay mentioned the following techniques:

- a. *Select a subject:* When the student starts writing, it is extremely important to decide what he is going to describe and how it will look like and the key for a good description is observation. For example, if the learner wants to describe a place that he already knows, he should go there to take notes in order to have a much clear idea about it.
- b. *Use descriptive words:* in his description, the learners should use as much as possible of sensory and descriptive words (adjectives) rather than using just simple words (good, bad...) for example, it is better to say "*The big brown dog sniffed around the red rose bushes in the front yard*" than saying "*The dog sniffs around*".
- c. *Organize details:* The paragraphs in a descriptive essay can be structured spatially (from top to bottom or from near to far) or chronologically (time order) or from general to specific. Descriptive essays can also use other patterns of organization such as narrative or exemplification.
- d. *Draw a logical conclusion:* in writing the conclusion, the learner may also use descriptive words, however, he has to be sure that the conclusion is logical and relevant.

### 1.3.4.3 The Exploratory Writing

The exploratory essay may tell how to make or do something, or report on an experience which can take a variety of forms. This type of essays conveys information to the reader in order to facilitate understanding. The purpose related to such essays is to inform about a specific subject or topic, but the student needs to be more careful because it is not telling a story rather is

a practical kind of writing such as research papers, or a scientific article that explains the reasons behind the problem under study like pollution.

#### **1.3.4.4 The Persuasive Writing**

Persuasive essay tries to convince the reader with the writer idea or point of view like in literary texts and advertisements, this type of texts provides strong proofs of what the writers think and what they believe. The writer should have a good knowledge of the subject he wants to write about, using different persuasive methods such as strong ideas, good information and technical skills in order to help the reader to make up his mind and get his attention.

#### **1.3.5 Importance of Writing Skill**

**“Writing provides an importance mean to personal self-expression”** (Mc Arthur, et al, 2008: 1). This skill is considered as an important part since it is a priority to language teaching and learning that is why teachers gave more importance to such skill during the past few years in order to improve the level of their students.

Writing expresses social relationships which exist due to the individuals' creation via discourse, but these relationships are not only discourse. According to Hyland (2003: 69) **“writing is one of the main ways that we create a coherent social reality through engaging with others”**.

Because the most exams often rely on the student's writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge, strong writing skills may improve their chances for success (Alexander, 2008). Students are likely to write research papers and reports that is why they should have a good level at writing because if their writing is badly structured, there might be a misunderstanding and misinterpretation from the readers.

The good level of writing is not helpful only for students but also for people which may help them overcome many problems such as nervousness that results happen during a conversation or an interview.

#### **1.3.6 Strategies for improving the writing skill**

Hedge (2005: 95) argued that **“successful writing goes beyond producing clear and accurate sentences since learners must be aided to write and express their ideas in the most appropriate and creative way”**. In this respect there are some strategies that should be taken into consideration when developing the students' writing skill and they can be classified as follow:

✓ *Choosing the appropriate type and topic*

Every teacher should help his students in selecting the type of writing and the topic that interest them including the appropriate words and expressions. When providing students with a short list of topics and an option to create their own topics often works well that is, he can encourage them to write about anything they want in order to make them feel free to express their thoughts and ideas. Perks (2010)

✓ *Generating Ideas*

When planning the topic, the teacher should explain to his students that gathering and recording what they know about the topic without worrying about repetition, spelling or grammar will be very helpful in starting writing and ultimately to produce more writing and encourage fluency in generating ideas. The teacher should also explain that **“Using idea mapping, you might discover interesting connections between topics that you had not thought of before.”** (Scott McLean, 2011)

✓ *Write more than one draft*

The teacher should explain clearly to his students that draft means a preliminary version of the piece of writing and by working on second and third draft; the students’ writing will be improved. He should also tell them that writing more than one draft will help to insert points or ideas that they did not think about in the first draft and they can add it in another draft and this can lead to a complete piece of writing.

✓ *Note taking*

The teacher should inform his students that any note that they take in class today can be used when they take the quiz tomorrow (Cohen et al, 2013) because materials presented in the classroom often contains the key concepts of the course most likely to be included on exams. So, while explaining the lesson, the teacher should pay attention to the importance of note taking, and then he might ask them to answer some questions like: *“What did you already know about ...? What did and did not you understand?”* to be sure that all students are engaged. This strategy might also help them in rapid writing.

✓ *Encouraging shy students*

Zimbardo (1977) stated that shy individuals have poor self-images and negative expectations. So, the teacher is considered to be the first one who should help his students to overcome their fears and to build their self-confidence by encouraging his shy students to write

about what they think. He may also engage them in groups' activities that expose them to other students' thoughts and this collaborative learning will teach them how to think deeply since the teacher doesn't provide them with responses, they must find answers by themselves.

