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Improving EFL learners' Speaking: Case of First Year Students at the University of Tlemcen

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Dedication 1

*To my sympathetic father and thoughtful mother whose
loves always strengthen my will.*

To my lovely sisters and brothers.

*To all my friends with whom I shared the university life with
its lights and shadows.*

To all those who love me.

Youcef

Dedication 2

*To my sympathetic father and thoughtful mother whose
loves always strengthen my will.*

To my lovely sisters and brothers.

*To all my friends with whom I shared the university life with
its lights and shadows.*

To all those who love me.

Mohamed El Amine

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Abstract

The present work aims at shading light on the importance of speaking and introducing some strategies that promote this skill and improve students' proficiency. Therefore, the activities teachers use may essentially influence the eventual efficiency of the development of speaking skill. This research also attempts to explore whether learners use the mother tongue while speaking in class. A case study research was conducted in Abou Bakr Belkaid University of Tlemcen relying on a number of research instruments for data collection: questionnaire for learners and structured interview with teachers. The data collected were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results revealed that first year EFL students improve their speaking skill through self-training in reading aloud, discussions and role play in conversations. On the other hand, teachers encourage their learners by using the previous activities (discussions and role play) and debates as well. Though the use of mother tongue may give brief explanations and facilitate the management of learning, this work emphasised that using the target language is crucial to achieve the objectives of speaking English fluently and accurately. At the end, some recommendations were presented to enhance the skill of speaking among University students.

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List of Acronyms

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TPO: Teaching Oral Production

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN: Cable News Network

GI: General Introduction

General Introduction

General Introduction

Worldwide changes resulting from the globalization process have imposed educational reforms as a major condition for human development. These educational reforms concern also foreign language teaching and learning. Thus, the speaking skill has become increasingly important in EFL settings because of the strengthening rank position of the English as global language for communication. Talking about EFL students' development of speaking skill plays a crucial role in how to be fluent and accurate despite of the difficulties they encounter. Therefore, one of the basic problems that are related to foreign language learning is to prepare learners be able to use the language effectively. Indeed, the foreseen objectives of this work are to study teaching-learning of the speaking skill by giving information concerning the way teachers teach this productive skill through different activities that effectively enhance first year EFL LMD students' level in speaking the target language.

Consequently, researchers strive to answer the following questions:

1. How can first year EFL students improve their speaking skill?
2. What are the activities that teachers should use to enhance speaking skill for their students?
3. Do first year EFL students use the target language or mother tongue or combination of both in relation to speaking activities?

The above mentioned questions led to formulate three hypotheses:

1. First EFL students may improve their speaking skill through self training in reading aloud.
2. Teachers may use different activities such as: role play, discussions and debates to enhance the level of speaking for their students.
3. First year EFL students probably use the target language in speaking activities.

General Introduction

In fact, the eagerness to reach the previously set objectives drives researchers to design an exploratory case study research dealing with first year EFL LMD students in the University of Tlemcen. This case study will collect qualitative and quantitative data from different sources relying on a set of research instruments: a questionnaire for learners and an interview with teachers of oral expressions.

To carry out this case study research, the present work is purposefully divided into four interrelated chapters. The first one reviews the literature on speaking skill and provides the theoretical background for the issue under investigation. The second chapter consist of two parts: the first one is devoted to be the description of ELT in Algeria and English Department at Tlemcen University. The second part deals with the research design and methodology through a detailed description of the data collection procedures and the research instruments. The third chapter is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of data. Furthermore, the chapter seeks to answer the research questions by confirming and disconfirming the research hypotheses. Finally, the fourth chapter is intended to provide some suggestions and recommendations that may encourage students improve their speaking performance.

Chapter One
Literature Review about
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1.1.Introduction

Speaking is of great importance in foreign language learning. It is essential for academic success and for many jobs. Despite its importance, teaching speaking has been undervalued and just in the last two decades that it wins its right to be an independent branch of teaching, learning and testing. So, speaking must be given its right place in the process of language teaching as a whole. For first year EFL students, it is a requirement for short (term needs), in tests and exams, and for long (term needs), in the job field. It is, then, regarded as the major skill to be developed because it is necessary for displaying the language proficiency. This chapter is devoted to a theoretical background about the key concepts related to the speaking skill and its elements, including the main characteristics of speaking performance, as well as demonstrating strategies and activities for effective speaking, in addition to the influence of the use of mother tongue in class.

1.2.The Speaking Skill

Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) requires learners' development of language skills: reading, speaking, writing and listening. As far as speaking is concerned, it is said to be at the heart of second language learning and one of the productive skills. This section revolves around the nature of speaking.

1.2.1. Definition of Speaking

English teaching and learning have the goal of focusing students so that they are able to use English for communication and as a tool for furthering their studies, therefore, the ability to speak English is priority for any second or foreign language learners. Thus, speaking is one of the basic language skills. It is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching that aims at improving students communicative skills because, only in that way students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance. In this context, the speaking skill has a variety of views concerning the meaning and it can be defined in different ways. According to Oxford Dictionary, speaking is “*the*

action of conveying information or expressing one's feeling in speech" (2009:414). Scholars do not share a single definition of speaking and this is inevitable, according to Brown *et al.* (1994:19) speaking is "*an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information*". In this context, speaking is one of the basic skills that must be mastered by students since it is very important for them to communicate, i.e., they exchange information to learn from each other particularly when speech is related to their studies. Harmer (2001:69) justifies "*the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on spot*". In this respect, Harmer views that the speaker's mastery of the target language is ultimately measured by how well he can use it, not only by how much he knows about i.e., to enable the speaker to be a good performer. In other words, speech should be appropriate to the situation and purposeful; "*spoken language allows us to produce a sequence of vocal sounds; in such a way another person can reconstruct from those sounds a useful approximation to one original meaning*" (Broughton, 1980:7). Hence, students have to innovate and should interact with the target language in order to develop their own competence and to be sufficiently proficient.

In addition to this, Chaney (1998:13) describes speaking as "*the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts*". For this reason, in the act of communication, the speaker has to be explicit as much as possible, when talking he has to select suitable expressions in order to be more fluent and which enable the receiver to form an interpretation of the intention of our message i.e., good speaking skill is the act of generating words that can be understood by listeners and the good speaker is clear and informative.

1.2.2. Elements of the Speaking Skill

There are a number of elements which have been put forward by Harmer (2001) in order to speak the foreign language fluently and accurately, including the language features that the learners should have knowledge about and the processes of the language and information in the same time when an interlocutor interacts with them.

❖ Language features:

Speaking effectively requires the following language features as a necessary aspect for spoken production.

- **Connected speech:** the speaker of English needs to be able to produce more connected sounds not only separated phonemes. In connected speech, these sounds may be modified (assimilation), omitted (elision), added (linking) or weakened (through contractions and stress patterning).
- **Expressive devices:** English native speakers alternate the pitch, stress, volume, speech with the use of non-verbal means. Such phonological rules enable them to convey their intended meaning to be effective communicators. “*The use of these devices contributes to the ability to convey meanings. They allow the extra expression of emotion and intensity*” (Harmer, 2001: 269).
- **Lexis and grammar:** learners often use the same lexical structures when they produce some language functions. The teacher, therefore, should provide phrases with different functions that make students competence at various stages of interaction (agreeing, disagreeing, expressing shock, surprise ...).
- **Negotiation language:** it is beneficial for learners who often ask clarification when they are listening to someone else talks. For students this is especially crucial particularly when teachers provide them with phrases they need to well perform their utterances. So, the speakers use negotiation language to show the structure of their discourse especially when they can see that the other interlocutors did not understand them.

❖ Mental /social processing

Language skill of the speaker depends on rapid mental and social processing skill as follows:

- **Language processing:** the ability of the 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. And the ability of retrieving words and phrases from the speakers memories to be used in appropriate context when they communicate.

- **Interacting with others:** interaction between participants requires speaking effectively taking into account listening and understanding the others' talk, then react through taking turns or allow others do so. Oral interaction has long been considered an important element in the field of foreign language acquisition, yet the way learners interact among themselves is different from the way learners and native speakers interact.
- **(On the spot) Information processing:** the speakers need to be able to respond to others' talk by processing the information in mind rapidly, though it is culture specific the time speaker gets information, they have to reply immediately. From Harmer's point of view; the ability to wage oral communication is necessary that the participant possesses knowledge of language features and the ability to process information and language on the spot.