## **1.4 Part Three: Speaking Skill Vs Writing Skill**

### **1.4.1 The relationship between speaking and writing**

Any language must include a spoken and a written forms through which people are able to communicate; and when learning a language, **“Speech comes first, reading and writing come later”** (Huebener, 1965: 14)

#### **1.4.1.1 Speaking and writing similarities**

As it is known, language is considered as a system of communicating with other people through the use of sounds, symbols and words; so, the learner is able to express his thoughts and emotions. (Sapir 1921) There are many forms of language: written, spoken, sign, body language...etc.

Language has two modes: Speaking and writing.

- ✓ Speaking is like writing an essay.
- ✓ Both skills share the same aim which is communicating and conveying a message since they have one characteristic in common which is arbitrariness.
- ✓ Both speaking and writing need to be collected, classified, interpreted and organized materially.
- ✓ They can include the use of visual aids.
- ✓ They lead the reader in the beginning, provide details in the text and summarize at the end.

#### **1.4.1.2 The nature of speech in contrast to writing**

Though writing and speaking are productive skills, they are so different. According to O'Grady et al. (1996: 59)

**“Speaking and writing are different in both origin and practice spoken language is acquired without specific formal instruction, whereas writing must be taught and learnt through deliberate effort . . . there are many people who are unable to write. While spoken language comes naturally to human beings, writing does not.”**

They may differ in the following points:

- ✓ Spoken messages are transmitted by oral communication through the mouth while written communication is written down on paper.
- ✓ While speaking, the speaker produces grammatically incorrect expressions, whereas in writing, he is expected to write grammatically correct words and with proper spelling.
- ✓ The productive skills differ at the level of “formality” that is, writing is formal and compact, while speaking is more informal and repetitive (Raimes, 1994: 35).
- ✓ When speakers use their voices (pitch, rhythm, stress) and gestures, pauses, intonations and simple sentences with lot of ands and buts and words with few syllables to communicate their messages, for instance, “*I don wanna go to the party kuz it sounds boring*”, writers rely on words on the paper and more complex sentences with connecting words like “*however, although and who*” to express their ideas, for example, “*I don’t want to go to the party because it sounds boring*”
- ✓ Moreover, in terms of planning, writing needs more time than speaking, this last tends to rely on the context of the interaction more than writing. Speakers and addressees are often face-to-face while writers and readers are not.

#### **1.4.2 Strategies for enhancing both speaking and writing skills**

Speaking and writing are two important skills that should be improved by the EFL teachers. The improvements of excellent communicating skills take time, patience, and practice, however, is extremely beneficial. In this sake, communication strategies need to be explicitly taught for EFL students to improve their accuracy and fluency (Dörnyei, 1995).

A set of strategies was provided for EFL teachers in order to help their students to be better in both skills. So, the teacher may push them to read loudly in the classroom and to be active readers that is, they should think about the structure and unfamiliar words as they read and write it down in order to ask about their meanings.

The teacher may use audio-visual materials, for example, he brings a video of native speakers; the students listen to each part and try to repeat it separately and also write the most important words and try to make the difference between the way it is written and the way it is pronounced by spelling each difficult word.

The teacher may ask his students to write a short story or to describe something or someone and when the exercises are done; he can call for specific members to read loudly their

writings. Then he asks the others to comment on their class mate's work at the level of mistakes (grammar, spelling, pronunciations).

Another strategy that might help the EFL students is to bring them a list of words or expressions that have the same pronunciations but are different in the way of writing, and demands from them to put each word in a form of sentences or essays, so they have the opportunity to memorize lot of words that may use in conversations for instance. The teacher should also encourage his students to be willing to take risks and manipulate the target language without being afraid of making errors.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

As productive skills, speaking and writing are regarded to be important processes since they help the teachers in evaluating students' proficiency in the target language because they can be the major criteria towards better academic position and greater educational success.

So, since writing and speaking have many features in common, by deliberately controlling a number of variables, EFL teachers can make both skills interrelated in their sessions as the development of those skills will provide more opportunities for EFL learners to interact and communicate in an effective and successful manner. Many approaches and various methods have been used by EFL teachers in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen to teach these important skills to their learners. Yet we cannot deny that there are numerous differences between the two skills. For EFL learners, the strong level in speaking and writing skills will be achieved by lot of practice and determination since no one is born with innate capacity to speak and to write.

## **Chapter Two: Empirical Phase**

### 2.1 Introduction

### 2.2 Data Collection

#### 2.2.1 Research Instruments and procedures

##### 2.2.1.a Questionnaire

##### 2.2.1.b Interview

### 2.3 Data Analysis

#### 2.3.1 Students' Questionnaire

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### 2.4 Discussion of the Results

#### 2.4.1 Students' Questionnaire

#### 2.4.2 Teachers' Interview

### 2.5 Suggestions and Recommendations

#### 2.5.1 For Teachers

#### 2.5.2 For Learners

### 2.6 Conclusion

## 2.1 Introduction

The second chapter deals with the empirical phase of this work. It investigates the process of teaching/learning the productive skills at Abou Baker-Belkaid University in Tlemcen. Furthermore, it aims at providing the readers with the main research instruments and procedures that have been used to collect data in this study. The present work intends to elicit teachers and students' opinion about the productive skills and whether speaking and writing are interrelated or not. Their views and opinions are very crucial to test the stated hypothesis. The main research tools to collect the necessary data are questionnaire for first year and an interview for EFL teachers.

## 2.2 Data Collection

Data collection methods for impact assessment vary along a continuum. There are several methods to use when collecting data. The researcher in this study, in order to assure the validity of his research, attempts to use more than one technique to investigate.

### 2.2.1 Research instruments and procedures

For Parahoo (1997: 52- 325), a research instrument is **“a tool used to collect data. An instrument is a tool designed to measure knowledge attitude and skills.”**

The research instruments are from different types: questionnaires, interviews, observations... In this work two instruments were used to know the opinion of the informants at the University, a questionnaire was selected to collect data from learners and an interview for teachers.

#### 2.2.1.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is considered as the most common tool used for gathering information about a specific topic using set of clear questions sent for a specific population. According to Brown (2001) a questionnaire is **“any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”**

The questionnaire in this work was addressed for fifty three first year EFL university learners in order to investigate the research questions and hypotheses as Richterich and Chancerel (1980: 59) state that

**“Questionnaires are structured instruments for the collection of data which translate research hypothesis into questions”**

The questionnaire consists of eleven questions which composed of the three types of questions: open, closed and mixed questions.

**Item one:** questions one and three are connected to the learners’ level in English and whether it enables them to express themselves.

**Item two:** question two asks the informants to classify the four skills according to their importance for them.

**Item three:** questions four, six and ten investigate about which productive skill is easy and comfortable for the learning process and whether speaking and writing are interrelated.

**Item four:** question five intends to ask the participants whether they use the productive skills outside the classroom.

**Item five:** question seven aims at exploring the mistakes that students make while speaking and writing.

**Item six:** question eight enquires about the productive skills’ learning process during two academic years.

**Item seven:** question nine seeks to gather the participants’ opinions about writing ability on the way of speaking.

**Item eight:** question eleven aims at gathering information about the activities use by the learners to improve their level in both speaking and writing skills out of the wall of University.

#### **2.2.1.2 Interview**

**“An interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of view as in everyday conversation and become a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge”.** (Kvale 1996: 6)

In this research paper the informants that took part to the interview are the OP teachers in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen they were asked to answer thirteen questions about the issue under study.

Teachers' interview enquires about their students' level in speaking and writing and whether speaking can be helpful to enhance writing level. The informants were asked whether they give importance to writing during their sessions. In addition, they have been requested if speaking and writing converge and the activities they use to teach speaking and writing interrelated. The teachers were required to give the most common issues that students face while dealing with those skills. The interview is, indeed, a means to know the difficulties faced by both teachers and learners when teaching/learning the productive skill and to provide suggestions to improve students speaking performance.

## 2.3 Data Analysis

After data collection, the obtained results have been interpreted and then discussed.

### 2.3.2 Students' Questionnaire

**Question 1:** How do you consider your English level?

EFL Learning Level	A.F	R.F
Good	16	30%
Average	33	62%
Weak	4	8%
Total number	53%	100%

Table 2.1 Students' Level in English

From the table above we can notice that most of the students (62%) present an average level in English. The others (30%) claim that they have good level whereas 8% of students show that they are weak in English.

**Question 2:** How would you classify the following four skills in terms of importance to your learning?

Skills	A.F	R.F	Classes
Listening	16	30%	4
Speaking	19	36%	1
Reading	18	34%	2
Writing	17	32%	3

Table 2.2: Classification of skills

One can notice from the table above that the highest percentage (36%) of students agree on that speaking is the most important skill to their learning then reading with a 34% as a second step, after that writing with a percentage of 32% and the last one is listening with a 30%.