1.2.3. Characteristics of speaking performance

Many language researchers regard the speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. They define fluency as the ability to converse with others much more than the capacity to read and write. They consider speaking as most important skill they can acquire, and they evaluate their progress in terms of accomplishment in the spoken communication.

Fluency and accuracy dichotomy is one of the concepts which usually come to mind first when speaking of teaching speaking skills. These criteria are also based upon in the assessment of the oral skills. Although Richards and Rodgers (2001:157) mention that "*fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context*". This means that learners must be taught fluency and accuracy during classroom activities as it is essential for them to learn how to speak well on professional issues in English.

1.2.3.1. Fluency

Hughes (2002:14) defines fluency as “*the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate way without too much hesitation, otherwise the communication will breakdown because listeners will lose their interest*”. This definition is interesting because it clearly shows that fluency and accuracy are closely knit together. Technically speaking, the term fluency is a hyponym because to be fluent means not only to produce utterances smoothly and rapidly but also accurately. Hedge Tricia (2000:54) adds: “*The term fluency relates to 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 slowness, or undue hesitation.*”

Many of foreign language speakers think of fluency as the ability to speak fast, that is why they start speaking rapidly without pauses. On the subject of appropriate placement of pauses Thornbury (2005:07) says that “*natural sounding pauses are those that occur at the intersection of clauses, or after groups of words that form a meaningful unit. Unnatural pauses on the other hand, occur midway between related groups of words*”. However, fluency is reflected mainly in two aspects: speed of delivery and regularity, which means a natural amount and distribution of pauses (Bygate, 2009).

1.2.3.2. Accuracy

Even though it has been said that fluency and accuracy are closely linked together for the purposes of language. Richards (1992) define accuracy as the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences. This is not to exclude one of the two concepts from teaching but rather to point out what the main purpose of the activity is .i.e., to concentrate mainly on using language accurately entails using a broader range of skills and helps learners train strategic competence. Hedge (2000:61) makes the important point that: “*the communicative approach somehow excuses teachers and learners from a consideration of how to develop high levels of accuracy in the use of*

grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.” The advantage of controlled accuracy-focused activities is that they can help learners use language which they are not ready to use yet by themselves and that gradually transfer passive knowledge into their active use. When conducting accuracy focused task, it is important that learners are made aware that a particular activity is accuracy focused. Otherwise a task can easily miss its aim. If learners do not strive for accuracy but rather treat accuracy-focused tasks as fluency practice, their language skills will hardly develop further. This is mainly because accuracy focused tasks are designed to practice language in very limited way.

In teaching the speaking skill, Burkat (1998) mentions that learners should focus on a number of things, mainly the grammatical structure, vocabulary and pronunciation.

➤ **Grammar:** is the system of language in which the principles of that language are organised. It is generally known that a sentence needs at least a subject and a verb which can often be followed by an object, complement or by an adverbial. It is known that questions are often formed by inverting the order of subject and verb or bringing an operator for this function (Harmer, 2001). However, the grammar of speech has its own constructional principles; it is organised differently from writing. Thornbury (2005) lists the following features of spoken grammar:

- Frequent non-clausal units (e.g.: Mmm, No, uh, huh, yeah);
- A variety of tags not found in written style such as questions tags;
- Interjections (e.g.: ah, oh, wow...);
- Hesitators (e.g.: umm, emm);
- Condensed questions (e.g. more milk? Any luck?);
- Response forms (e.g. sure!) to acknowledge and request;
- Fixed polite speech formulate (e.g. happy birthday! Congratulations);
- Direct speech favoured.

Henceforth, grammar helps people to convey messages and express their emotions, feelings and ideas effectively and appropriately. Nunan (1989), citing support from Littlewood (1981) states that “*grammar is an essential resource in*

using language communicatively". This means that grammar is very important for communication and understanding. Thus accuracy of grammar adds meanings that are not easily inferable from the immediate context. It enables learners to use language accurately to describe the world in terms of how, when and where things happen. It also facilitates the way of interaction with other people and makes speakers' meaning clear.

➤ **Vocabulary:** accuracy of vocabulary is stressed and popularized by the writer Lewis (1993) based on the assertion that *"language consists not of traditional grammar and vocabulary but often of multi-word prefabricated chunks"*. In this context, accurate vocabulary can be triggered by choosing perfect words that have correct meaning. Teachers who believe that accurate vocabulary is a priority as long as information is successfully communicated or understood. Partin (2009) points out that *"the vocabulary task facing a learner of English is partly determined by the nature of vocabulary in general and by the particular nature of English"*.

Despite the fact that students try to express what they want to say they lack the appropriate vocabulary, and they sometimes use words incorrectly like in the case of synonyms which do not carry the same meaning in all contexts. Students then have to be able to use words and expressions accurately. According to Harmer (2001) the knowledge of word classes also allows speakers to perform well from utterances. Hence, teachers have to help their students develop their knowledge by providing original practice. They instruct them by giving practical information and vocabulary as well as developing the ability to produce correct grammatical forms and logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific context .i.e., to produce accurate words and phrases acceptable and intelligible. Harmer (2001) also adds: *"accuracy involves the correct use of vocabulary grammar and pronunciation"*. Hence the following section will deal with pronunciation.

➤ **Pronunciation:** pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sounds and sound features, but can also improve their speaking immeasurably. The degree to which students acquire perfect pronunciation seems to depend very much on their attitude to how they speak and how well they hear. As far

as the areas of pronunciation which students need to concentrate on during an accurate production stage, they are word and phrase / sentence stress and intonation to identify the different patterns of rising and falling tones. In addition to connected speech and correspondence between sounds and spelling (Harmer, 2001). 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”***.

Yet good speaking is not effortless and effective speaker is a skill which can be learned by practising (Stuart, 1989) before speaking students should plan and prepare their talks, practise and rehearse, learn to cope with nerves, control their body language, volume of the voice, pitch and speed of the speech.

1.3. The Importance of Speaking

Language is one of the means of communication that is used between people in order to share information among them. In his book *Teaching and Researching Speaking*, Hughes (2002) claimed that the status of speech in the language teaching process has changed in the beginning and the end of the nineteenth century. Despite its importance and its fragility, speaking was until recently largely ignored in schools and universities, for reasons such as emphasis on grammar and culture and unfavourable teachers-student ratios. Speaking was also absent from testing because of the difficulty in evaluating it objectively and the time it takes to conduct speaking tests. In the traditional approaches of language learning and teaching, the speaking skill was neglected in many classrooms where the emphasis was mainly on reading and writing.

In the communicative approach, speaking was given more importance since oral communication involves speech where learners are expected to interact verbally with other people. It is worth pointing out at this level that the speaking skill helps students receive a large amount of the new vocabulary through oral activities. When students are attempting to use what they know in real communication; alternatively they encounter the new words in interesting communicative practice. In this context, Freeman (1981) says ***“the necessary practice is thought to be most successful when***

students are engaged in the meaningful exchange of information rather than repeating a teacher's model".

The importance of speaking is more revealed with the integration of other language skills. For instance, speaking can help students to develop their vocabulary and grammar and then improving their writing skills with speaking, learners can express their personal feelings, opinions or thoughts clearly and confidently in conferences discussions and meetings. According to Gillis (2011) the ability to speak skilfully provides the speaker a variety of benefits .i.e., the capacity to stand out in front of the public and speak effectively, the capacity to inform, direct and persuade the audience and this contribute to the development of their relationship.

As far as the target language learning is concerned, learners are influenced by environment cues, Luoma (2004:01) argues that "*speaking in foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop*". Thus, teachers have to facilitate rather than impede the students' progress in communication. Learners must be given the best opportunities to practice.

1.4. Speaking Skill Activities

One of the primary goals of the speaking skill development is to teach learners how to think and present thoughts as well as their ideas to others. Thus, speaking can greatly reduce various psychological barriers when interacting with others. Freeman (1987) states that: "*it appears that the goal of many language teachers is to prepare their students to communicate in English*". This means that speaking is developed by practising speaking activities and the teacher is the leader and the responsible to urge the students to evaluate their own style and the ability to speak fluently. In order to achieve this goal, the different activities that teachers use in classrooms are to make students active, creative and pushing them positively to be able to communicate effectively.