**Question 3:** Does your level enable you to express yourself?

Using English to express themselves	AF	RF
Yes	50	94%
No	3	6%
Total number	53	100%

Table 2.3: Using English to express themselves

When asked about the ability to express themselves, students' answers vary from one to another. The majority of students (94%) replied by yes that is they have the ability to express themselves while (6%) claim the opposite.

**Question 4:** At which productive skill you feel more comfortable when learning? Why?

Productive skills	A.F	R.F
Speaking	23	43%
Writing	28	53%
Both	2	4%
Total number	53	100%

Table 2.4: the easiest productive skill for learners learning

Regarding this question, (53%) of students said that they feel more comfortable at writing skill; on the other hand 43% feel comfortable at speaking. The remaining 4% claim that they feel comfortable at both skills. However, the reasons for these choices were different; some of them said that they are able to express themselves easily when writing because they have more time to recognize their ideas and also because there is no anxiety while writing. Others agree on that when speaking they express their emotions and feelings more than when writing; while others did not give reasons for their choices.

**Question 5:** Do you practice the productive skills outside the classroom? If yes, which one do you feel comfortable to use and why?

Practicing the Productive skills outside	A.F	R.F
Yes	35	66%
No	16	30%
Total number	51	96%

Table 2.5: practicing the productive skills outside the classroom

In this question, 4% of students did not give their answers. (66%) of students practice the productive skills outside their classrooms while (30%) do not use the productive skills outside. Most of students use speaking outside rather than writing and some students did not give which skill they use, others said that they use both skills.

**Question 6:** How do you find writing and speaking in English?

Speaking in English	A.F	R.F
Easy	13	25%
Difficult	22	42%
Total number	35	67%

Table 2.6: Speaking in English

Writing in English	A.F	R.F
Easy	22	42%
Difficult	13	25%
Total number	35	67%

Table 2.7: Writing in English

The results obtained denote that most students (42%) find speaking a difficult skill while (25%) find it easy, whereas, (42%) of the informants state that writing is an easy skill while 25% of them state that it is difficult. Still 25% say that both speaking and writing are easy however, 9% state that the two skills are difficult.

**Question 7:** What kind of mistakes do you frequently make while speaking or writing?

Mistakes while	A.F	R.F	Mistakes while writing	A.F	R.F

speaking					
Pronunciation	33	62%	Pronunciation	4	8%
Spelling	12	23%	Spelling	26	49%
Vocabulary	16	30%	Vocabulary	27	51%
Grammar	14	26%	Grammar	29	55%
Total number	51	96%	Total number	51	96%

Table2.8: Mistakes made by students while speaking or writing

From the findings, it is noticeable that two students prefer not to answer this question, whereas, at the speaking skills, the majority of students (62%) make pronunciation mistakes while speaking, 30% of them make mistakes at the level of vocabulary, 26% face problems with grammar mistakes and 23% in spelling as well as they have issues in writing skill, where 55% of the students claim that grammar is the problem they face while writing, 51% of them said that they make vocabulary mistakes, 49% find difficulties with spelling and the last 8% with pronunciation.

**Question 8:** Learning the productive skills during two academic years is enough or not enough?

	A.F	R.F
Enough	13	25%
Not enough	40	75%
Total number	53	100%

Table2.9: two academic years for learning the productive skills

It is obvious that almost all the students (75%) share the same idea on that two academic years are not enough to learn two important skills such speaking and writing and the rest 25% feel that it is enough for them two academic years.

**Question 9:** As a learner, does your writing ability affect your way of speaking positively or negatively?

	A.F	R.F
Positively	43	81%
Negatively	7	13%
Total number	53	100%

Table 2.10: the students writing ability affect the way of speaking

The common shared reaction between the majority of students (81%) is that their writing ability affects their way of speaking positively. Whereas 13% of students state that their ability affects the way of speaking negatively.

**Question 10:** In your opinion, are speaking and writing interrelated? If yes how?

	A.F	R.F
Yes	41	77%
No	9	17%
Total number	50	94%

Table 2.11: Speaking and writing are interrelated

As table eleven shows, 77% of respondents find that speaking and writing are interrelated because they see that both skills need a good baggage of vocabulary and if they are good at writing they will improve their speaking and it help while speaking, however, 17% say no and 6% of students did not give their answers.

**Question 11:** what are the activities you use out of the wall of University to enhance your level in both skills?

In this question, most students insist on reading because it is a very helpful skill which has a big role in developing their level in both speaking and writing and making them familiar with the new vocabulary. Speaking with foreigners, practicing the two skills outside the classes, watching English films and listening to music were also suggestions provided by students.

### 2.3.1 Teachers' Interview

**Question 1:** How long have you been teaching at university?

This question aims at knowing the experience of the EFL teachers at the University of Tlemcen. The average of teaching is between 6 to 10 years only one teacher has been teaching at University for 18 years.

**Question 2:** How do you evaluate your students' level at speaking?

The results recorded reveal that four teachers evaluate their students' level as an average one when one of them claimed that their students are low in speaking.

**Question 3:** How do you evaluate them in writing?

When asking teachers about their students' level at writing, their answers differ from one to another. Two teachers claimed that their students have a weak level. The third teacher said that he does not give importance to such skill in his session. The students of the fourth teacher have an intermediate level in writing as he assigned. Whereas, the last teacher said that the students' level is acceptable according to their experience.

**Question 4:** Can speaking be helpful to enhance writing level? If yes how?

In this question, all the teachers had the same point of view which is speaking can be helpful in the development of writing level since each oral activity or performance will be first in the written form.

**Question 5:** Do you give importance to writing during your session?

The results show that the majority of teachers give importance for the writing skill during their OP session whereas two of them neglect writing completely.

**Question 6:** Do speaking and writing converge? If yes, in what way?

The answers of the participants for this question were the same in which all agree on that the two skills (speaking and writing) converge because, in their opinion, all skills are interrelated that is the teacher cannot teach one without the other, they go hand in hand.

**Question 7:** Does the level of your students in speaking reflect their level in writing? If yes how?

In answering this question, the teachers agree on that their students level in speaking does not reflect their level in writing because there are students who are good at speaking but are so weak when writing and vice versa.

**Question 8:** What are the activities you use to teach speaking and writing interrelated?

From the results obtained, one teacher skip this question and prefer not to answer because he does not give importance to writing, however, the other teachers give the following answers

- ✓ Writing an idiom then make the comments and to give it orally.
- ✓ Giving them recording to listen to and to take notes then they give what they have understood orally.

- ✓ Writing some dictations.
- ✓ Fill in the gaps
- ✓ Idiomatic expressions.

**Question 9:** What are the most common issues that students face while dealing with those skills?

In this question, all the teachers claimed almost the same issues that their students have while dealing with the productive skills:

- ✓ Psychological issues.
- ✓ Pronunciation and spelling.
- ✓ Convention of speaking.
- ✓ Lack of vocabulary.
- ✓ Coherence and cohesion.
- ✓ Grammar and lexical mistakes.
- ✓ Language structure.

**Question 10:** what are these difficulties due to?

The questioned teachers gave many reasons for their students' difficulties which can be summarized as follow:

- ✓ Students are not well prepared.
- ✓ Educational system.
- ✓ Teachers caring about the program (they just want to finish it).
- ✓ The writing process is completely neglected the focus is on the product.
- ✓ Problem of self-confidence.
- ✓ The large number of students in classroom.
- ✓ Lack of practice in both skills outside the classroom.

**Question 11:** is it possible to overcome these difficulties?

The results demonstrated that all the teachers agree on the fact that their students are able to overcome their difficulties.

**Question 12:** What procedures do you use to help your students to overcome their mistakes?

The questioned teachers have different strategies to help their students overcoming their mistakes. The following are the main ones:

- ✓ Insist on having a dictionary.
- ✓ Repeating the same mistake to attract the students' attention and through a discussion they correct each other.
- ✓ A re-consideration of the teaching/learning speaking and writing, focus on both the form and the content.
- ✓ Insist on reading a lot and memorize a lot of words then try to use them in speech and conversations.
- ✓ Advising them to free themselves and to be fluent because first fluency then accuracy.
- ✓ Audio visual, computing, self-correction, exercises to push them work.

**Question 13:** As a teacher, how do can you help your students to improve their level in OP that has a positive effect on WP?

For this question teachers provide several suggestions to improve the students' level in OP to have a positive effect on their WP level:

- ✓ Encourage them to speak and to listen to native speakers.
- ✓ Try to exercise writing.
- ✓ Extensive writing practice and oral communication.
- ✓ To take native speakers as a model and to try to speak.
- ✓ Try to connect all the skills together.

## **2.4 Discussion of the Results**

This study has aimed at investigating the learning process of the productive skills for first year EFL students at Abou Bekr-Balkaid University and the relationship between speaking and writing. For this sake, the questionnaire and the interview were used as instruments in order to gather information from both EFL students and teachers to attest the hypotheses proposed by the researcher. After the analysis of both research tools, the most significant findings are as follow:

### **2.4.1 Students' Questionnaire**

The analysis of the questionnaire reveals that most students have an intermediate level in English (see table 2.1). They found the learning process more accessible since they feel more comfortable in writing tasks than in speaking ones. This can be due to the lack of practice in speaking. However, their answers about the classification of the four skills show that the speaking skill comes at the first glance in comparison with the other skills for the sake of improving their level in speaking.