Harmer (2001) suggests the following activities that will be discussed in detail:

- **Role Play:** the teacher divides the students into different groups. In each group two students are selected for two different roles. Rest of the students watch their performance and listen to their dialect. Later on spectator students give them their feedback. This helps not only their interpersonal relations but they also learn to work together. When the learners are given feedback by their co-learners, they do not lose confidence rather they may be assigned roles from different professions, viz, doctor-patient, teacher-student, parent-teacher, etc... Partin (2009) describes role play as: *“The role play can arouse interest in a topic, as well as encourage students to empathize with differing viewpoints. Because students become totally involved in their roles”* Thus, role play makes students aware that they can use a language to say what they want and encourages them to speak adapting given information.

- **Information Gap Activity:** it is a type of speaking task that is used where two speakers have different parts of information that make a whole image when relating them one part to another. This activity requires the students’ ability to fill gaps when there is a missing of information and also the students’ vocabulary and information in order to exchange it with other students, because in most foreign language classes, the teacher uses this kind of activities aiming at sharing information between students during classroom oral course (Harmer, 1998, p.88).

- **Discussions:** this activity fosters critical thinking and quick decision making and students learn how to express and justify themselves in polite ways while disagreeing with others. Discussions, therefore, give learners the opportunity to share their views and are useful means of training pragmatic and strategic competence and fluency in general. To investigate a productive debate, it is desirable to allow learners enough thinking time to generate their thoughts. This can be done through brainstorming in pairs. Learners discuss their ideas and become more confident about what they have to say while learners participate in debates in their groups; a teacher monitors their discussions and provides further stimuli where necessary. During a feedback stage, learners can report the main points of their discussion to the class and receive feedback from their teacher. It is appropriate for teachers to include a short segment, in which learners errors are treated. It is also advisable to pre-teach useful language, especially functions, communication strategies and pragmatics.

Discussions are stimulating if they concern topics or issues that interest learners or challenge them. Topics which are quite likely to spur debates more than anything else concern especially controversial and current issues. Littlewood (1981:47) states that: *“it (discussion) provides learners with opportunities to express their own personality and experience through the foreign language”*. This means that discussion is regarded as real language experiences with the students’ use of their abilities in order to deal with such speaking activity.

- **Interviews:** many lessons can be enriched with the use of interviews, which are best used as a homework assignment. Interviews can be motivating especially if they involve personal experience or opinion sharing, a fact which means that learners engage in interactions that interest them. Interviews can have a simple outline such as providing learners with questions they can choose-from to interview others in pairs, group, or an open class setting. They can also involve learners in taking notes of learners’ answers in creative way .e.g., completing a map of one’s life path or feeling in questionnaire which learners discuss together. Learners can also conduct interviews on selected topics asking various people questions which they prepare themselves.

Although, interviews based on questions may seem an activity which is easy to prepare, the truth that it is not easy to collect questions that are stimulating enough. If an interview is not to end up in a rudimentary question-answer routine, teachers may want to look for questions that will instigate longer turns, encourage learners to ask follow-up questions and promote further discussion. Therefore, teachers should be particularly selective in their choice of questions whatever resources they use. Interviews can be followed by a short feedback activity where learners present something interesting they have learned or provide more information about each other to the class.

- **Communication Games:** teachers design such games to encourage and involve the students in a verbal interaction. According to Bygate (1987) such activities include first “Describe and Draw” in which one student describes a given picture and the other one draws it. Second, “Describe and Arrange” one student describes a particular

structure using oral language and the other reconstructs it without seeing the original one. Third, “find the difference” two students have two similar pictures but with some differences, they must extract these differences through describing their pictures .i.e., without seeing each others’ pictures. O’Malley and Pierce (1996) call these activities “information gap activities” they define them as *“the ability of one person to give information to another. An information gap is an activity where one student with information that is kept from a partner”*

- **Dramatization:** in dramatization students’ act out a skill or situation before the class, with or without scripts. A dramatization is a mini-play; the roles are much more defined than in a simple role play. Students receive instructions as to the role they are to demonstrate and suggestions as to the behaviour and techniques to include. Students will usually rehearse the dramatization before presenting it to the whole class. The teacher, therefore, strives to minimize participants’ potential embarrassment by matching the roles to the students’ personality as much as possible, and by creating a safe atmosphere to make participants feel at ease (Partin, 2009).

- **Prepared Talk:** it is one of the most popular activities used in classrooms to enhance EFL students’ speaking skill. It is an activity where students make presentations on a topic of their own choice in condition they should not learn it by heart, but speak freely from notes (Harmer, 2001).

- **Dialogue:** this activity helps students practise speech, pronunciation, intonation and stress. Dialogue also increases own students’ vocabulary. It is two side communications, it means that they have not to express something but they should understand what other people said.

- **Reading:** students must choose some reading materials that they enjoy and practice their skills on those readings loudly, they also have to precise their purpose before reading either for pleasure or to obtain special information. This activity enhances students to become fluent speakers of the target language by the teachers support through suggesting references to them and ask them to summarize what have read.

1.5. Speaking Strategies

A number of scholars note that the use of communication strategies enables speakers (or language learners in the context of foreign language acquisition) to compensate for language deficiencies. This tradition of saying communicative strategies in terms of failure, that is as a compensatory means used to repair broken language, has been particularly strong as Cook (2009) points out. Communication strategies can be viewed from another perspective, as a positive tool that helps listeners to negotiate meaning. Hesitations, word repetition and repairs are therefore not perceived as communication breakdowns but as an effective tool enabling interlocutors deal with challenging conditions which oral exchanges bring. This tool also helps the interlocutors to understand the meaning of utterances that might otherwise be misinterpreted or not understood at all. Moreover, it also helps them express thoughts they would otherwise not be able to convey.

Bygate (1987) classifies two main types of communicative strategies. First, achievement strategies which include: Guessing Strategies, Paraphrase Strategies and Cooperative Strategies. Second, Reduction Strategies which involve: Avoidance Strategies.

➤ Achievement Strategies

In which students try to look for substituting words in order to fill their language gap or missing words. Such strategies may be used to transmit the message to the listener in real meaning without changing it. This sort of strategies includes the following:

- **Guessing Strategies**

There exist many types of guessing strategies that are used by the speaker particularly in oral expression to replace some words that he ignore, and which he thinks his listeners will understand and recognize. Hence, the speaker may foreignize a word from his mother tongue and pronounce it as it sounds in the foreign language. For instance, a French speaker talks in English may use the word “manoeuvre” as it is an English word, to succeed in transmitting his speech to an English listener. The

speaker may also borrow a word from his mother tongue and say it as it is, without any change, and which the listener will understand its meaning, for instance, an English speaker saying: “il ya deux candles sur la cheminée”. Coining may also be one of the guessing strategies; the speaker use to invent a word in the target language, depending on his knowledge of the language, such as using “air ball” instead of “balloon”, “vegetarianist” for “vegetarian”.

- **Paraphrase Strategies**

It is designed to alternate a term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible, for example, a “ship” for “sailboat”. The speaker may also explain a word by describing or exemplifying the target object of action in order to convey his intended message; this is also called circumlocution, for instance, the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew.

- **Co-operative Strategies**

Also known as appeal for assistance which is used when the speaker asks for aid from the interlocutor either directly, for example, what do you call...? Or indirectly, for example, through rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzles expression. As he may asks for providing a necessary grammatical structure or in solving a problem.

- **Reduction Strategies**

Learners make their messages smaller in length or leave what they want to say and substitute their chosen messages by other ones where they can speak successfully and without difficulty.

- **Avoidance Strategies**

The learners can exploit these strategies, by avoiding complications or topic areas that pose language difficulties related with students’ lack of vocabulary, or message abandonment by leaving a message unfinished because of the difficult grammatical structures, namely saying some sounds in English like “th”, “tr” or repeated “r” and other like to avoid words whose gender is unknown or unsure for them.