The analysis demonstrates that most of the learners use to watch films, speak with foreigners and write short stories and idioms outside the classroom. The findings show that students have common mistakes in writing such as spelling, grammar and vocabulary whereas they generally encounter some problems at the level of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar while speaking (see table 2.8). These mistakes are due to the lack of practice in both skills and how to use effective methods and techniques to overcome their difficulties in the production skills.

From the analysis, the learners do not agree on the time allocated to the productive skills because two years is not enough for them (see table 2.9). Thus, the fluency in speaking and mastering the writing skill require more than two years of practice to get the desire level.

The questionnaire analysis denotes that the learners' writing ability affect positively their way of speaking because when students have an acceptable and appropriate written style (see table 2.10); they will be able to speak and communicate effectively without mistakes mainly grammar and pronunciation mistakes. The analysis shows that most of the informants agree on the correlation that exists between writing and speaking as one completes the other since they are both productive skills and they work together to help the learners in expressing their ideas either in the spoken or the written form.

#### **2.4.2 Teachers Interview**

The analysis of the teachers' interview demonstrates that their first year EFL learners generally have an intermediate level in speaking and a weak one in writing since in oral expression sessions most of the teachers neglect writing completely and they focus on speaking and listening (see 2.3.1 Question 2 and 3) However, all the teachers agree on the fact that the speaking skill can be helpful to improve the learners' writing level (see 2.3.1 Question 4) because when they ask their students to perform something orally they will prepare it at first in a written form and if they write appropriate statements with no mistakes, the oral performance will be interesting and also if the students will have the opportunity to select large and adequate vocabulary to express themselves.

The interview analysis reveals that all the teachers have the same point of view concerning the idea that speaking and writing converge since the four language skills are interrelated and one completes the other in the sense that they call for the stock of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation (see 2.3.1 Question 6). Whereas, the findings show that the participants do not agree on the fact that the level of their students in speaking reflects their level in writing

because there are students who are able to write an appropriate piece of writing but they cannot express their ideas in speaking and vice versa.

From the analysis of the outcomes, it is clear that the informants share the same issues while dealing with the productive skills like psychological variables that affects negatively their performance in the two skills such as the fear of making mistakes since students are not well prepared, lack of self-confidence and shyness, there are also grammar and vocabulary problems which are due to the lack of practicing the two skills outside the classroom.

In the beginning of this work, the researcher suggested four hypotheses. The first one denotes that some students' performance in speaking is weak in comparison with their performance in writing because of common issues that are shared by most students in both skills like shyness, lack of vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, failure of failure. This hypothesis was proved after data collected were analyzed because the students in answering their questionnaire mentioned several problems that they frequently face while dealing with speaking and writing skills.

The second hypothesis proposed by the researcher was that speaking and writing have a strong relationship in the EFL teaching and learning process even though they are different. These results correlated with teachers' points of view on that speaking is different from writing in many points and both EFL teachers and students demonstrated that speaking and writing as productive skills are interrelated and inseparable. It was claimed by all teachers that they cannot deal with one skill without the other because they believe that those skills go hand in hand.

As a third hypothesis, the researcher recommended that every EFL teacher use various methods and techniques in order to teach writing and speaking. After analysing the answers of the addressed EFL teachers this hypothesis has been proved; each one of them have proposed several methods that he used to work with in his sessions such as gap filling, listening to native speakers and taking notes, making comments on an idiom that the students write...etc.

The fourth and the last hypothesis put forward by the researcher indicates that there are many strategies available to enhance the speaking and writing skills separately and also there are ones to improve both skills in connection to each other. The results obtained, after the analysis of data collected, have proved this hypothesis. While most of the EFL teachers prefer to make activities that are helpful for EFL Learners to enhance their level in the productive skills. The others stated that to teach each skill alone and separately is an easy task for the students. But all of them agree on that Speaking can be very helpful to develop Writing and vice versa

through different activities like writing a short story and reading a loud procedure, picking up their mistakes to attract the students' attention to correct them in peers group.

Finally, one may say that the findings of this work clearly show that Speaking and Writing are interconnected skills in the EFL teaching and learning processes. Though they have many things in contrast, both EFL teachers and students agree on the fact that in order to learn a new language, the focus should be on the productive skills in order to facilitate the learning process. As this study shows, the EFL teachers at Abou Bekr-Balkaid University agree on the importance of teaching speaking and writing in order to enhance the EFL learners' ability to express themselves in both skills.