1.6. The Use of Mother Tongue

The process of teaching a foreign language, the teacher’s use of the mother tongue can influence the learner’s acquisition of the target language. Throughout the

history of English language teaching and foreign language learning, the role of mother tongue has been an important issue. The various views are reflections on the methodological changes in English language teaching, which have in such way brought different properties on the role of mother tongue. Nunan and Lamb (1996) note down that it is almost impossible to know how, when and how frequently to use students' first language. However, agree that the first language use to give brief explanations of grammar and lexis, as well as for explaining procedures and routines, can greatly facilitate the management of learning.

Harmer (2001) proposes a number of actions to avoid students using their mother tongue; first of all, the teacher needs to set clear guidelines when mother tongue is allowed and when it is not, secondly, he is supposed to choose appropriate task for the level of their students to promote the use of the target language, particularly with challenging activities. It is also advisable to create an English atmosphere, such as giving instruction that encourage students using the target language. According to Baker and Westrup (2003:12) "*barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother to a foreign language.*" Therefore, the learners will not be able to use the foreign language correctly if they keep on being influenced by the use of their mother tongue.

1.7 Conclusion

The process of learning occurs as a result of four language skills that are divided into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Speaking has been defined by many authors as a complex process that is used by the students to express themselves. This chapter as already mentioned was an attempt to give an idea about speaking skill, its elements, its characteristics and its importance. Another point which has been discussed is how speaking is practised, and strategies for improving this productive. This chapter also suggest that a systematic use of target language and a minimal use of mother tongue in English language classroom may provide learners with explicit knowledge of the target language systems.

Chapter Two

Situation Analysis and Research Design

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2.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the empirical phase of this extended essay. It gives an overall description of the teaching learning situation of English at different levels, in an attempt to describe EFL situation in Algeria. It also gives details about the participants in this study and presents the research instruments used in this investigation, namely interview with teachers and questionnaire with students.

2.2. ELT Situation in Algeria

The Algerian linguistic background is very rich and complex too. It makes of Algeria a particular Arab nation with a number of languages taught and used either in academic or non-academic contexts as described by Ephraim and Mala Tabory:

The Algerian situation is complex as it is a crossroad of tensions between French language, classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic. The lessons from the Algerian situation may be usefully applied to analogous situations by states planning their linguistic, educational and cultural policies.

Ephraim and Mala Tabory (1987:63-79)

Historical accounts of language teaching profession tend, therefore, to describe a succession of a number of educational systems in Algeria. The Algerian educational system has witnessed three phases, namely the colonial phase from 1830 to 1960. Hence the French language has been widely used among Algerians; they were obliged to learn French to depersonalize them and to eradicate the Arabic. Yet, Qu'ran was an effective force to resist against the attempt of the colonial regime. However this situation began to change after the arabization process undertaken by the Algerian government to officialise Arabic from the late 1960s to the late 1990s. Ben Rabah (2002:73) states: "*all subjects were taught in Arabic and there was a decrease in the amount of time for teaching French. This policy of course favoured the national integrity and unity and religion*". A weak performance of a big number of Algerian

learners at university in first and second foreign languages has been the result of the Arabization process as described by Entelis (1987): *“too many young people may be emerging from secondary schools with an incomplete command of both literary Arabic and functional French”*.

In 2002, French language was reintroduced by the national education reform as first foreign language and some subjects, sciences and mathematics were partly taught in French (Lakhal-Ayat, 2008). Though French was considered as the first foreign language, Tamazight was officially recognized as a national language and inserted in the Algerian educational system on February 2002 by president Bouteflika.

Algeria, then, has opened communication to more worldwide contact in the early 2000s. The first years of the twentieth century saw little of any development of a field of language pedagogy. Language teachers have witnessed the birth of a disciplined approach to second and foreign language learning and teaching; methodological framework were the subject of applied linguistic research on the nature of language learning and the successful acquisition of language in classrooms.

Dozens of respected periodicals and hundreds of textbooks and anthologies currently offer ample evidence about how to successfully teach foreign languages and help teachers to effectively accomplish communicative objectives, proficiency levels, skills and contexts of language learners around the globe. It is obvious that worldwide changes resulting from the globalization have imposed educational reforms as a major condition for human development. These educational reforms concern also foreign language teaching and learning. English has become the global language: a language which is widely adopted for international communication and other fields such as economy, culture, information exchange, travel... etc. Thus, within the Algerian educational system, the English language is taught as a second foreign language at middle and secondary school and at higher educational institutions.

In fact, the English curriculum today is very different from that of sixties (the grammar translation method), the seventies (the structural approach), the eighties (the communicative approach) and finally the competency-based approach (CBA for short) with the advent of the new millennium and more precisely in 2003. More recently with the adaptation of the CBA, other Algerian textbooks have been designed such as

spotlight on English 1, 2 and 3, *on the move* for EFL in middle school, and in parallel *At the crossroads, getting through and new prospects* in secondary education. Technology has always been present in the teaching of foreign languages since the advent of language laboratory that includes things like information and communication technologies. The Algerian pre-university educational system is in general composed of three main levels: the primary, the middle and the secondary school. In the primary school the Algerian learners study the literary Arabic for five years and French as first foreign language starting from the third year. While they learned English at the first year of middle school and continues until the third year of secondary school with different coefficient.

The higher education system of Algeria started introducing the LMD reform in 2004/2005; it is spreading nowadays everywhere. The LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorate) designed three main grades, viz, Licence is granted after three years of study, Master's degree is conferred after two years of study and the doctorate is conferred after the completion of research for at least three years and defending a thesis.

2.3. The Educational Context

Abou Bakr Belkaid University in Tlemcen city is situated in the extreme north west of Algeria on the borders of Morocco, this university was established by the late seventies. Hence, the department of foreign languages was found not less than 20 years ago. It witnessed many changes in 1995; foreign languages (French and English) were related sections which both form the department of foreign languages. This latter was itself part of institute of letters and human and social sciences.

In 2010, the faculty of letters and human and social sciences was separated into two sub-faculties, namely the faculty of human and social sciences and the faculty of letters and languages where the department of foreign languages belongs. The department of foreign languages consists of two departments: the department of English which is divided into two sections; English and translation as well as French department which involves French and Spanish. LMD system is the one used to teach in the English section which stands for (Licence, Master, and Doctorate) students who have their Licence degree choose to continue either in language studies or literature

and civilization. They are supposed to attend teacher training session which ended by pedagogical training reports. The former students intend to be teachers of the English language for all levels (beginning, intermediate and advanced) and even part time university teacher. Several modules are enrolled in the studies during the five years. The course programme includes Grammar, Written production, Oral production, Phonetics/Phonology, linguistics and base language courses on British and American civilization and literature. The programme also includes courses on principles of language teaching methodology (TEFL), Discourse comprehension, and Psycholinguistics and Sociolinguistics modules. As far as Oral expressions sessions is taught two times per week (three hours) for first and second years students.

The foreign languages department has language laboratories that contain computers with no internet, a cyber space, a data show and an over head projector ...etc. in an addition to two shared libraries used by students; the first is the faculty's library, which is for all of the French, English, Spanish and translation sections. The second is the central library, which is for all the university. Therefore, students can consult books only on a designed day of the week.

2.4. Research Design

This extended essay is an exploratory case study dealing with first year LMD EFL students at the Department of English. It will collect qualitative and quantitative data from different sources relying on a set of research instruments: questionnaire for learners and a structured interview for teachers, in order to gather the data that enable to provide the glue that holds the research project together that will more likely advance knowledge and understanding in this topic and gain a lot of valuable information.

2.4.1. The Sample Population

This study involves thirty students who responded to the questionnaire, they were chosen among the total number of the first year LMD students' population (three hundred and ninety) at the English Department, the participants were assured that the

data collected would only be used for the sole purpose of the study. In addition to eight teachers of TPO who responded to structured interview. The selection of such sample was based on the consideration that the teachers of TPO will benefit the researchers more than other teachers since they teach students how to develop the oral skills which is our concerns. It is devoted to describe the teachers and learners' profile in terms of their teaching-learning experience and gender.

2.4.1.1. Teachers' Profile

The informants are eight teachers of oral expression (TPO) in the English Department, University of Tlemcen. They are full time teachers and all of them are specialized in TEFL. Their experience varies from five to fifteen years.

2.4.1.2. Learners' Profile

This case study is concerned with first year LMD EFL students studying English as foreign language at the University of Tlemcen. Thirty of them were randomly chosen to answer the questionnaire. All of them are baccalaureate holders from different streams who have learnt the English language since the first year in the middle school; this makes a sum of seven years before entering the university. At this level their educational background comprises thirteen years of Arabic as their mother tongue, ten years of French as their first foreign language and seven years of English as their second foreign language.

2.4.2. Research Instruments

Questionnaires and structured interviews were used in this study to investigate the research questions. The former was addressed to first year LMD EFL students and the latter to their oral expression teachers during academic year 2014/2015.

2.4.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire: the questionnaire is a tool of data collection which is thought to give the researcher the advantage to collect a large amount of diverse data within a short period of time and with less energy. Thus, and for our purposes three types of questions were used:

- **Closed questions:** they request the informants to choose one of the proposed possibilities without commenting. For example:

According to you what is the most difficult skill to learn in EFL?

-Listening -speaking -reading -writing

- **Mixed questions:** they ask the informants to opt for one of the proposed possibilities then justify the answer. For example:

Do you enjoy speaking?

-Yes -no -why?

- **Open questions:** they request the informants to express freely his/her point of view. For example:

What are the strategies that you use to improve your speaking skill?

2.4.2.2. Description of the Interview: the interview serves as an instrument for eliciting qualitative and quantitative data on the informants' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and interests on a specific topic.

The difference between interview and questionnaire is basically the oral form. There are three types of interview, namely the structured in which the researcher prepares a list of questions and asks them, then semi-structured, where the researchers prepares a list of questions and during the interview, the interviewer may probably ask for more information depending on questions if it was structured, he directly move to the following question but in this case he may add, and finally the unstructured interview, the researcher ask a question and let the participant answering and interruption are in minimum.

In the present research work, structured interview was chosen for exploring teacher's methodology in teaching the speaking skill and strive to improve students' speaking competence and pronunciation. Only two types of questions where used:

- **Closed-ended question:** for example do you speak only English in class?

- **Open-ended question:** for example which strategies do you use to develop the speaking skill for first year EFL students?

2.4.2.3. The Teachers' Interview

The purpose of this interview is to know the teachers' opinion on their students' level in speaking and the objectives they tend to reach when teaching oral expression as well as to have an idea about the techniques used to teach this skill in EFL classes, yet to know the solutions teachers suggest to improve learners speaking performance. Eight teachers were requested to answer nine questions:

(The first two direct questions cover the teacher's profile).

Question (1): it attempts to know whether teachers speak only English in class.

Question (2): it inquires about the time devoted to teach speaking.

Question (3): it asks to know if all the students participate in class.

Question (4): it is about the teachers' assessment of students' speaking level.

Question (5): it deals with the activities that teachers used to teach the speaking skill.

Question (6): it looks for whether teachers should focus on fluency or accuracy.

Question (7): it asks about the objectives teachers tend to reach when teaching the speaking skill.

Question (8): it tries to find out teachers' strategies to develop the speaking skill for first EFL students.

Question (9): it deals with some of teachers' suggestions to improve their learners' speaking performance.

2.4.2.4. The Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to thirty students. The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out students' opinion on speaking skill and to discover the different ways that enhance their speaking ability. The questionnaire consists of ten questions:

(The first direct questions cover the learners' profile).

Question (1) it tries to know the students' most difficult skill to learn in EFL.

Question (2) it deals with learners' assessment of their speaking level.

Question (3 and 4) they try to find out students' attendance for oral production sessions and how do they evaluate their participation in class.

Question (5) it attempts to reveal kinds of activities students used to practise their speaking skill outside the classroom.

Question (6) and (7) they ask students if they enjoy speaking and whether they use English language outside the classroom.

Question (8) it aims at knowing if students speak English in their class all times.

Question (9) it inquires about the strategies students use to improve their speaking skill.

Question (10) it invites students to propose some suggestions to their teachers to help them develop their speaking skill.

2.5. Conclusion

The current chapter was an attempt to describe ELT situation in Algeria. It was concerned with the status of English language in the educational system of Algeria. Additionally, the chapter provided an overview of the research design and methodology followed to collect data and evidence that support the hypothesis formulated in this work and then answer the research questions in the following chapter.

Chapter Three
Data Analysis and Interpretation

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3.1. Introduction

After collecting data from different sources through the use of a set of research instruments including a questionnaire for students and an interview with teachers. The present chapter is devoted to the procedures of data analysis, and the interpretation of the results gathered from each instrument.

3.2. Data Analysis

This section is concerned with the analysis of data results from teachers' interview and learners' questionnaire.

3.2.1. Analysis of Teachers' Interview

Each question is to be examined separately.

Q1: Do you speak only English in class?

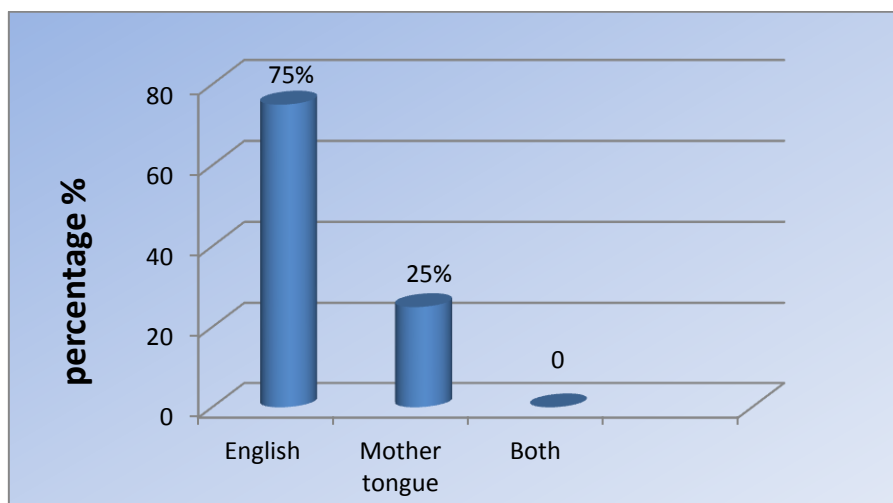


Figure3.1 The use of the target language or the mother tongue.

The results recorded in the graph show that seventy five % of teachers assert that use only English in the class. Whereas, twenty five % of the teachers use sometimes Arabic (mother tongue especially when the students do not understand). However no one of the teachers use both languages at the same time to explain the lesson in the class.

Q2: Do you think that time devoted to teach the speaking is sufficient?

- a. Yes
- b. No

According to the results, the common shared answer between seventy five % of teachers is that two years and only three hours a week are not sufficient and more time would be needed for practicing speaking. However twenty five % see that this amount is sufficient.

Q2	Yes	No
Percentages %	25%	75%

Table3.2 The time devoted to oral expression.

Q3: Do all of your students participate in the class?

Regarding teachers' answers, they state that a great number of learners eighty five % participate in class.

Q4: How do you evaluate your students' level in speaking?

All teachers reveal that some learners ten % are really fluent with high level; seventy five % of them are medium. While few of them fifteen % are too passive (slow learners) and it depends on the group.

Q5: What kind of activities do you use to teach speaking skill?

A clear majority of teachers, claim that all the sessions are based on listening and speaking activities, by the use of visual aids (language laboratory) such as, listening to native speakers and writing the full text, taking notes, role plays debating, oral presentation by the use of various topics of discussion and video tapes.

Q6: What should teachers focus on?

- a. Fluency?
- b. Accuracy?

Why?

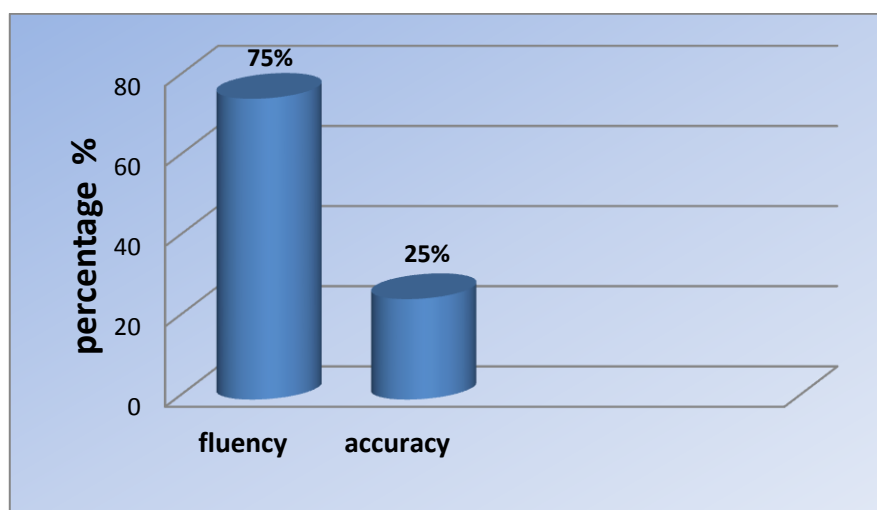


Figure3.3 What do you think teachers should focus on?