## 2.5 Suggestions and Recommendations

The productive skills **“is the term for speaking and writing skills where students actually have to produce language themselves”** (Harmer, 2007: 265). That is learners in learning the language for the first time they need to articulate words and to write it down in order to produce the language. The first productive skill is speaking which has been defined by Chaney (1988: 13) as: **“a process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal or oral form”**.

For Nunan (1989: 32), in order to be successful in acquiring the speaking skill in the target language, the following sub skills should be developed by the EFL learners:

- ✓ “The ability to articulate phonological features of the language comprehensively;
- ✓ Expertise on stress, rhythm, intonation patterns,
- ✓ An acceptance degree of fluency,
- ✓ Transactional and interpersonal skills,
- ✓ Skills in talking short and long speaking turns,
- ✓ Skills in the management of interaction,
- ✓ Using appropriate formulae and fillers.”

Writing is the second productive skill that helps people in translating their thoughts and ideas into words. According to Grossmann (2009: 3), **“Writing can take many forms, including anything from a shopping list, acting as an aide-memoire, through letters, both formal and informal, to academic texts like this essay”**.

Gower et al. (1995: 107) suggested some techniques which can help students in learning the writing skill through discussions in the class:

- ✓ “Teachers should ensure that students are interested in the subject and have ideas of their own.
- ✓ The activity should have motivating factors which can create an environment for the learners to speak.
- ✓ The activity should be planned such a way where the whole class can participate”

So, the following suggestions are put forward for both EFL teachers and students which seem to be of interest for both of them:

### 2.5.1. For Teachers

For Gerald Dykstra (1978: 4) the role of teacher can be characterized in:

**“...near automatons who stand up, call roll, talk a lot, give cues, ask simple content questions, check for comprehension, check for recall, keep records, discipline students, bestow grades and generally carry on with clerical tasks far below what their won level of ability might be.”**

- ✓ The first thing that the EFL teacher should do is to provide the relaxed atmosphere in order to stimulate his students to learn.
- ✓ EFL Teachers should encourage their students to speak in English not only inside the classroom but also outside it in order to be fluent by preparing tasks for practicing the Speaking skill.
- ✓ He should build a friendly relationship with his students to motivate them participating in speaking and writing activities.
- ✓ The teacher should be helped by his students in developing their vocabulary and pronunciation by providing different activities related to those aspects like giving a list of words that have the same pronunciation with different spelling.
- ✓ He should provide more activities that help them enhancing both speaking and writing at the same time.
- ✓ He also can encourage his students to correct each other during the session.
- ✓ The teacher should reward the learners with encouragements or by adding extra marks in their exams.
- ✓ Teacher should give more opportunities for the learners to express themselves during sessions.
- ✓ The teacher should be able to deal with psychological variables (problems of motivation, shyness, and misbehavior).

- ✓ He should make sure that all the students are involved in every speaking or writing activity.

### **2.5.2. For Students**

Students also have a great role in the classroom because without them, there is no learning process. So, they need to:

- ✓ The students should follow the instructions that the teacher suggests in the classroom
- ✓ To ask the teacher for some clarification maybe by repeating the lesson or the re-explaining what they did not understand.
- ✓ To develop their own speaking and writing strategies through listening to native speakers and taking notes.
- ✓ To practice the productive skills outside the classroom.
- ✓ To be able and ready to answer their teachers' questions.
- ✓ To be engaged within the explanation of the teacher.
- ✓ To do activities out of the wall of school to enhance their level in Speaking and Writing.
- ✓ To share their thought and opinions with their class mates in order to practice speaking.
- ✓ To be able to write short stories or idioms at home and give it to their teacher in order to correct it (extra activities).
- ✓ To do home assignments that help them developing their pronunciation and spelling as they are the most common issues faced by learners.

### **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter exposes the nature of the teaching/learning situation as far as the productive skills are concerned. It represents the empirical phase of this study. In addition, it gives a clear idea about the research tools and procedure used by the researcher to collect data from both EFL teachers and learners at Abou Bekr-Balkaid University. Moreover, the chapter deals with the analysis of both teachers' interview and first year EFL learners' questionnaire and provides an interpretation and a discussion of the obtained results. Finally, the researcher proposed some recommendations that can be used by the EFL teachers and their learners to achieve a successful teaching/learning process.

## **General Conclusion**

The productive skills play a vital role in the learning operation since they form an essential part of the communication process in any language. It is observed that EFL teachers at Abou Bekr-Balkaid University focus much more on the speaking skill rather than on the writing one in their oral production sessions while the EFL learners prefer writing and ignore speaking. Through this work, the researcher has investigated the teaching/learning process of the productive skills at the Department of English in the University of Tlemcen and the main problems which may inhibit the EFL learners speaking and writing. It aims also at identifying the role of the EFL teachers in helping their students to overcome those problems and difficulties and the main methods used to enhance their learners' level in both speaking and writing skills.

This study departed from four main hypotheses. The first hypothesis was clarified since the main findings show that most of the students share common problems when speaking and others when writing and this may affect their levels in performance. The second hypothesis was proved by the answers of both EFL teachers and learners who believe that speaking and writing converge in many points since they are two productive skills though they have differences. The third hypothesis was also proved when the EFL teachers mentioned several methods to teach speaking and writing skills. The last hypothesis, which was suggested by the researcher, was proved by the total number of informants who took part in this survey in which they set up some strategies that can be helpful to improve speaking and others to improve writing; some other strategies were designed to enhance both skills interrelated as productive skills.

This work began with a theoretical framework which dealt with the main concepts related to the speaking skill in the first part and to the writing in the second part; a third part was designed to describe the correlation between the two skills. The second chapter is the empirical phase of the work in which the researcher used two instruments for the sake of gathering information from EFL teachers with an interview and first year EFL learners with a questionnaire. These tools were analysed and discussed in order to prove or disapprove the hypotheses suggested by the researcher when starting investigating. As a final step in this chapter a set of suggestions and recommendations were designed for EFL teachers and their students to facilitate and improve the teaching/learning process of the productive skills.

To conclude, one may say that speaking and writing are two complex skills and difficult to teach. However, learning English through speaking and writing courses can be helpful to develop the level of first year EFL students. So, it is important to make a deep research on the situation of teaching/learning the productive skills at Algerian Universities. It is hoped that

future research will be conducted on how to faster the teaching and learner of the four skills in the English language with much more emphasize on speaking and writing since one skill can be used to enhance the other and vice versa.

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# **Appendix « A »**

**Students' Questionnaire**

## Students' Questionnaire

Dear students, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions concerning my research paper which is about speaking /writing difficulties encountered in teaching/learning EFL, by putting a cross in the appropriate box. From time to time, you may be required to justify your choice.

1. How do you consider your English level?

- a. Good
- b. Average
- c. Weak

2. How would you classify the following four skills in terms of importance to your learning?

- a. Listening
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing

3. Does your level enable you to express yourself?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. At Which productive skill you feel more comfortable when learning? Why?

- a. Speaking
- b. Writing

.....  
.....

5. Do you practice the productive skills outside the classroom? If yes, which one do you feel comfortable to use and why?

- a. Yes
- b. No

.....  
.....

6. How do you find writing and speaking in English?

	Speaking	Writing
Easy		
Difficult		

7. What kind of mistakes do you frequently make while speaking or writing?

	Speaking	Writing
Pronunciation		
Spelling		
Vocabulary		
Grammar		

Other, specify.

.....  
.....

8. Learning the productive skills during two academic years is:

a. Enough

b. Not enough

9. As a learner does your writing ability affect your way of speaking:

a. Positively

b. Negatively

Why?

.....  
.....

10. In your opinion, are speaking and writing interrelated? If yes how?

a. Yes

b. No

.....  
.....

**11.** What are the activities out of the wall of school that you use you use to enhance your level in both skills?

.....  
.....

# **Appendix « B »**

**Teachers' Interview**

## Teachers' Interview

The present interview is an attempt to collect information about the teaching/learning process of the productive skills and to identify the problems encountered by first year EFL students while dealing with those skills. Thus, the teachers were kindly requested to answer the following questions.

1. How long have you been teaching English at university?

.....  
.....

2. How do you evaluate your students' level in speaking?

- a. Good
- b. Average
- c. Weak

3. How do you evaluate them in writing?

- a. Good
- b. Average
- c. Weak

4. Can speaking be helpful to enhance writing level? If yes, how?

- a. Yes
- b. No

.....  
.....

5. Do you give importance to writing during your session?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. Do speaking and writing converge? If yes, in what ways?

- a. Yes
- b. No

.....  
.....

7. Does the level of your students in speaking reflect their level in writing? If yes, how?

a. Yes

b. No

.....  
.....

8. What are the activities you use to teach speaking and writing interrelated?

.....  
.....

9. What are the most common issues that students face while dealing with those skills?

.....  
.....

10. These difficulties are due to what?

.....  
.....

11. Is it possible to overcome these difficulties?

a. Yes

b. No

12. What procedures do you use to help your students to overcome their mistakes?

.....  
.....

13. As a teacher, how can you help your students to improve their level in OP that has a positive effect on WP?

.....  
.....