A high percentage of teachers seventy five % believe that fluency is more important than accuracy, as teachers justified that they cannot interrupt learners every now and then for not being precise, what really matters is that the message is conveyed and that students have the ability to express their ideas in different ways. Whereas the remaining teachers twenty five % say that both of them are important is speaking since they go hand in hand and one cannot separate from another.

Q7: What are the objectives that you tend to reach when teaching speaking skill?

The teachers' responses show that the first objective for first year EFL students is to make them speak in English in order to express themselves. If learners have quite a good command of vocabulary, then they will not have any difficulty to communicate. The second objective is to enrich their vocabularies, then starting from second year to pay attention to correctness, fluency and to focus on every aspects of the speaking skill by teaching those phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions and idioms with some grammar point from time to time.

Q8: Which strategies do you use to develop the speaking skill for first year EFL students?

Among the strategies used by the most of teachers are: language laboratory in order to push students talk in the class, varied activities, and range from listening and

repeating the whole conversation to make them feel more confident then introducing other activities that require a hot situation for discussion and motivating them to read as well (extensive reading). Other teachers use debates and discussions (questions and response) also writing their own dialogues.

Q9: What do you suggest to learners to improve their speaking performance?

Teachers provide a variety of suggestions:

- Reading a lot;
- Listening to native speakers;
- Be good listeners first then engage vocabulary in discussions with English-speaking persons;
- A lot of practice outside and inside the classroom;
- Using social network;
- Listening to music and watching movies in English, (BBC news and CNN).
- Attending lectures regularly;
- Doing a lot of efforts when preparing an oral presentation and not being afraid to talk.

3.2.2. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire aims at clarifying students' opinion on speaking skill. It was addressed to thirty first year EFL learners at the University of Tlemcen. Each question will be analysed and discussed separately.

Q1: According to you what is the most difficult skill to learn in EFL?

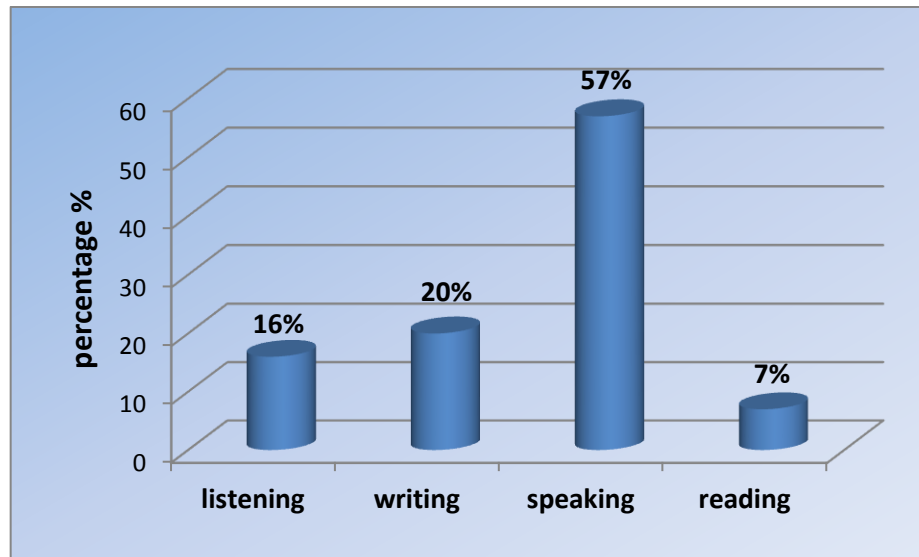


Figure3.4 Students' most difficult skill.

As it is shown above the majority of students fifty seven % consider speaking as the most difficult skill to learn in English, then writing comes in the second position twenty % followed by listening sixteen % and reading seven %.

Q2. How do you assess your level in speaking?

This question asks learners to assess their speaking performance, most of the informants sixty six % states that their speaking performance is average. Twenty % of informants admit that they are weak at speaking but only thirteen % claim that they are good. Indeed, this result is widely similar to what teachers have said

level	Number of students	Percentage
Average	20	66.66%
weak	6	20%
good	4	13.33%
Total number	30	100%

Table3.5 Learners' proficiency level in speaking.

Q3: How often do you attend your oral production sessions?

As the table indicates a great majority of the student seventy % always attend oral production sessions, twenty six % of students sometimes attend and three % of them rarely attend regularly only their speaking lessons

Option	Number of students	Percentage
Always	21	70%
Sometimes	8	26.66%
Rarely	1	3.33%
Never	0	0
Total numbers	30	100%

Table3.6 Students' frequency of attending oral production sessions.

Q4: How do you evaluate your participation in class? Why?

The results showed that thirteen % of students consider their participation in class as very high. More than half sixty % state that their participation in class is average, sixteen % evaluate their participation as being low. While the remaining six % of students do not speak at all. Students explained that their participation in class is high because they are motivated by their teachers and always ready to talk and enjoy oral expression sessions. While the students whose participation is average either they prefer listening to their classmates' responses or they do not have enough chances to speak. Concerning the low participation of students as they state "for not being comfortable or having a difficult with some modules" and the rest of the respondents cannot speak at all because they lack the appropriate vocabulary to express their thoughts.

Option	High	Average	Low	Not talkative
Number of Students	4	18	6	2
Percentages %	13.33%	60%	16.66%	6.66%

Table3.7 Students' evaluation of their participation in class.

Q5: According to you what kind of activity do you use to practise your speaking skill outside the classroom?

One can notice from the results shown that thirty six % of students prefer reading aloud while practising their speaking skill outside the classroom, whereas thirty % used role play in conversations as activity when speaking English outside the classroom. On the other hand, thirty three % of students speak English outside the classroom through discussions.

Option	Number of students	Percentage %
Reading aloud	11	33.66%
Role play in conversation	9	30%
Prepared talk	0	00%
Communication games	0	00%
interviews	0	00%
discussions	10	33.33%
Total number	30	100%

Table3.8 Total activities that students practice outside the classroom.

Q6: Do you enjoy speaking? Why?

Ninety three % of the informants answer positively (yes) while six % of them show negative attitude (no) towards speaking. This means that a high percentage of students are interested in speaking and show their concern for it. Students give the following reasons for enjoying speaking:

- Improve pronunciation and for the sake of new vocabulary;

- Learn from others and reach a high level in studies;
- Develop their self-confidence;
- The only two students who were negative in their answers argue that they do not have enough time and vocabulary to speak in English.

Q7: Do you use English language outside the classroom?

This question reveals that seventy six % of students use English outside the classroom for different purposes, mainly with their classmates. However, the others twenty three % of them answer negatively as far as using English outside the classroom.

Q8: Do you speak English in your class all the time?

- Yes.
- No.

More than half of students seventy % speak English in the class all times. However, the others thirty % do not use English.

Q9: What are the strategies that you use to improve your speaking skill?

The strategies given by students are summarized in the following points:

- Using social network to chat with native speakers;
- Debates and discussions among a group of students;
- Listening to music, news, watching movies and documentaries as well;
- Reading a lot to enrich vocabulary.

Q10: What would you suggest to your teachers to help you develop your speaking skill?

The suggestions provide by students turn around the same idea which is to be in contact with foreigners and native speakers; to take parts in debates and conversations and giving more speaking assignments. Few students assert that the teachers should present a variety of activities with more explanations and support.

3.3. Data Interpretation

Both learners' questionnaire and teachers' interview were used as research instruments in this work in an attempt to investigate the way first year EFL students improve their speaking performance through the activities used by teachers and to see if they use only target language in relation to these speaking activities. It has been noticed that the majority of learners have an average level in speaking performance. It is similar to teachers in which six out of eight represents females' teachers and they have along experience in teaching oral production since they have spent about five to fifteen years.

First of all, one of the things which the research aimed to explore was the way first year EFL students use to improve their speaking skill level. The obtained results from the learners' questionnaire revealed that reading aloud, discussions and role play in conversation are the key successful strategies they based on in the practice of English language. This partly validates the first hypothesis which says that first year EFL students improve their speaking skill through self training in reading aloud and as well. These results were deduced form the answers of the students' questionnaire, the second, fifth, seventh and ninth questions.

Concerning the speaking activities which most of oral expression teachers use to enhance the speaking skill for their students, all teachers state that they focus on role plays, debates and discussions through language laboratories, other teachers focus on oral presentations to foster learners' level of speaking. This may enhance them to speak freely and deal with various topics. Indeed, the data collected from teachers' interview prove that such activities motivate students to develop their speaking performance. Teachers mentioned also other listening activities as songs, videos and BBC news. This information confirms the second hypothesis. Most of teachers and learners agree that they use only target language in relation to speaking activities in order to improve progressively their speaking of English language proficiency. As the main objective of any oral expression teacher is to have positive impact on learners' achievement and their academic success. This data has not totally validated the third hypothesis and students' answers to questions four, six and eight demonstrate exactly the results. Thus, the interpretation of the results obtained from learners' questionnaire

and teachers' interview together with their analysis truly show the manners to improve speaking performance among university students.

3.4. Conclusion

In general, the results of the third chapter which rely on learners' questionnaire and teachers' interview show that extensive reading builds up students' confidence that encourages them to speak fluently and take part in oral activities without fear. Therefore, the results show that the speaking skill is very important in EFL teaching, it also reveal that using appropriate activities and principles can help the teachers to develop the speaking skill of their students through the permanent use of the target language (English language).

Chapter Four
Recommendations and Suggestions

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4.1. Introduction

This chapter puts forward some recommendations to help maintain students' speaking skill and build up learners' awareness of the value of that language skill. It also embodies a remedial work to both teachers and learners by proposing some practical solutions.

4.2. Recommendations

Speaking skill improvement can only be successfully achieved if special circumstances and techniques are used by the teacher and strategies by the learner.

4.2.1. The Psychological Factors and Speaking Ability

Factors such as self-confidence, motivation, anxiety and teacher's attitude and sense of humour may affect students in taking part in speaking activities during the class. These factors, to some extent; hinder them from being able to speak fluently and communicatively in English. It is, therefore, wise that teachers try to regard the following factors:

- **Self-Confidence**

It refers to the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, achieve goals or complete tasks proficiently (Dornyei, 2005). Thus, developing learners' oral communication skills based on self confidence as the most essential factor that determines learners' willingness to participate in oral activities in language classrooms. In other words, it is worth saying that where there is self-confidence there will be good communication .i.e., it is thought that low confident learners usually tend to perform less successfully because they are concerned about being criticized or disapproved when using the language orally. Likewise, as high self-confidence may develop the learners' desire to communicate and help improve language proficiency, it may generate good performance. The correlation between self-confidence and academic achievement is dynamic one; as levels of self confidence raise, academic achievement increases and this has in particular an impact on learners' oral performance.

Oral presentation is an activity introduced to English majors in order to enhance their speaking abilities. Learners describe it as one of the most stressful activities they have ever had, possessing general self-confidence is thought to be helpful to learners. Therefore, teachers need to develop learners confidence capacities within the teaching process, for example, some learners are shy in the beginning of the year but step by step and by the help of their teachers, those learners become motivated and confident in their competences as well as they recognize that they are all gifted in one way or in another. Sociable learners, therefore, are risk takers; they participate in almost all language activities without caring much about making mistakes.

- **Motivation**

All teachers whether at the start of their careers or after some years of teaching, need to be able to try out new activities and techniques. It is important to know the teacher's way used in the classroom environment including motivation which is the heart or the centre of learning. It needs organizations, planning and setting goals. Students, for example, when feeling ambitious for a positive reinforcement push themselves to perform according to previous experience with reward (teacher's praise) when giving a correct answer to win another positive comment (reward). Harmer (2001) defines motivation as "*some kind of drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something*". Hence, motivation is one of the major affective factors in students' success or failure to learn a foreign language. In this vein, the teacher should push his students to be motivated without obstacles and take part in the different classroom activities such as, role plays, discussions, language games and group work. Such activities enhance motivation in the students and help them get rid of their shyness, lower inhibition and anxiety, and encourage them to take risks and higher their self esteem.

In short, motivation is energy of students which come from inside or outside encouraging themselves to do something (harmer, 1991). In fact, motivated students will do everything which supports their performance; they will do the best way to get the best result.

- **Speaking Anxiety**

Speaking plays a vital role in communication process; it helps people express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions to others. Thus, providing students with an effective environment enables language speakers to speak fluently and interact freely with each other without anxiety; being another factor that has a great impact on ones' self confidence in foreign language learning and which can be recognized by a fear of expressing oneself orally. If a students with speaking anxiety experience failure, he or she will rather remain quite than take the risk of failing again. This situation drags them into a silence that becomes more and more difficult to break and create the fact that one feel uncomfortable as for example, in an oral presentation in front of a larger group of people. Philips (1992) reported that highly anxious students are likely to have lower oral performance in contrast to their relaxed counter parts: his study suggests that foreign language anxiety can influence the learners' performance and his attitude toward language learning from many popular classroom activities that tend to focus on having to speak in the target language in front of whole classroom members. This issue can become more prominent and influence deeply learners' fluency and accuracy of the target language.

Consequently, the primary role in reducing speaking anxiety belongs to the teachers who organize, conduct the tasks and evaluate students' performance by making the communication and cooperation during the language lessons more comfortable and season the lessons with friendly, positive and creative atmosphere. In addition to that, teachers are asked to use a variety of interesting presentation modes, this means using songs, films, guest speakers, demonstrations, computers, language games, role plays and so forth (Salvin, 2006).

- **Teacher's Attitude**

Teachers can monitor students' strengths and weaknesses and oversee the student's learning, when they understand how they feel teachers, then, can help them overcome their negative feelings, so that they could form a coherent progressions leading towards greater communicative ability. Basically, the positive social

behaviours teachers show towards their students in the academic settings, encourage their autonomy, raise their engagement and improve their performance (Littlewood, 1981).

Teachers, gradually, can discuss with students the value of language use even if they are not fluent and accurate, and this can be done through opportunities of joining English clubs for instance. As far as classroom activities, the teacher models a variety of roles, each of them is learned by practice over time. He may serve as a resource person and a facilitator who circulates among the groups, manages their work and helps out with any difficulties they encounter in group interaction and the performance of a particular task related to speaking skill. He may also create a highly structured and well organized environment for classroom instruction. In general positive teachers-students relationships provide the foundation for effective instruction and constructive classroom management. In particular, the teacher always tries to praise publically and criticize privately; even when criticizing students' behaviour, the teacher should do so in a style that leaves their dignity intact. If at all possible, he should never cause a student to lose face in front of his or her peers. It achieves nothing positive in the long run. So, knowing linguistic and sociological information about learners is not enough for the teachers; it is his task also to have some analysis about the students' psychological barriers and characteristics (Harmer, 2001).

- **Teacher's Sense of Humour**

The hardest things teachers face in their work is to come to class to do their works as it should be and they find careless in motivated students, who are not interested in the course or in activities they do or even on the teacher's speech because they think that it is just a waste of time or they do not find any importance in all these activities or lessons. However, the use of humour in the form of jokes, riddles and satire is a very useful aid in promoting a positive and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom. It also helps reducing students' anxiety, raising their confidence and making learning digestible. In this respect, Trachtenberg (1980) claims: "*sense of humour is a key element that must be encouraged. The student of English as a*

foreign language is to be himself in an English speaking milieu... that put the student at their ease". Humour serves important functions as to facilitate cooperation and including silent students in a group. It is a powerful tool that can break the ice. Humour recaptures students' attention and anchors their memory, improves achievement and provides comic relief from the serious and tends to make any experience more fun and brings a group closer together. Successful teachers develop a repertoire of stories and anecdotes illustrating various aspects of the subjects they teach. Some of the tales may be naturally amusing or can be made so with a bit of exaggeration, animated gestures or surprising twists. The teacher begins by drawing on funny things that have happened to him. Quotations and proverbs are another planned source of humour; chances are that if a quotation makes the teacher laughs, it will also make his students laugh (Ronald, 2009).

Many psychological studies have proved that the use of humour in classroom produces an increase in positive affect and mood. High seriousness is undoubtedly not a bad element in the class but in language learning class, humour could also play very effective role in the learning of the target language and achieving many different goals.

4.2.2. Teacher's Feedback in Speaking Skill

Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, but this impact can be either positive or negative. A teacher can provide corrective information and a learner can look up the answer to evaluate the correctness of a response. Feedback, thus, is a consequence of a performance. Providing feedback may foster learners awareness and the ability to notice gaps in their inter-language. What makes the issue of providing corrective feedback even more complicated is the fact that it requires a range of quick decisions that a teacher needs to make after having noticed an error in students' speech. Teachers may think that it is better not to correct immediately and frequently their students' errors. However, self correction is extremely important, since it indicates students' active engagement in the process of language learning; this positive attitude makes students feel more comfortable and confident that they will manage to reduce their erroneous forms, assuring that any kind

of errors is the inevitable part of the foreign language learning. This attitude also shows students how to monitor and take responsibility for their own learning (Young, 1991).

Effective teaching not only involves imparting information and understandings to students but also involves assessing and evaluating students understanding of this information. What is more, sufficient quantity of feedback is necessary to guide students to improve their learning practices and opportunities to provide oral feedback can occur with individuals, groups or face to face interaction. Students are able to put their work into context by reviewing other work that may be weaker or stronger than their own and based on how future work could be improved.

In short, teachers should always concentrate on the purpose of the activity which frequently has a considerable impact on the decision whether to correct an error or not and how much of corrective feedback should be provided to students. It should not be forgotten that it is always beneficial to correct students' errors in a positive manner and assure them that due to a wrong forms, the correct ones will be better noticed and remembered in the further processes of learning a language.

4.2.3. Teachers' Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills

Speaking is the primary tool for communicating, thinking and learning in general, and learning a language in particular. To develop speaking skill, all the parameters are responsible for the success or failure and can contribute to a great deal of EFL learners in developing basic interactive skills necessary for their learning process. The teachers should promote oral interaction in their classes using minimal responses, recognizing scripts and using language to talk about language that they can use to help their students to expand their knowledge of the target language and their confidence in using it:

- **Using Minimal Responses**

Teachers always have to look for new ways to encourage students to practise their oral English and speak spontaneously. One way to enhance language learners

who cannot participate successfully in oral presentations is to push them construct a stock of minimal responses that they can use differently in oral interactions. Minimal responses can be idiomatic phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt and responses that are expected from the listener. These responses are beneficial and useful to negotiate the context as necessary to overcome language learning failure.

- **Recognizing Scripts**

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others much more than the ability to read, write or comprehend oral language. Language learners need to recognize spoken exchanges such as greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations and other functions that are related to society and cultural norms. Teachers, therefore, have to make students conscious about using script for different situations when they interact. For instance students start recording themselves using a script that can be grammatically correct and accurate and it is always best to practise reading aloud from these scripts to be sure that they succeed to speak effectively and without barriers to the listener with the target language.

- **Using Language to Talk about a Language**

Foreign language learners are usually observed developing a new language system that incorporate element form the native language; they develop their speaking skill, this is why they receive a large and a wide amount of new vocabulary through their oral activities so when they are attempting to use what they know in communication, they encounter the new works in interesting communication practise for example, when language learners do not understand another speaker, they feel embarrassed or shy to talk, in order to overcome this situation they need to ask for clarification. Thus, teachers have to ask students each time to act using phrases of clarification and comprehension check when misunderstanding occurs by responding in positive way and this strategy will help students manage communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom (<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/speaking/stratspeak.htm>2003).

4.3. Conclusion

The current chapter provides some suggestions and recommendation on the role of the psychological factors in helping foreign language learners to speak freely and spontaneously in general. This chapter also emphasizes on how the teacher's feedback encourages learners improve their levels in speaking the target language in a positive manner through some effective strategies.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

One of the most important skills in language is speaking, since it is such a prominent part of the English language, the teacher is obliged to possess knowledge of how to improve students' proficiencies in an efficient way. For this reason, this research aimed at identifying the main strategies which may foster EFL learners to speak effectively and indicating the role of the EFL teachers in teaching speaking skill in order to help the learners overcome their difficulties.

Therefore, the research was divided into four chapters: the first one dealt with theoretical consideration on speaking skill and the use of mother tongue. In the second chapter the research gave a bird's eye view on ELT situation in Algeria and research methodology. In addition to the situation analysis in the third chapter in which data were collected, analysed then provided the main findings. The research work ended with some suggestions and solutions for teachers and learners' drawbacks in speaking English in the fourth chapter.

Through conducting and designing an exploratory case study and after the analysis of data gathered from different sources using a set of research instruments (a questionnaire for learners and an interview with teachers) the three hypotheses put forward were not totally confirmed. The results revealed that first year EFL students improve their speaking skill through reading aloud, discussions and role play in conversation. The findings also proved that teachers use different activities to develop the speaking skill for their students as debates, discussions and role play. The result showed as well that first year EFL students at Tlemcen University use the target language in relation to previous activities and mother tongue only to give brief explanations. These results partly validate the first and third hypotheses while they totally confirmed the second one.

It is ethical to mention, however, that this research had limitations and that many aspects were neglected because of the researchers' unawareness of such issues as a

General Conclusion

part of teaching English language. One should bear in mind that there are many factors which could contribute to the limitation of data, including the nature of topic, being tackled, the choice of the research method, the instruments, the sample population and the context of the study.

It's worth saying that the findings of the present study might be regarded as beginning of a new research investigation based on the limitations and shortcomings encountered and, therefore, would open window for further research such as self confidence and speaking ability, speaking skill performance, learner's fluency and accuracy.

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Appendix A

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

We are, at present, working on a research paper about speaking skill improvement among university students. This interview is intended to collect data about the topic, we would be grateful if you answer the following questions:

1/ Information about the teacher:

1. Are you full time teacher or a part time teacher?
2. How many years of experience in teaching English do you have?

2/ The teacher's methodology:

1. Do you speak only English in class?
2. Do you think that the time devoted to teach the speaking is sufficient?
3. Do all of your students participate in the class?
4. How do you evaluate your students' level in speaking?
5. What kind of activities do you use to teach the speaking skill?
6. What should teachers focus on: fluency or accuracy? Why?
7. What are the objectives that you tend to reach when teaching speaking skill?
8. Which strategies do you use to develop the speaking skill for first year EFL students?
9. What do you suggest to learners to improve their speaking performance?

Appendix B

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students,

We are second year Master LMD students, Language Studies, in the Department of English. We are preparing a research paper that aims at studying the speaking skill at the University of Tlemcen. You are, therefore, kindly requested to answer the following questions freely or by putting a cross (x) in the appropriate box, whenever necessary.

Sex: Male () Female ()

Age:

How many years have you been studying English?

.....

1. According to you, what is the most difficult skill to learn in EFL?

- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing

(1 for the most difficult, 4 for the least difficult)

2. How do you assess your level in speaking?

Good () Average () Weak ()

3. How often do you attend your oral production sessions?

Always () Sometimes () Rarely ()
Never ()

4. How do you evaluate your participation in class?

High () Average () Low ()
No talkative ()

Why?

.....
.....

Appendix B

5. According to you, what kind of activity do you use to practice your speaking skill outside the classroom?

- Reading aloud ()
- Role play in conversations ()
- Prepared talk ()
- Communication games ()
- Interviews ()
- Discussions ()
- Others?

.....
.....

6. Do you enjoy speaking?

Yes ()

No ()

Why?

.....
.....

7. Do you use English language outside the classroom?

Yes ()

No ()

8. Do you speak English in class all times?

Yes ()

No ()

9. What are the strategies that you use to improve your speaking skill?

.....
.....

10. What would you suggest to your teachers to help you develop your speaking skill?

.....
.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION