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**EFL Teachers' and Learners' Attitudes towards the Role of English  
Speaking Clubs in Improving EFL learners' Oral Proficiency  
The Case of English Speaking Clubs in Jijel and Algiers, Algeria**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of Master in  
didactics of foreign languages

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## **Declaration**

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “EFL Teachers’ and Learners’ Attitudes towards the Role of English Speaking Clubs in Improving EFL Learners’ Oral Proficiency” is our own work and all the sources we have used have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

Signature

Date

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work

To my **mother** and my **father** for their love, support, and prayers

To my dear sister **Merieme** who has always been there for me

To my precious brothers **Oussama, Ayoub, and Zakaria**

To my friends and colleagues who have been by my side.

**Khadidja MOUSSAOUI**

I dedicate this work

To my dear parents who have always stood by me through thick and thin

To my dear sister and brother for being there for me

To my precious friends who are like my second family

To anyone who has supported me throughout this journey

**Yasmine HACINI**

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## **Abstract**

Speaking is considered to be an important skill and one of the major skills that EFL learners need to master. However, it is deemed to be a problematic area in language teaching and learning especially in regards to fluency and accuracy i.e. oral proficiency. The present study attempted to explore EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs (ESCs) in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency. It was thus assumed that joining ESCs would be welcomed by both teachers and learners from the five levels. To test the assumption, this study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Data was collected using an online student questionnaire and a teacher interview. The questionnaire was answered by 42 LMD English language majors who are at the same time members of some Algerian ESCs, namely The Hive, WATI, and an ESC at TEFL Academy. Additionally, a teacher interview was conducted with Speaking Class university teachers at the department of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. The findings showed that regardless of the uncommonness of ESCs, EFL teachers and learners had positive attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs in Improving EFL learners' oral proficiency and they encouraged the establishment of more ESCs in Algeria.

*Key Words:* Oral Proficiency, English Speaking Clubs

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

- 1- ALM. Audio-lingual Method
- 2- CA. Communication Apprehension
- 3- CLT. Communicative Language Teaching
- 4- DM. Direct Method
- 5- ECA. Extracurricular Activity
- 6- EFL. English as a Foreign Language
- 7- ESC. English Speaking Club
- 8- ESL. English as a Second Language
- 9- FL. Foreign Language
- 10- FLA. Foreign Language Acquisition
- 11- GTM. Grammar Translation Method
- 12- IPA. International Phonetic Association
- 13- L1. First Language
- 14- L2. Second Language
- 15- LMD. Licence, Master, Doctorate
- 16- Q. Question
- 17- SL. Second Language
- 18- SLA. Second Language Acquisition
- 19- SLT. Situational Language Teaching
- 20- TL. Target Language

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## **Introduction**

Since English has become widely used as a lingua franca all over the world, studying it has become a necessity. One of the major skills needed to communicate and share meaning is the speaking one; thus, learning speaking has become of major importance. Good speakers of a language, such as English, are usually characterised by how fluent and accurate they are. Learners of SL and FL are usually judged by their ability to speak the language i.e. how good they are at it.

In order to become a good speaker of English, one needs to practice speaking it, and one of the platforms that offer the opportunity to speak English is the classroom. When it comes to speaking English, however, learners usually encounter a multitude of both affective and linguistic problems, and although speaking class teachers try to implement some strategies to reduce these problems, they are faced with failure due to some circumstances such as the lack of time, the large number of learners, and high affective filters

For the sake of improving oral proficiency, EFL learners are constantly looking for opportunities to talk in English. One way of doing so is by participating in English Speaking Clubs (ESCs) as per the researchers' of this study's suggestion. In this vein, this study aims at exploring EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the role of ESCs in improving learners' oral proficiency.

## **2. Background of the study**

Learners usually spend most of their time outside of the classroom, and how they spend their free time may influence their performance, especially second or foreign language performance. The application of language-oriented ECAs has proved beneficial since it can aid many aspects of language teaching and learning. One aspect that they play a major role in is boosting learners' motivation levels and self-confidence while reducing foreign language

anxiety. This assertion is reinforced in a study conducted by Yildiz (2016) in which 34 students of Ishik University were involved. The research was quantitative in nature in the form of an experiment and accompanied by a test. The findings demonstrated that ECAs are extremely useful in the previously mentioned language respects and in influencing learners' academic achievement. In the same vein, Stephens and Schaben (2002, p.39) also came to the conclusion that learners who are involved in ECAs tend to have a better academic performance than those who are not.

The success and efficiency of ECAs does not only rely on learners' efforts and attitudes towards them. Similarly, teachers also have a key role in their successful implementation. Yusof and Abdulgalil (2017) examined teachers' attitudes towards the use of ECAs to enhance learners' speaking skill. The sample consisted of 40 high school teachers. The researchers applied both quantitative and qualitative research methods where they distributed questionnaires to 40 of the teachers and conducted semi-structured interviews with 3 of them. They found that most EFL teachers had quite the positive attitudes towards the implementation of ECAs and believed that they can improve learners' communicative skills.

Demydovych and Holik (2020) conducted a study on Speaking Club as an interactive extracurricular activity in learning English for professional purposes at medical universities. The study aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the Speaking Club in learning English for professional purposes. Thus, a five-year experiment was conducted on 140 students of the national medical university from 2012 to 2017, including 4 stages. The researchers of this study applied a combination of research methods. The qualitative method, on the one hand, was used in the form of certificates, diplomas, letters of appreciation, or the level of satisfaction. On the other hand, the quantitative method included inquiries, tests, and interviews. The given results demonstrated the effectiveness of the Speaking Club as an

extracurricular activity in learning English for professional purposes at medical purposes.

Yuliandasari and Kusriandi (2018) investigated students' perception on English Club extracurricular in speaking practices at Madrasah. The researchers' study aimed at identifying students' perceptions of the impact of English Club extracurricular towards students' speaking skill. The sample of the study consisted of 26 students who joined an English Club extracurricular. The research tools used to obtain the needed data were observation, questionnaire, and speaking test. Based on the given data and results, Yuliandasari and Kusriandi advocated for learners' enrolment in an English Club arguing that this latter can improve their speaking skills.

The aforementioned studies form useful conclusions that determine the direction of this research as they pave the way to its significance. While the literature discussed above focused on the impact of ECAs in general and English Clubs in particular on the various aspects of the speaking skill, there has not been, to the researchers' current knowledge, any research conducted about what EFL teachers and learners, in Algeria, think of using this type of ECA to enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency. Hence, the present study attempts to fill a research gap by investigating EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Since English has become a lingua franca used all over the world, learning how to speak it has become a necessity. It is commonly known that second or foreign language learners need to practice in order to become good speakers of a language, and one of the few platforms that offer the opportunity to speak English is the classroom. However, due to a plethora of drawbacks, such as the unmanageable number of learners, time restrictions, and so on, learners need to resort to other alternatives to practice speaking second or foreign

languages. One such place that offers this opportunity is an English Speaking Club. It is considered as a place where language learners can meet and communicate using English which may help them improve their oral proficiency.

### **3. Research Questions**

The current study aims at investigating the following research questions:

- 1- What are EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency?
- 2- To what extent do English Speaking Clubs enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency?
- 3- How do EFL teachers and learners support the establishment and participation in English Speaking Clubs?

### **4. Research Assumption**

Researchers of this study assume that EFL teachers and learners have positive attitudes towards the role of English speaking clubs in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency.

### **5. The Aim and Significance of the Study**

The present study aims at investigating EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency. This study is significant because it may pave the way to the adoption of English Speaking Clubs at the university level. This study can also become a significant reference for teachers and learners who want to establish or join an English Speaking Club.

### **6. Research Methodology**

The researchers of this study applied a combination of research methods. The quantitative method, on the one hand, was used in the form of a student online questionnaire

administered to forty-two English major learners. On the other hand, the qualitative method included a teacher interview with five Speaking Class teachers.

## **7. Organisation of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into two chapters, the literature review and the practical part. The first chapter is composed of two sections. The first section covers oral proficiency while the second one deals with English speaking Clubs. The second chapter represents the practical part. The first section represents the methodology the researchers applied in conducting the study. The second section covers the analysis of the questionnaire and the interview followed by the discussion of the results.

## **Chapter One: Oral Proficiency and English Speaking Clubs**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with oral proficiency. It explores its numerous areas namely fluency and accuracy. Then it addresses the affective, linguistic, and cognitive factors that may either hinder or develop EFL learners' oral proficiency. Then the section traces its status across language teaching methods.

The second section discusses some of the literature related to English Speaking Clubs. It covers English Speaking Clubs as ECAs, principle of ESCs, problems and solutions for English Club meetings in addition to exploring the role of both the teacher and the learner in an ESC. Lastly, this section provides example of four speaking-oriented activities mainly group discussions; drama, role-play, simulations; communicative games; and debates.

### **Section One: Oral Proficiency**

#### **1.1. Proficiency in a Foreign Language**

According to Harsch (2016), the notion of proficiency itself is important for the crucial impact it has on language teaching, learning, and assessment. She stated that the term proficiency involves the ability to use language appropriately, "knowing how," and also knowledge about language, "knowing what."

Researchers started giving more thought to the concept of language proficiency due to the shift from Chomskyan competence to Dell Hymes' communicative competence (Harsch, 2016, p.250). Taylor (1983) pointed out the confusion between the terms competence and proficiency. Thus, he made a distinction between them, defining proficiency as "designating something like 'the ability to make use of competence'... Competence can be regarded as a static concept, having to do with structure, state, or form, whereas proficiency is essentially a dynamic concept, having to do with process and function."

Proficient speakers of L2 are usually labelled as competent, fluent, accurate, good, knowledgeable in a language, and so forth. Being a complex concept, however, and due to the lack of agreement as to what oral proficiency entails, many definitions emerged. Omaggio (1986) stated that “oral proficiency includes the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language. A high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to new contexts (topics) and situations.” (as cited in Tanni& Raba, 2015, p.712). That is, in order to be considered a proficient speaker of a language, L2 learners should have the ability to use the oral language appropriately and accurately.

Housen and Kuiken (2009, p.1) conducted a research on what shapes the language proficiency of a second or foreign language learner (L2) or even of a native speaker. They stated that in the 1980s, L2 researchers distinguished between fluent and accurate L2 usage to research the development of oral proficiency in L2 within the classroom. Based on this, it can be noted that both accuracy and fluency are important components of oral proficiency.

## **1.2. Accuracy and Fluency toward English Oral Proficiency**

As far as accuracy and fluency are concerned, different definitions were given by different scholars. For instance, Lennon (1990, p.390) defined accuracy as “the ability to produce error-free speech” Accuracy encompasses pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. This can be illustrated in Wang’s definition of accuracy, “correct use of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar” (2014, p.110). On the other hand, “The term ‘fluency’ has a range of meanings, the most common of which is related to ‘high proficiency’, that is, an excellent grasp of the vocabulary and grammar of a language” ( Rossiter et al, 2010, p.584). Crystal (1977), Bryne (1986), and Nation (1991) defined fluency as, “the ability to get across communicative intent without too much hesitation and too many pauses to cause barriers or a

breakdown in communication”(as cited in Shen, 2013, p.819).

### **1.3. Factors Affecting Oral proficiency**

The need for learning languages nowadays has become more crucial than ever as a result of the facilitation of travel and communication. Thus, one of the main skills language learners are required to master is speaking. However, there are factors that may improve or obstruct learners’ oral language. It is hence necessary to investigate these factors, namely affective, cognitive, and linguistic factors.

#### **1.3.1. Affective Factors**

According to Derakhshan et al. (2016), “Affective factors are emotions influencing learning such as anxiety and self-restriction and thus affecting the learners’ oral proficiency” (as cited in Pangket, 2019, p89). Krashen (1982, p.30) stated that Dullay and Burt (1977) introduced the concept of the affective filter, which he further developed in his works. In this regard, Krashen held that, “The affective filter hypothesis states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process.” Krashen’s hypothesis of the affective filter identified motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety as affective contributors to language learning.

##### **1.3.1.1. Motivation**

Motivation is viewed as the internal desire to do something for whichever reason. Regarding language teaching and learning, motivation is the desire to learn and use L2. Gardner (1985, p.10), in his definition of motivation, claimed that desire alone is not enough to learn a target language. Learners instead need to combine desire, effort, and have positive attitudes toward the target language in order to achieve their learning goals. The success or failure of language learning substantially depends on both learners’ and teachers’ motivation level. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) “motivation is a major factor in the

successful study of language acquisition” (as cited in Anjomshoa and Sadighi, 2015) As far as oral proficiency is concerned, learners' participation in classroom oral practice, which may be a result of high motivation, can be considered as an important contributor to the development of their language proficiency (Wang and Guo, 2013, p. 58). Cohen (2010, p. 170) indicated that motivation is a notably dynamic process which is constantly changing. ESL and EFL teachers are therefore encouraged to continuously motivate their learners by planning stimulating and motivating lessons and oral activities.

### **1.3.1.2 Self-confidence**

Self-confidence is another factor that prompts learners' L2 acquisition. That is, a learner's self-confidence may either accelerate or hinder the learning process. Self-confidence by definition is the trust and belief that someone holds about his or her abilities to successfully achieve a given goal. This can be viewed in Dornyei's definition of self-confidence: “the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals, or perform tasks competently” (2005, p.73). The first research on self-confidence in language learning was conducted by Clément, Gardner, and Smythe (1977), who introduced this term to L2 literature (Dornyei, 2005, p. 73), prompting more research on the role of self-confidence in second language acquisition. Generally, there are two types of learners: those with high self-confidence and those with low self-confidence. Self-confident learners, on the one hand, trust their abilities thus engage and take risks without fear of making mistakes while speaking. Noels and Clément (1996, p. 216), for example, argued that self-confidence is linked to the expanded usage of and communicative competence in L2. Likewise, Krashen (1982, p.31) stated that “Performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition.” Less confident learners, on the other hand, are hesitant to talk and are afraid of making mistakes. For this reason, teachers are to pay attention to their learners' self-

confidence.

### **1.3.1.3. Anxiety**

Anxiety is regarded as one of the biggest factors that obstruct second or foreign language acquisition (SLA or FLA). According to Zheng (2008, p.8), language anxiety is truly an important element that should not be neglected in the field of second or foreign language learning. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p.125) stated that various learners reported having a “mental block” when learning FL even though they may not have this issue in other areas or events. They claimed that this is caused by anxiety toward SL or FL learning. McCroskey (1977, p.78) labelled anxiety related to oral communication as communication apprehension (CA) and defined it as “a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication.” He suggested that CA may affect one’s willingness to communicate, a willingness which in turn may influence learners’ performance (Young, 1986, p.440). In anxiety-inducing situations, if learners cannot cope with anxiety, their quality of input usually declines causing them to make mistakes they usually would not. Many ESL and EFL learners experience a feeling of anxiety throughout their learning process, but it differs in terms of degree from one learner to another. Some of the symptoms learners may suffer from are sweating, butterflies in the stomach, shaking, stuttering, increased heartbeat, and so on.

### **1.3.2. Cognitive Factors**

According to Levelt (1989), speaking occurs through three stages: conceptualisation, formulation, and articulation. Conceptualisation is concerned with the information that can be used to convey meaning. Formulation refers to the composition of grammatically and linguistically correct and appropriate structures. Articulation is the conversion of a message into speech through the vocal apparatus (as cited in Berg, 1990, p.410). Since these three processes happen spontaneously and on the spot, mistakes are bound to occur. As Beattie

(1983, p.33) stated, “spontaneous speech is unlike written text. It contains many mistakes...” (as cited in Halliday, 1985, p.76). Accordingly, learners’ oral “fluency and accuracy may be affected” (Wang, 2014, p.111). Since the human mind is finite and has restricted concentration spans, teachers and learners should evenly focus on both fluency and accuracy so as to see development in both areas (Wang, 2014, p.111).

### **1.3.3. Linguistic Factors**

Developing oral proficiency involves developing some language features such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation or the so-called linguistic factors.

Grammar is an important aspect of language. Using correct grammar is essential to communicate the intended meaning. Moreover, grammar differs in the various aspects of language. That is, a learner can recognise and apply correct and appropriate grammar structures in reading, writing, and listening. However, spoken language is characterised by hesitation, mistakes, and unfinished sentences. According to Larsen-Freeman (2001), “it is rather difficult for EFL learners to transfer the correct grammar to their speaking” (as cited in Wang, 2014, p.111)

Vocabulary is the building block of language “just as the significance of bricks to a building” (Wang, 2014, p.111). A lack of vocabulary may negatively affect learners’ oral proficiency. This can be viewed in learners’ confusion and hesitation while speaking. Also, learners may face difficulties in retrieving vocabulary from their memory. They may thus use retrieval cues which are stimuli that help get information, the case here being vocabulary, out of memory including associations, context, and mood. On the other hand, learners with an adequate pool of vocabulary may exude self-confidence and high proficiency while speaking.

Pronunciation is considered as a speaking sub skill that affects learners’ oral proficiency. Therefore, it may influence the transmission of a message in different ways.

Incorrect pronunciation, for instance, may lead to unclear or incoherent speech or even misunderstandings between the interlocutors. In this vein, Wang (2014, p.111) argued that “Mispronouncing a single sound causes the listener’s misunderstanding, and various uses of stresses as well as intonations result in totally different meanings.”

#### **1.4. The Status of Oral Proficiency across Language Teaching Methods**

Even though it is a known fact nowadays that oral proficiency is a crucial component of language, it has not always been prioritised but instead was marginalised in the early teaching and learning methods. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.1), the goal and focus of teaching and learning methods has shifted throughout time. For instance, this manifested in “a move toward oral proficiency rather than reading comprehension as the goal of language study.”

For many years, Grammar Translation Method (GTM) dominated the field of language teaching and learning. In this method, the goal of language learning was the mastery of reading and writing in order to achieve language proficiency through memorising long lists of vocabulary and translating sentences and texts into the target language. Speaking was additionally considered inferior, so oral practice was minimised. Hence, accuracy was advanced while fluency was neglected (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 2-4).

What ensued after the failure of GTM to develop learners’ speaking ability in the target language was a quest to find alternative methods and approaches to language teaching. Hence, a series of reforms in the scope of linguistics emerged, and phonetics was added as branch of linguistics. The International Phonetic Association was also founded as a result of these reforms along its International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) which aims at the accurate transcription of the sounds of any language (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.7). According to Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.8) many reformers, in the late nineteenth century, such as

Vietor and Sweet “shared many beliefs about the principles on which a new approach to teaching foreign languages should be based”. In regards to speaking, these reformers believed that: (Richards & Rodgers 1986)

1. The spoken language is primary and that this should be reflected in an oral-based methodology;
2. The findings of phonetics should be applied to teaching and to teacher training;
3. Learners should hear the language first, before seeing it in written form; (p.8)

Based on the growth of interest in the spoken form of language after the Reform Movement, the Direct Method (DM) developed a new approach to teaching speaking. The DM or the so called the Natural Approach was a language teaching method, which favoured the extensive use of the target language without translation. In other words, the teaching of the foreign language was the same as the one used to teach the mother tongue. For instance, Richards and Rodgers claimed that “Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language” (1986, p. 9). Thus, a constant use of TL is implemented inside the classroom. Moreover, the Direct Method was built on other principles that supported oral language teaching such as: (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

- 1- Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organised around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
- 2- New teaching points were introduced orally.
- 3- Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
- 4- Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized. (p.10)

However, the Direct Method was attacked by language practitioners. This method called for

native teachers or teachers who have a native-like command of the TL and it also relied on teacher's skills rather than the textbook (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 10).

In the Audio-lingual Method (ALM), language was considered a set of structures that encode meaning, so learning L2 was based on habit-formation and reinforcement which were the cornerstones of behavioural psychology. Besides, structural linguistics, on which ALM was based, claimed "oral" to be the primary medium of language. That is, according to Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.49) "Speech is language...many languages do not have a written form and we learn to speak before we learn to read or write...Therefore, it was assumed that speech had a priority in language teaching." In its early stages, ALM focused on oral skills while gradually connecting to other skills as learning develops. Moreover, ALM viewed oral proficiency as synonymous to "accurate pronunciation and grammar and the ability to respond quickly and accurately in speech" (Richards and Rodgers 1986, p.52). ALM came under criticism for not living up to its premises. Learners were considered as empty vassals, who merely memorised and practised structures of the TL in the classroom. Hence, they were unable to reproduce the TL outside the classroom, i.e., in real communicative situations.

Spanning from the 1920s, Situational Language Teaching (SLT) appeared in parallel with the Audio Lingual Method as a result of the work of some British linguists. Situational Language Teaching was based on the structural view of language where the focus was on both speech and structures (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp.31). That is, according to Richards and Rodgers "Speech was regarded as the basis of language, and structure was viewed as being at the heart of the speaking ability."(1986, p. 35) Teachers, within this approach, start with the spoken/oral language before the presentation of the written form. (p.34). Hence, students drill those structures until it becomes a habit to be used in other

situations (p.37)

The emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) marked the beginning of a new era of the teaching and learning of speaking second and foreign languages. For many years, the advocates of ALM and SLT believed that people learn languages by breaking them down into sets of structures, synthesising, and then applying them into real-life settings. Nunan (2003, p.50), however, stated that research in the late twentieth century re-evaluated these shared beliefs and realised that people learn first and second languages through interaction, so CLT was developed as a result of this realisation. Harmer (2007, p.70) said that learners in this method should focus on language appropriateness rather than correctness in both speaking and writing. In the same vein, Nunan (2003, p.50) also said that teachers in CLT strive to develop the communicative skills in their learners rather than trying to use the language accurately.

## **Section Two: English Speaking Clubs**

### **2.1. English Speaking Club within the Framework of Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are out-of-class activities that learners can participate in for both educational and non-educational purposes. Thus, they “fall outside of the regular course of work or studies at school or college” (Hornby, 1995, p.409 as cited in Yusof & Abdulgalil, 2017, p.153). According to Mitchell (2015, p.2), “Extracurricular activities are defined as activities that are not part of an academic curriculum, but are offered by an academic institution.” In the case of ESL and EFL learners, different ECAs such as English Speaking Clubs are available to enhance their English oral proficiency.

According to Malu and Smedley (2015, p.11) an English club is “A group of people— Club Members—who meet regularly to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in

English.” Additionally, as stated by EnglishClub (n.d.) “an English club is a place for language learners to use English in a casual setting.” In the case of English Speaking Clubs, their focus is solely on speaking with the aim of improving communicative speaking skills. An English Speaking Club is a place where members can learn to speak through interacting with each other in a stress-free and friendly environment. This is supported by Gass and Selinker (2008, p.350) who argued that learning SL may occur through interaction.

## **2.2. Principles of a Successful English Club**

English Speaking Clubs are established for the purpose of helping members practice speaking English in an authentic setting, and they are available for anyone who strives to improve his or her oral proficiency. In order to be successful in achieving this aim, English Speaking Clubs are based on a set of principles. The British Council (n.d.) outlined five principles of a successful English Club. First of all, “A good English Club should be participant-centred.” Instruction in an English Speaking Club should be learner-centred. Moderators in an English Speaking Club should act as a guide while the members should be the ones who speak for most of the time a process that aims to maximise member talk and minimise moderator talk. Secondly, “A good English Club plays an important social role,” i.e., it should provide opportunities for members and moderators alike to socialise with other EFL learners which can help members reduce social awkwardness and anxiety and raise their self-confidence. Thirdly, “A good English Club gives people freedom” in the sense that members of the group should be able to negotiate their syllabus freely and also be able to voice their opinions without the need to hold back. Fourthly, “A good English club should be rooted in the community.”

Malu and Smedley (2018, p.13) provided yes and no questions that English Club moderators should answer after every club meeting to determine whether or not the meeting

was successful.

**Table01.** *Successful English Club Meetings*

	Yes	No
Do all Members speak English at the meetings?		
Do all Members—men and women (boys and girls)—participate equally?		
Do all Members feel free to speak?		
Do all Members want to practice English?		
Do all Members have equal time to speak?		
Do Members help each other with vocabulary?		
Do Members help each other with grammar?		
Do most Members attend regularly?		
Are the meetings fun, lively, and interesting?		
Do Members want to select the topic for the next meeting?		
When the meeting ends, do all Members know the next meeting date and place?		

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### **2.3 Benefits of an English Speaking Club**

EFL learners tend to join English Speaking Clubs for different reasons. One of these reasons is willingness to improve their speaking skills. An English Speaking Club offers an

appropriate learning atmosphere that helps these learners to achieve their goal. For instance, learners have the chance to speak freely in discussions, presentations, and even dialogues. Shy and anxious learners, hence, break the ice and mental barriers. According to Krashen (1982), high affective filter affects the learner's oral proficiency and thus his performance in communicative settings. In his Affective Filter hypothesis, Krashen argued that learners with low affective filter tend to perform better than those with high affective filter.

English Speaking Clubs also adopt cooperative, collaborative, and interactive language learning strategies. First, research on language teaching has shed light on the effectiveness of cooperative learning on different factors as “promoting intrinsic motivation, ... heightening self-esteem,... creating caring and altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice” (Oxford, 1997, p.445 as cited in Brown, 2000, p 47). In this vein, Brown (2000, p. 47) added that “in a cooperative classroom the students and teachers work together to pursue goals and objectives.” Additionally, collaborative learning is the place where two or more people attempt to learn together. The learner hence interacts “with more capable others (teachers, advanced peers, etc.) who provide assistance and guidance” (Oxford, 1997, p. 444 as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 47). Finally, interactive learning is an approach based on learners' interaction and the inclusion of digital technology. It hence has an effective impact on learners' oral proficiency. In this vein, Brown (2000, p. 48) claimed that “As learners interact with each other through oral and written discourse, their communicative abilities are enhanced.”

#### **2.4. Problems and Solutions for English Club Meetings**

Both English Speaking Club moderators and members face problems during club meetings. In their book “The English Club Handbook: A Guide for English Club Leaders”, Malu and Smedley (2015, p. 14-15) summarised a set of problems and solutions for English

## Club Meetings:

### **a. Problems:**

1. Some club members are more talkative than other members.
2. Men speak more than women.
3. Absences
4. Quarrels over some English vocabulary or grammar between club members
5. Some club members may have some opposing views with other club members, or they may get annoyed.
6. Some members would usually touch on topics related to politics, government officials, and religion.
7. Some club members feel offended by each other.

### **b. Solutions:**

1. Club members determine a given time to talk for each member and select a “Time Keeper”.
2. In order to make a balance between men and women’s participation, the leader may talk to them individually, designate sessions for men only and others for women or take them into different rooms for 45 minutes.
3. In order to avoid absences, the club leader can ask questions about the appropriateness of meetings: day and time and types of topics to be discussed.
4. Select a club member to write complicated vocabulary and grammar then ask a native speaker to explain them in addition to reviewing them in the next meeting.
5. The club leader can assert that the club meetings are for language exercises and active listening rather than persuasion.

6. In order to avoid sensitive topics, the club leader can directly inform them. For example, he can say “We are not here to talk about religion, we are here to practice English...”( Malu & Smedley, 2015, pp. 14-15)
7. The club leader can remind the club members that the initial goal of the club is learning rather than criticizing each other.

### **2.5. Role of the Teacher and the Learner in an English Speaking Club**

One of the principles of a successful English Speaking Club is learner-centeredness. Tudor (1993, p.22) argues that the learner-centred approach provides opportunities for learners to be more active and engaged unlike traditional approaches. According to Brown (2000) learner-centred instruction entails:

1. techniques that focus on or account for learners’ needs, styles, or goals.
2. techniques that give some control to the student (group work or strategy training, for example).
3. curricula that include the consultation and input of students and that do not presuppose objectives in advance.
4. techniques that allow for student creativity and innovation.
5. Techniques that enhance a student’s sense of competence and self-worth.  
(pp.46-7).

Learners in the learner-centred approach “also have a number of responsibilities in learning and learning strategies” (Wolfgang, 2001 as cited in Al-Zu’be, 2013, p.27). Learners in this approach are supposed to become leaders themselves by taking charge of their responsibilities in the class such as listening to each other, doing their assignments, and so forth. Learners are also supposed to develop critical thinking while dealing with tasks and

activities by listening to each other and seeking help from the teacher when necessary. Besides, teachers do not usually give many instructions to learners who are, in turn, expected to participate in lesson negotiation and planning. Additionally, there must be cooperation, collaboration, and even healthy competition among learners in group work, discussions, debates, and so on. Furthermore, learners are encouraged to ask questions without fear of making mistakes and errors. On the contrary, mistakes and errors are tolerated and considered an indicator of learning. Finally, the success or failure of such an approach depends on learners' intrinsic motivation and desire to learn where motivation and desire to work as a driving force that pushes learners to perform better and more efficiently (Al-Zu'be, 2013, pp.27-9). In this regard, Tudor (1993, p.30) said that "the more open teaching is to students' participation, the more dependent it is upon their cooperation—which can put the teacher in an awkward situation if students decide not to play the game."

## **2.6. Types of Activities that can be used in English Speaking Clubs**

### **2.6.1. Group Discussions**

A discussion by definition is a conversation between two or more people where they talk and share opinions over a given topic. Mohammed and Ahmed (2021, p.3) defined group discussions as "an activity in which a small number of students sit together face to face and bandies and participates thoughts smoothly and freely, or trying to decide on a specific topic." Discussion in FL teaching and learning has a significant impact on learners' communicative skills and thus on oral proficiency. Many FL teachers hence use discussions in their classes. This type of activities, for instance, is applied in speaking classes in order to enhance learners speaking skills. Nunan (1991, p. 51) stated that "learning to speak in second or foreign language will be facilitated when students actively engaged in attempting to communicate" (as cited in Mohammed & Ahmed, 2021, p. 4). Additionally, discussion in general "has the great

advantage of provoking fluent language use” (Harmer, 2007, p. 128). Wood (1981, p. 47) argued that discussion gives learners chances to represent themselves and their knowledge through a FL (as cited in Mohammed & Ahmed, 2021, p.2).

Mohammed and Ahmed (2021) conducted a research on the impact of discussion activities on improving students’ fluency. In their paper, they summarised the impact of applying discussion activities on developing learners speaking skills as follows:

- 1- It reinforces confidence in speaking.
- 2- It supplies a deeper comprehending of the course.
- 3- It can change opinion and show the things from a Different Perspective.
- 4- It promotes the capacity to think critically.
- 5- It provides varied ways to do a problem-solving.
- 6- It assists the students in taking a decision
- 7- It enables a student to introduce her point of view.
- 8- It gives a chance to share the opinions of other students. (p. 2)

### **2.6.2. Drama, Role-play, and Simulations**

Speaking activities such as simulations and role-play that encompass aspects of drama are beneficial for practicing real world situations and immersing learners in roles and emotions that may not be theirs. Learners are therefore exposed to a large range of vocabulary which is not usually used in the confines of the classroom (Thornbury, 2005, p.96). (Harmer, 2001, p.274-5; Thornbury, 2005, p.98; Ur, 1996, p.132) distinguished between both simulations and role-play. They said that in the former, learners perform as themselves in an imaginary situation while in the latter they play the role of a completely distinct persona from themselves. Harmer (2001, p.274) claims that simulations and role-play may help learners

improve their oral proficiency, and since learners do not usually perform individually but in pairs or groups, they are considered as an excellent interactive activity aimed at enhancing fluency. He also lists other three advantages. First and foremost, they are fun and enjoyable, so they motivate learners to be active participants instead of being passive observers. Secondly, simulations and role-play may help hesitant learners become more expressive and honest since they “may feel uncomfortable being ‘themselves’ in a second language” (Thornbury, 2005, p.96). Thirdly, similar to Thornbury, Harmer said that unlike task-centred activities, simulations and role-play provide learners with opportunities to learn vocabulary that can be applied in real life situations.

According to Bharthy (2013, p.19), despite learners’ positive feedback toward the use of role-play, there are still some drawbacks to consider:

1. Some learners are self-conscious, so sometimes they feel anxious and embarrassed to talk.
2. Some classes are extremely large, so not all learners can participate
3. Some learners do not pay attention to their classmates
4. The more they participate in the role-play the messier they are.
5. The success of the role-play also depends on teachers’ supervision and skills, but unfortunately most teachers are untrained in this aspect.

### **2.6.3. Communication Games**

Research on language teaching has advocated the use of games in FL classrooms. Byrne and Rixon (1979, p.7) argued that “The term ‘games’ has been used in language teaching to cover a wide range of classrooms activities”. Games generally refer to those fun and enjoyable activities that are used to teach a second or foreign language. The use of games aims at presenting an impressive and fun practice of a given element of language (Byrne &

Rixon, 1979, p.7). Second and foreign language teachers, for example, use games for communicative purposes in order to practice speaking. This type of activities is labelled as communication games. Harmer (2001, p. 272) defined communication games as “Games which are designed to provoke communication between students...”.Moreover, Zhu (2012) conducted a research on using games to improve students’ communicative ability where he supported the effectiveness of using games in enhancing learners’ communicative skills. He called for the use of the communicative approach, which involves using games in language teaching. Thus, he argued that students’ involvement in playing games “can arouse and maintain their interest in learning, promote their motivation of study, and at the same time get lots of opportunities to have their basic skills of listening and speaking practiced. (p.805)

#### **2.6.4. Debates**

Debates are another commonly used speaking activity in the field of teaching and learning. In a debate, learners try to express their ideas and opinions by giving valid arguments in order to try and convince others of certain points of view. When it comes to EFL classes, Alasmari and Ahmed (2013, p.147) claim that debates can be used “as tools to make students practice skills of English language in real-life situations” where not all learners have equal chances to use English.

#### **Conclusion**

The degree of knowledge in a language is usually “measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language” (Nunan, 1991, p.39). That is, learners of second or foreign languages are judged on how proficient they are in speaking. For the main goal of improving learners’ oral proficiency, Speaking Classes are established. However, even after participating in them, learners still face a multitude of speaking problems that may be a repercussion of the lack of practicing speaking. Thus, the present study suggests ESCs, as a

place where EFL learners gather and communicate using English, to improve EFL learners' oral proficiency.

## **Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Analysis, and Data Discussion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section is a description of the methodology used for data collection. This section thus presents the research paradigm, discusses the population and sampling, and finally describes the utilised research tools. Meanwhile, the second section presents the analysis of the collected data from both the learner questionnaire and the teacher interview, succeeded by a discussion of the results. Finally, the researchers mentioned both the limitations they faced while conducting the research in addition to suggestions for further research.

### **Section One: Research Methodology**

#### **2.1. Research Paradigm**

In an attempt to determine EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency, the researchers opted for both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis. MacDonald and Headlam (2008) made a distinction between these two research methods as follows:

Quantitative - as the name suggests, is concerned with trying to quantify things; it asks questions such as 'how long', 'how many' or 'the degree to which'.

Qualitative – concerned with a quality of information, qualitative methods attempt to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for actions and establish how people interpret their experiences and the world around them. (p.8)

These mixed data gathering tools refer to a research method called triangulation. The latter term refers to the application of several research methods for more credible and valid results. The quantitative data was gathered from a student questionnaire to collect numerical data where the frequencies of learners' answers were statistically treated. The Qualitative data, on the other hand, was obtained from a teacher structured interview.

## **1.2. Population and Sampling**

Due to the difficulty of putting the whole population under scrutiny, the researchers chose a sample of the population. Because of the lack of English Speaking Clubs in Algeria, the sample involved 42 LMD English majors enrolled in English Speaking Clubs in Algeria from all levels (L1, L2, L3, M1, and M2) in addition to 5 Speaking Class teachers at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia since the very nature of their subject is focused on teaching speaking English to various learners. The sample has been selected based on convenience sampling method for its usefulness and less-demanding nature.

## **1.3. Research Instruments**

### **1.3.1. Description of the Questionnaire**

The current study opted for using a questionnaire as one of the main research instruments to data collection. The questionnaire is a useful instrument that consists of "asking questions of respondents" (MacDonald & Headlam, 2008, p.11). According to Wilson & McLean (1994), the questionnaire is a commonly used data collection tool that serves to gather information and provide structured and numerical data. On top of that, it can be handed out in the presence or the absence of the researcher; it can additionally be analysed fairly easily (as cited in Cohen, 2007, p.317). Dornyei (2007, p.101) attributed the widespread use of questionnaires to the fact that they seek to "find answers to questions in a systematic and

disciplined manner.” The current survey is a cross-sectional one which refers to “a questionnaire that collects data on people’s experience of a particular initiative or event. A cross-sectional survey questionnaire might try to determine the relationship between two factors” (MacDonald & Headlam, 2008, p.14).

### **1.3.2. Questionnaire Aims**

The present questionnaire (see Appendix A) is mainly designed to solve main research problem. It therefore consists of questions that aim to gather data regarding EFL learners’ attitudes and suggestions concerning the role of joining English Speaking Clubs in enhancing learners’ oral proficiency.

### **1.3.3. Questionnaire Development**

The current student questionnaire is composed of twenty-two questions, which were designed based on the literature review. The questions are either closed-ended or open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions, on the one hand, refer to questions that require selection from a given number of options such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions, multiple choices, or scale questions. On the other hand, open-ended questions are those which require participants’ detailed answers by providing explanations, justifications, etc. This questionnaire is divided into four sections. Section one, (Q1 to Q3), is devoted for learners’ personal information to get an appropriate description of the participants. Section two, (Q4 to Q11), consists of EFL learners’ opinions on oral proficiency and speaking. Section three, (Q12 to Q14), deals with general information on speaking clubs. The last section, (Q15 to Q22), is dedicated to EFL learners impressions and opinions about the role of English Speaking Clubs in improving EFL learners oral proficiency.

### **1.3.4. Questionnaire Administration**

The questionnaire was administered online to LMD students of English who are also

members of English Speaking Clubs in Algeria. The researchers sent the link to the questionnaire on Facebook and Instagram to various ESCs namely The Hive, WATI, and the English Speaking Club at TEFL Academy. The questionnaire was sent to the sample on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June and it was answered by 42 students.

#### **1.4. Description of the Interview**

The present study favoured conducting a structured teacher interview in order to get in-depth and authentic data from the participants. A structured interview is utilised if the researcher's aim is to determine some specific information from the interviewees (McKay, 2006, p.52). She added that "The advantage of interviews is that they allow the researcher to study individual teachers and students in much greater depth than written surveys" (p.17). According to MacDonald and Headlam (2008, p.42), researchers implement interviews "when seeking the views and opinions of people with a specific perspective."

The structured interview was conducted with five Speaking Class teachers. It consisted of eight questions and further comments. The questions aimed at exploring teachers' perspectives on the role of ESCs in improving learners' oral proficiency. The questions were asked to clear insights on their views concerning the importance of speaking and its difficulties (Q1 and Q3) as well as the strategies followed to overcome those problems (Q4). Q2 tried to determine what constitutes a good speaker of English. Q5 and Q6 were concerned with teachers' attitudes towards ESCs. Meanwhile, Q7 asked the teachers to describe an effective speaking session from their own experience in teaching speaking. The final question (Q8), dealt with teachers' opinions on whether or not they support the establishment of ESCs. Finally, the teachers were given the freedom to add further comments or suggestions. (see Appendix B)

#### **Section Two: Data Analysis and Discussion**

## 2.1. Questionnaire Analysis

### Section One: Personal Information

The results obtained from the student questionnaire are presented below.

#### Q1. Gender

This statement determines the gender of the learners that are more interested in joining English Speaking Clubs.

**Table02.** *Learner's Gender*

Option	Number	Percentage
Female	38	90.5
Male	04	09.5

The results shown above indicate that the majority of learners (90.5%) were females; whereas, (9.5%) males. As can be seen females are more interested in joining English Speaking Clubs.

#### Q2. Age

This statement identifies the age category of learners who are more motivated to join an English Speaking Club.

**Table03.** *Learners' Age*

Option	Number	Percentage
18-20	17	40.5
20-25	24	57.1
More than 25	01	02.4

The results above show that (57.1%) of the participants are aged between 20 and 25

and (40.5%) are aged between 18 and 20 while only 1 (2.4%) participant is more than 25.

### Q3. How good are you at English?

The present question aims to estimate learners' level at English.

**Table04.** *Learners' Levels*

Option	Number	Percentage
Excellent	06	14.3
Good	30	71.4
Average	05	11.9
Poor	01	02.4

The given results indicated that the vast majority of participants (71.4%) assessed their level to be good. Meanwhile, (14.3%) estimated themselves as excellent while (11.9%) and (2.4 %) were average and poor. Therefore, most of the participants demonstrated satisfaction with their level of English with there being some members who still need to work on their English.

## Section Two: Oral Proficiency

### Q04. Speaking is key to second or foreign language acquisition.

The statement above explores learners' opinions on whether speaking is the most important aspect to acquire a language.

**Table.05** *Learners' Perception on Speaking*

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23	54.8
Agree	14	40.5
	00	

<b>Neutral</b>	02	-
<b>Disagree</b>	00	04.7
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>		-

Out of the five provided options, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were mostly chosen with percentage of (95.3%). (4.7%) disagreed that speaking is crucial to second or foreign language learning while none were neutral or strongly disagreed ;which goes to show that learners consider speaking as being extremely important to learn English.

**Q05. Do you think that Speaking Classes (Oral Expression) are effective in improving your oral proficiency?**

This question was intended to show if learners think that Speaking Classes can enhance their oral proficiency.

**Table06.** *EFL Learners' Opinions towards the Effectiveness of Speaking Classes*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	38	90.5%
<b>No</b>	4	9.5%

The results undoubtedly show that the vast majority of majority of participants, namely 38, opted for choosing yes while only a remainder of 4 participants selected no which indicates that learners deem Speaking Classes as capital in the development of their oral proficiency.

To get further details on what learners' views on the effect Speaking Classes have on oral proficiency, the participants were asked to justify their position.

**Table07.** *Learners' Justifications for the Role of Speaking Classes in Enhancing their Oral Proficiency*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>A) Approving</b>	
<b>They enrich learners' vocabulary</b>	9
<b>They improve communication skills</b>	5
<b>They improve oral performance</b>	7
<b>They reduce speaking problems</b>	9
<b>They increase fluency</b>	3
<b>They increase accuracy</b>	3
<b>They provide more opportunities to speak</b>	5
<b>They help practice the language</b>	5
<b>A) Disapproving</b>	
<b>Teachers do not involve everyone</b>	4
<b>Time for the sessions is not sufficient</b>	6
<b>We do not choose the topics</b>	1

Almost all participants (80.7%) believed that the Speaking Classes enhance oral proficiency. They justified their choice by saying that the sessions provide EFL learners with more opportunities to speak. They thus help learners put language into practice leading to an improvement in accuracy, fluency and communication skills. Other learners also claimed that the classes lead to an increase in learners' vocabulary pool. All of these factors together result in a noticeable improvement in learners' oral performance.

**Q06. What problems do you face when you speak English?**

- a- Anxiety

- b- Lack of vocabulary
- c- Expression of ideas
- d- Sentence construction
- e- Lack of self-confidence
- f- Lack of motivation
- g- None

This question addresses the problems EFL learners frequently face when they speak English.

**Table08.** *EFL Learners' Speaking Problems*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	22	25.9
<b>B</b>	17	20
<b>C</b>	16	18.9
<b>D</b>	08	9.4
<b>E</b>	18	21.2
<b>F</b>	02	2.3
<b>G</b>	02	2.3

Learners' responses to Q6 demonstrate that anxiety was chosen by 22 participants. Lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, and expression of ideas were selected 18, 17, and 16 times, respectively. Additionally, sentence construction was chosen 8 times while lack of motivation was selected twice. Surprisingly, two participants (2.3%) did not have any speaking problems.

Some participants also believed that the fear of making mistakes and the fear of not

being heard hinders speaking as well.

From the given results, it can be noticed that EFL learners face a variety of problems. Anxiety, in particular, is viewed as a main one.

**Q07. Do Speaking Classes (Oral Expression) help you overcome your speaking problems?**

This question addresses learners' views regarding the role of Speaking Classes in surmounting their speaking difficulties.

**Table09.** *EFL Learners' Views on the Role of Speaking Classes in Reducing Their Speaking Problems*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	35	83.3
<b>No</b>	7	16.7

The responses to Q07 demonstrate that the number of learners who believe that Speaking Classes contribute in reducing their speaking difficulties, 35, surpasses the number of those who disagree with them, 7, which further supports the findings of Q05 where the majority of learners considered the sessions as crucial in improving their oral proficiency.

For the sake of exploring further insights of learners' views regarding this point, few participants were asked how the sessions affected their speaking problems. The majority of participants said that Speaking Classes challenge them to step outside of their comfort zone where they had to overcome their anxiety and fear of public speaking while others got over their shyness. Some reported gaining more self-confidence and becoming more fluent saying they can express themselves more freely and hold longer conversations now. Other learners also claimed that their vocabulary has increased from interacting and listening to their peers whereas others have reported that the errors and mistakes they make have reduced due to their

teachers' correction. On the other side of the spectrum, there are those who had negative experiences with Speaking Classes. They wrote the following,

“On the contrary, they made my anxiety worse when I stand in front of the whole class and everyone is watching.”

“They put more stress on anxious learners.”

“Teachers stick to a list of questions which they want us to answer.”

**Q08. Which of the following activities does your oral expression teacher usually use?**

- a- Role-play
- b- Debate
- c- Discussion
- d- Communication Games

This question was asked to signify types of activities applied by Speaking Class teachers.

**Table10.** *Activities Used by Speaking Class Teachers*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>A</b>	16
<b>B</b>	25
<b>C</b>	33
<b>D</b>	14

The table above illustrate that discussions are often-used Speaking Class activates with 33 learners' ticks. While debates received 25 ticks. Yet, role-play and communication games got approximately the same number of responses from the learners' parts, 14 and 16. From this, it can be noticed that the majority of Speaking Class teachers use discussions and debates in their classes; whereas, other activities such as role-plays and communication games are less commonly used. In a nutshell, university Speaking Class teachers use a variety of speaking

oriented activities with their EFL learners.

**Q09. Do all learners get equal chances to speak during Speaking Classes?**

This question was intended to estimate how often learners participate in Speaking Classes.

**Table11.** *The Frequency of Learners' Participation in Speaking Classes*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	20	47.6
<b>No</b>	22	52.4

As illustrated in the table above, (47.6%) of learners said that all learners participate equally while (52.4%) said that they do not. As a result, teachers must be aware that more than half of the learners believe that they do not equal chances to participate in the classroom.

In order to verify why learners selected No as an answer, they were asked to clarify their answers.

**Table12.** *EFL Learners' Justifications for Not Participating in Class*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Speaking problems</b>	8
<b>Varying learner levels</b>	4
<b>Uninterested learners</b>	2
<b>Lack of time</b>	4
<b>Some learners dominate discussions</b>	6
<b>Teachers do not involve everyone</b>	4

Learners drew on their experiences in Speaking Classes and claimed that a plethora of learners suffer from speaking problems such as anxiety, shyness, difficulty expressing ideas, and lack of self-confidence. Besides, they also reported that some learners, who were claimed

to usually be the better speakers of English, dominate the conversations thus not giving the chance to speak to their peers. Other participants also said that teachers fail to involve everyone and move on too quickly from learners due to insufficient time or to other unnamed reasons. Finally, one participant claimed that there are uninterested learners who, according to him/her, “don’t take the lesson seriously”, so they do not participate and remain silent.

**Q10. Do you think that the hours devoted to Speaking Classes at University are sufficient to improve your oral proficiency?**

The tenth question intended to see whether EFL university learners are satisfied with the hours devoted for university speaking classes in regards to its role on their oral proficiency.

**Table13.***EFL Learners’ Opinions of Devoted Hours for University Speaking Classes*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	5	11.9
<b>No</b>	37	88.1

The majority of those who were questioned (88.1%) think that the hours devoted for university Speaking Classes are not sufficient. Meanwhile, a minority (11.9%) opted for YES.

Investigating their arguments to defend their opinions, the participants were asked to justify their attitudes. Most of the students( 37), who claimed that devoted hours for Speaking Classes are not sufficient, argued that speaking is an important skill hence they need more hours to get enough and equal chances to practice. They provided the following answers:

-“we do not have enough time to learn new vocabulary”

-“The large number of students reduces their chance to speak; therefore, not all students get the chance to speak”

-“Because if you want to reach fluency, you have to be extensively exposed to the language and two sessions a week are insufficient”

Meanwhile, those who said “YES”, 5 participants, did not justify their answers.

### **Q11. How often do you practice speaking English outside the classroom?**

This question was aimed to investigate the frequency in which learners speak English outside of the classroom confines.

**Table14.** *The Frequency of Learners’ Practice of Speaking English*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Always</b>	12	28.6
<b>Usually</b>	13	30.9
<b>Sometimes</b>	13	30.9
<b>Occasionally</b>	4	3.6
<b>Never</b>	0	-

Usually and sometimes received the same number of responses (=13) while 12 participants selected always with no one, unexpectedly, saying that they never practice English outside of class. Based on the results, learners consider that speaking English outside of the classroom is as important or may even be more important than speaking it inside the class.

### **Section Three: English Speaking Clubs**

#### **Q12. Do all members use English at the meetings?**

The present question targets the ESC members use of English at the meetings i.e. to see whether they try to speak or not.

**Table15.** *Learners’ Opinions on the Club Members’ Use of English at the Meetings*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	22	52.4
<b>No</b>	20	47.6

(52.4%) of the participants claimed that all members use English at the meetings. However, (47.6%) argued that they do not. This means that there are members who use English only and others who use other dialects or languages.

For further details, participants were asked to justify their answers. Participants who claimed that all members use English at the meetings believed that it is for the sake of learning and mastering the speaking skill. That is because “The purpose of the club is to speak English and improve oral skills” and “English is the language they decided to communicate with”. Other participants added that “Using other languages will not help them to learn English appropriately” and simply “It’s the goal” of the club i.e. to speak.

On the other hand, participants who claimed that not all members use English at the meetings argued that it is because of “ The fear of getting out of their comfort zone”, The lack of vocabulary”, The lack of self-confidence, and “ shyness”. Furthermore, others mentioned that “They sometimes tend to explain difficult words in Arabic” or to avoid some misunderstandings because “They can occur if the other party is not fluent enough.”

### **Q13. Do all members, male or female, participate equally?**

The aim behind this question was to determine the frequency of member involvement in the club based on gender in order to uncover whether males or females are more interested and motivated to speak in the club.

**Table16.** *EFL Learners’ Opinions on the Frequency of Male and Female Participation*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	25	59.5
<b>Female dominated</b>	16	38.1
<b>Male dominated</b>	1	2.4

As can be seen in the table above, (59.5%) said that both males and females participate

equally whereas (38.1%) claimed that females dominated the conversations meanwhile only (2.4%) said that the sessions were male dominated. This low percentage may be due to the fact that less male presence was reported in the responses from Q01.

#### **Q14. How often do you get to choose the topics for the meetings?**

The main concern of Q14 is to investigate learners' and teachers' collaboration in the learning process.

**Table17.** *How Frequent EFL Learners Get the Chance to Choose the Meetings' Topics*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Always</b>	00	-
<b>Usually</b>	07	16.6
<b>Sometimes</b>	18	42.9
<b>Occasionally</b>	11	26.2
<b>Never</b>	06	14.3

As illustrated in the table above, 'sometimes' and 'occasionally' were significantly chosen with the percentage of (69.1%). Whereas, 'usually' and 'never' got (16.6%) and (14.4%). However, none of the participants chose 'always'. All in all, most of the students get to choose the topic from time to time but not regularly i.e. for all the meetings. Unexpectedly, there is a minority of learners who never get the chance to choose the topics.

### **Section Four: Attitudes towards the Role of English Speaking Clubs in Improving Oral Proficiency**

#### **Q15. What do you think of the English Speaking Club?**

This question was asked to determine learners' views regarding English Speaking Clubs.

- a. Fun and enjoyable
- b. Beneficial in improving speaking

- c. Neutral
- d. Boring and useless
- e. A waste of time

**Table18.** *EFL Learners' Attitudes towards ESCs*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	20	47.6
<b>B</b>	20	47.6
<b>C</b>	2	4.8
<b>D</b>	0	-
<b>E</b>	0	-

The results show that there was a balance between learners who believe that English Speaking Clubs are effective to enhance learners' oral proficiency and those who believe that the clubs are fun and enjoyable (=20) while 2 learners who selected neutral feel indifferent. Significantly, none of the participants had negative attitudes towards it.

Participants were also asked to list other opinions they may have that were not mentioned in the options, and few have provided the following answers:

- “We have more chances to speak.”
- “I see it as a good chance for me. There's learning, communicating and having fun.”
- “We learn other skills such as soft skills.”

All in all, the vast majority of learners, 39, view the club in a positive light.

**Q16. Has the English Speaking Club helped you overcome the speaking problems mentioned in question 6?**

The above mentioned question is to discover whether ESC meetings contribute to EFL learners' speaking problems.

**Table19.** *EFL Learners' Views on the Role of ESCs in Overcoming their Speaking Problems*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	35	83.3
<b>No</b>	07	16.7

Students' responses to Q16 exhibit that the learners who deem the ESC helpful in overcoming speaking problems, mentioned in Q6, outnumber those who disagree. A percentage of 83.3% represents those who opted for YES and (16.7%) for those who picked NO. To put it in another way, EFL learners consider English Speaking Club meetings highly important to improve their speaking proficiency. During those meeting, learners practice speaking more than they do in the speaking classes.

**Q17. Which of the following oral proficiency areas has the English Speaking Club improved?**

This question aims at investigating the impact English Speaking Clubs have on oral proficiency.

- a. Self-confidence
- b. Motivation
- c. Anxiety
- d. Fluency
- e. Accuracy
- f. Nothing has changed

**Table20.** *The Effectiveness of ESCs*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	24	31.6
<b>B</b>	19	25
<b>C</b>	6	7.9
<b>D</b>	17	22.4
<b>E</b>	9	11.8
<b>F</b>	1	1.3

From learners' responses, it can be seen that self-confidence was significantly chosen 24 times. Motivation, fluency, and accuracy were chosen 19, 17, and 9 times. On top of that, motivation was chosen 6 times while only one said nothing has changed. As a result, EFL teachers must pay close attention to learners' affective filters and make a balance between fluency and accuracy. For further insights, participants were asked to mention other aspects that English Speaking Clubs have influenced, but none answered. To sum up, it can be safely established that English Speaking Clubs are helpful in numerous areas of oral proficiency since they allow learners to practice speaking English.

**Q18. Which of the following activities does your club moderator often use?**

- a- Role-play
- b- Debates
- c- Discussions
- d- Communication Games

This question elicits the most used activities by club moderators from learners' perspective.

**Table21.** *Types of Activities Used by Club Moderators*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>
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<b>A</b>	15
<b>B</b>	24
<b>C</b>	26
<b>D</b>	20

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The given answers illustrate that discussions were chosen 26 times while debates and communication games 24 and 20 times. Meanwhile, role-plays got 15 ticks only. Other students added video games. The results obtained indicate that club moderators use different types of speaking oriented activities; mostly discussions and debates. They also tend to use communication games from time to time, maybe as warm-ups or energizers; whereas, role-play is often used. In a nutshell, these activities are all contributors to the oral practice of English.

**Q19. Which of the activities above do you find beneficial in improving your oral proficiency?**

This question aims at distinguishing which speaking activities used in the club learners favour and find useful to better their speaking skill.

**Table22.** *Activities EFL Learners View as Beneficial*

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<b>Option</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Role-play</b>	7
<b>Debates</b>	13
<b>Discussions</b>	18
<b>Communication games</b>	10

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As illustrated in the table above, discussions were claimed to help participants increase

their oral proficiency 18 times while debates, communication games, and role-play were chosen 13, 10, and 7 times. In short, discussing and exchanging ideas with one another appears to be the most favoured EFL speaking activity among the participants.

**Q20. Who does most of the talking during the club meeting?**

- a- Learners
- b- Moderator
- c- Both

This question aims at discovering both the moderators' and club members' role in an ESC.

**Table23.** *The Dominant Speakers in an ESC*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	20	47.6
<b>B</b>	04	09.5
<b>C</b>	18	42.9

Based on the results above, (47.6%) of the participants claimed that learners are the ones who do most of the talking during the club meeting, while (42.9%) said that they both do. Whereas, only (9.5%) of the participants argued that the moderator is the one who talks the most. To sum-up, ESCs are learner's centred where the learner does most of the talking during the club meetings and sometimes both of them. The moderator, however, never dominates the meeting.

**Q21. Does your university have any speaking-oriented extracurricular activities?**

This question was asked to explore whether universities incorporate EFL speaking-oriented ECAs in their programs.

**Table24.** *The Incorporation of Speaking-oriented ECAs at University*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	11	26.2
<b>No</b>	31	73.8

As can be seen in the table above, almost three thirds of participants (73.8%) opted for choosing No as an answer while only a quarter said Yes (26.2%) which shows that most universities that participants study at do not incorporate ECAs in their programs.

### **Q22. Do you recommend that EFL learners should join English Speaking Clubs?**

The present question, elicits EFL learners views of the participation in ESCs

**Table25.** *Learners' Attitudes towards the Enrolment in ESCs*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	42	100
<b>No</b>	00	-

All the participants in this questionnaire (100%) recommended that EFL learners should join ESCs while none of them said NO. This clearly shows that ESCs are crucially important for EFL learners.

In other to get further details, learners were asked to justify their answers. They thus provided the following answers,

**Table26.** *Learners' Justifications for Encouraging EFL Learners' Enrolment in ESCs*

<b>Justification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>A)Approving</b>	
<b>They are fun and enjoyable</b>	5
<b>They urge students to speak</b>	7
<b>They raise self-confidence</b>	7

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<b>They enrich vocabulary</b>	4
<b>They are motivational</b>	7
<b>They help practice the language</b>	8
<b>They help learners to overcome anxiety</b>	4
<b>B) Disapproving</b>	
<b>Nothing</b>	0

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Participants who encouraged EFL learners' enrolment in ESCs (100%) provided the justifications mentioned in the table above. They supported their choice by stating that ESCs motivate learners to speak and learn new vocabulary as they provide a stress-free environment, reduce anxiety, and raise self-confidence. Furthermore, ESCs urge students to speak and practice the language by discussing different topics.

## **2.2. Discussion of the Questionnaire Results**

After a careful examination of the questionnaire results, final, satisfying conclusions were derived. The twenty-two questions investigated EFL learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs in improving their oral proficiency. Learners' responses were undoubtedly positive and were also consistent with the research assumption.

To begin with, the current study intended to explore what university learners that are majoring in English and are also involved in English Speaking Clubs think of the importance of speaking in learning English; that is why Q4 was devised. The results obtained showed that the majority of learners (95.3%) believe that speaking is remarkably significant in language learning. Q5 revealed that most learners consider that university Speaking Classes are crucial in improving their oral proficiency (90.5%). For further insights, learners were asked to justify their answers. They said that Speaking Classes allow them to practice speaking English which results in improving many areas of oral proficiency such as fluency, accuracy, communication skills, and so

on. Some of them added that the classes also reduce their speaking problems. In order to address these problems, Q6 was designed. The results showed that anxiety was the most common problem among learners in addition to lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, lack of motivation, and difficulty in expressing ideas as well as sentence construction. It was found through Q7 that the majority of learners, (83.3%), deemed Speaking Classes helpful in overcoming the aforementioned speaking problems whereas (16.7%) disagreed. For further insights they were asked to support their answers. Therefore, they claimed that Speaking Classes helped them overcome their shyness and anxiety because it pushed them outside of their comfort zone through interaction. However, those who disagreed argued that their anxiety worsened when they spoke in front of a crowd. To overcome these problems different types of speaking activities are implemented. Q8 entailed which type of those activities EFL teachers use in the classroom where most learners selected discussions and debates as the most used ones. Participation is important for learning since through it, learners practice speaking English inside the classroom. The ninth question was asked in order to investigate whether all learners get to participate during the sessions. As a result, more than half of the learners (52.4%) claimed that not all of them get the chance to speak. For further investigation, Q10 aimed at discovering whether the devoted hours for speaking classes are sufficient or not. As expected, the majority of learners (88.1%) assumed that those hours are not enough where they justified their answers by putting emphasis on the need for more sessions a week. They would thus get more chances to participate and practice speaking. However, this may be hard due to the overloaded schedule. As a result, EFL learners resort to other means for practicing English; in this case, they join English Speaking Clubs.

Q12, Q13, and Q14 were designed to get general information on English Speaking Clubs. To get a thorough response to whether English is actually used at the club meetings Q12 was asked. Responses to Q12 demonstrate that both options received almost the same number of

responses where more than half of the participants (52.4%) reported that all members use English at the meetings whereas less than half of them (47.6%) claimed that they do not. For further insights, learners provided justifications to support the previous question. On the one side, those who said YES argued that learners' constant use of English is for practicing and mastering speaking skills. According to a learner "using other languages will not help them to learn English appropriately." On the flip-side, those who said NO admitted the interference of some affective factors such as, according to some participants, "the fear of getting out of their comfort zone", "the lack of vocabulary", "the lack of self-confidence", and "shyness". These affective factors usually result in communication apprehension which hinders their speaking ability. Q13 inquired about whether males and females participate equally during the club meeting. The findings show that 25 learners claimed that no gender dominated the discussions while 16 others believed that females were more involved than males whereas 1 claimed that males are dominant speakers. To investigate teacher-learner collaboration in the classroom, question 14 was asked. A great deal of learners (85.7%) get to choose the topics for the meetings usually, sometimes, or occasionally but never always.

To have an in-depth look into EFL learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs on improving their oral proficiency, the fourth section was designed (questions 15-22). Q15 demonstrated learners' opinions on English Speaking Clubs. The findings showed that the vast majority of participants (95.2%) had positive attitudes towards the speaking clubs while none of them viewed the club in a negative light. Besides the positive attitudes learners had towards the Speaking Clubs, they also claimed that clubs had a similar impact on their speaking problems based on the findings in Q16. In the following question, Q17, learners were asked about the benefits English Speaking Clubs had on some areas of oral proficiency. From the results, participants found that the club meetings reduced their speaking problems where self-confidence

was chosen 24 times, motivation 19 times, and anxiety 6 times. In addition, participants also believed that ESCs increase both their fluency and accuracy which were chosen 17 and 9 times. Significantly, none ticked 'nothing has changed'. Q18 explored the most used speaking activities by club moderators where participants ticked mostly discussions and debates 26 and 24 times, in addition to communication games and role-play 20 and 15 times. Q19 looked into what speaking activities the participants favoured. The results deduced that participants liked discussions (18 times), debates (13), communication games (10), and role-play (7). That is, speaking activities induce a positive attitude on EFL learners. In order to deduce both moderator's and learners' roles in the club meetings, learners were asked to choose who does most of the talking in Q20. Results obtained illustrated learners' dominance with a percentage of 47.6% and both of the moderator and learners with a percentage of 42.9% whereas moderators got 9.5%. The succeeding question, Q21, tried to uncover whether Algerian universities implement speaking-oriented ECAs. However, based on the findings only a minority of (26.2%) confirmed the question while, as expected, the majority (73.8%) denied having any ECAs in their universities which is one of the reasons why EFL learners look for other opportunities to speak English outside of university. The very last question examined whether learners encourage EFL learners participation in ESCs where they all supported the suggestion (100%). Approving opinions argued that ESCs raise self-confidence and motivation, and urge students to speak (=7). Learners additionally stated that ESCs enrich their vocabulary and reduce anxiety (=4) as they also help practice the language (8).

In a nutshell, the questionnaire fully examined the main concern of the study. The findings displayed positive attitudes by LMD English major learners, who are enrolled in ESCs, towards the English Speaking Clubs' role in enhancing oral proficiency and reducing speaking problems such as communication apprehension, lack of self-confidence and motivation as well as their contribution in enriching vocabulary. In support of this, all participants (Q22, 100%) advocate

for EFL learners' participation in ESCs. These results most certainly support the research assumption and signify that EFL learners, based on their experience in the club, see English Speaking Clubs as effective in improving their oral proficiency.

### **2.3. Analysis of the Teacher Interview**

#### **Q01. What is the importance of speaking in a second or foreign language?**

This question was asked to determine teachers' views regarding the role of speaking in learning SL or FL. The participants had approximately the same views where they believed that speaking a language is crucial in order to learn it. Three teachers even claimed that speaking equals learning a language in the sense that if one cannot speak, they would not be able to transmit their ideas and opinions. Another teacher stated that if one does not speak the language, then learning it is futile. That is, according to another teacher, language is communication, and speaking is proof of knowledge of a language.

#### **Q02. What are the characteristics of a good speaker of English?**

This question is an attempt to signify the characteristics of a good speaker of a language from a teacher's perspective. All teachers argued that both fluency and accuracy are two main characteristics of a good speaker of English. They described fluency as the learner's ability to speak without fear or hesitation whereas accuracy as the ability to communicate effectively without hesitation. Another participant added that a good speaker is that who has "the ability to handle communication breakdowns and go on in a conversation for long periods." A teacher also mentioned some affective factors by saying that "a good speaker of English should not be hesitant and afraid of talking to others; he or she should be ready to negotiate and convince them when needed."

#### **Q03. What problems do EFL learners usually face when they speak English?**

This question addresses the problems EFL learners face when speaking English based

on EFL teachers' observation. They listed the major difficulties their students face. Their answers were approximately the same problems reported in the student questionnaire. They include lack of vocabulary which was considered the most prevailing problem. Consequently, the teachers claimed that it caused a difficulty in expressing ideas. The fear of making mistakes was also reported to severely hinder learners from speaking. A teacher also mentioned pronunciation problems which were attributed to lack of practice. One teacher brought up an interesting point regarding the lack of awareness towards cultural competence. They said that EFL learners think and speak English in their own culture. As a result, their speech may not sound appropriate even if it is fluent and correct. Generally speaking, the findings show that all teachers agree that EFL learners face a myriad of problems regarding speaking due to some affective factors, lack of practice, or lack of cultural awareness of the target culture.

#### **Q4. How do you help them overcome these problems?**

This question was administered to see how Speaking Class teachers help their learners overcome their speaking problems. As far as this question is concerned, the answers were as follows. Two teachers argued that they used to correct the mistakes on the spot; however, they changed the method by correcting those mistakes at the end of the session because they noticed that it "hinders learners' fluency." In addition, most of the participants encourage their learners to "listen to music, watch films, read books, and even talk to themselves." Data in chapter 1 shed light on different activities that can enhance learners' oral proficiency such as discussions, debates, role-play, and communication games which were mostly encouraged by the teachers of this interview.

#### **Q05. What do you think about English Speaking Clubs?**

This question aims at determining teachers' views concerning English Speaking Clubs.

The responses show that all teachers agreed that establishing such clubs would be extremely beneficial for developing EFL learners' speaking skill. A teacher said "I would join one especially if participants have similar ages and levels." Another added that "they are very essential especially due to the lack of opportunities to speak English in Algeria." All in all, all teachers viewed the idea of establishing English Speaking Clubs as effective and essential to provide learners with more opportunities to practice English.

**Q6. Do you think that joining an English Speaking Club can enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency?**

Question 6 aims at identifying teachers' opinions about whether ESCs contribute in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency or not. Therefore, all the informants claimed that ESCs can enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency. As expected, none of them denied it. Moreover, for further details, teachers were asked to justify their answers. They thus provided the following answers,

"ESCs will help learners promote their speaking skills through interaction especially with a group."

"EFL learners will find it entertaining which decreases their language anxiety"

"ESCs urge learners to practice and use the language and dare to express their ideas"

"It is good because it engages introvert learners with extrovert ones"

"In ESCs learners get the chance to discuss different topics"

**Q07. In your opinion, what can be done in order to lead an effective speaking session either in a Speaking Club meeting or a Speaking Class in regards to warm-ups, activities, and so on?**

This question addresses how EFL teachers can deliver a successful speaking session. Concerning how they do so, the participants provided a multitude of answers. A teacher

preferred the use of discussions to urge EFL learners to speak; they added that the secret to having “hot conversations” is the use of relevant and controversial topics. Another teacher advocated for the use of communication games and presentations to motivate learners and help them overcome their communication apprehension and their shyness too. Significantly, two teachers mentioned that the sessions must be well-organised and systematic. That is, teachers should prepare the lesson well beforehand in terms of the topic, warm-up (not mandatory), and the activities in order to lead a satisfactory session. Remarkably, according to one teacher, the lesson must be “tailored based on learners’ needs and wants.” They supported their claim by saying that learners will be more engaged, and teachers will get the most results from them by doing so.

**Q8. Do you think that more English speaking clubs should be established to provide learners with more opportunities to enhance their oral proficiency?**

This question aims at investigating EFL teachers’ opinions on the establishment of ESCs. All the teachers of this interview supported the establishment of English Speaking clubs especially at the university level.

They added that,

“It’s high time to make changes in the methodology of teaching speaking”

“ESCs will provide more opportunities to communicate rather than their speaking classes”

“Interaction with a group has a central role in speaking”

“Hours devoted for Speaking Classes at the university are not sufficient”; therefore, ESCs are a good opportunity.

#### **2.4. Discussion of the Teacher Interview**

After the analysis of the interview findings, researchers came to positive results. The

eight questions investigated EFL Speaking Class teachers' opinions and views towards the impact ESCs may have on EFL learners' oral proficiency. The responses aligned with the questionnaire results and research assumption.

Teachers' responses to Q1 revealed that the participants had approximately the same views on the importance of speaking in learning SL or FL. In the following question, Q2, they tried to list the attributes of what they considered a good speaker is. They included fluency and accuracy as two main characteristics that a good speaker might possess. Participants also added other qualities to the list such as the ability to handle communication breakdowns and being self-confident when speaking. However, there are some factors that may hinder students from speaking well. This may make them feel anxious when speaking English. These problems were discussed in Q3 and they mainly involved linguistic and affective factors as well as lack of practice. In order to investigate what measures teachers take to reduce their learners' speaking problems, Q4 was asked. For instance, the interviewees provide feedback on learners' mistakes and errors at the end of the session as not to interrupt and disturb their speech. Besides, they suggest out-of-class activities like listening to music, watching films, and so on. Teachers also use speaking oriented activities namely discussions, debates, role-play, and communication games.

Questions from five to eight, addressed EFL Speaking Class teachers' attitudes towards the impact of ESCs on EFL learners' oral proficiency. In Q5, interviewees praised ESCs and said that they would help learners practice speaking English. In Q6 they elaborated precisely how joining an ESC can improve learners' oral proficiency. They said that those clubs engage all learners more than speaking classes. Other teachers also added that ESCs are fun and motivating which may reduce learners' anxiety and stress. All in all, teachers believed that joining ESCs may help reduce learners' affective filters. From interviewees' answers to

Q7, it can be deduced that the majority of teachers have systematic and well-planned sessions to meet their learners' needs. The final question, (Q8), was asked to reveal Speaking Class teachers' opinions on the establishment of ESCs since they can draw from their experience in teaching speaking where they all praised the suggestion.

To conclude, Speaking Class teachers encouraged joining ESCs to enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency. The results clearly support the researchers' assumption that EFL teachers hold positive attitudes towards the role of ESCs in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency.

### **2.5. Limitations of the Study**

- ✓ The lack of ESCs in the Algerian EFL teaching and learning context was a major obstacle.
- ✓ The questionnaire was administered online to various ESCs, but a mere few answered it.
- ✓ There was a lack of references in literature regarding both variables.
- ✓ Due to COVID-19, the researchers of this study were unable to implement a classroom observation which is the most suitable research tool based on the topic.

### **2.6. Suggestions for Further Research**

The results obtained from the research in addition to the remarkable limitations pave the way for other related topics in the field of language teaching and learning.

- ✓ Out-of-class strategies to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills.
- ✓ Using ESCs in tertiary education to enrich learners' vocabulary.
- ✓ The effect of ESCs on learners' anxiety.

## **Conclusion**

This fieldwork chapter is comprised of two sections. The first section consisted of the description of the research methodology including the paradigm, the design, and the research instruments. In the second section, the collected data from the students' responses to the questionnaire and teachers' answers to the interview questions were displayed, analysed, and then discussed. The analysis of student questionnaire and teacher interview showed the positive attitudes both teachers and learners held towards the role of ESCs in enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency despite the uncommonness of ESCs in the Algerian EFL teaching and learning context. It also revealed that EFL teachers support the establishment of ESCs at the university level. The practical chapter finally ended with a brief description of the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

## **General Conclusion**

LMD English majors encounter a myriad of obstacles when speaking English that hinder their learning process. Speaking Class teachers use a multitude of strategies to help reduce their learners' speaking problems. However, due to the lack of time to practice speaking and the large number of learners in Speaking Classes, they still face difficulties regarding their oral proficiency. Therefore, the researchers of this study suggested EFL learners' participation in English Speaking Clubs. The current study investigates EFL teachers' and learners' views towards the role of ESCs in enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency. This study comprises two chapters. The first one contains the review of related literature concerning oral proficiency and ESCs. The second chapter of this study is devoted to the practical part which includes both the methodology used to conduct the study succeeded by an analysis and discussion of the collected data. The study utilised both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms represented in an online student questionnaire and a teacher interview.

The findings revealed that despite the infrequency of ESCs, both EFL teachers and learners hold positive attitudes towards them. They believed that ESCs can enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency as they provide more opportunities to practice speaking English. In addition, they may also help learners overcome some speaking problems such as communication apprehension, lack of self-confidence, and motivation because they may provide a comfortable and stress-free learning environment. At the end, both teachers and learners recommended establishing and joining ESCs to improve learners' oral proficiency.

Briefly, the results show that the establishment and participation in ESCs was highly advocated by both EFL teachers and learners to improve EFL learners' oral proficiency. Since

the topic is authentic and new, its findings can be the cornerstone for future research on other related topics.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Student Questionnaire

Dear EFL students,

We sincerely appreciate your contribution to this survey as it would provide us with the data needed to investigate EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the role of English Speaking Clubs in improving EFL learners' oral proficiency. Please tick  the box that best states your opinion. You can ONLY choose one box EXCEPT in questions 6 and 16.

#### Key Definitions

1. An English Speaking Club is a place where EFL learners can practice their speaking skills.
2. Oral Proficiency is the learners' ability to use the language in real communicative settings.
3. Accuracy is the correct use of language including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation i.e. in an error free speech.
4. Fluency is the ability to communicate ideas without too much hesitation and too many pauses.

Data collected will be treated anonymously.

#### Section One: Personal Information

1. Gender

a. Male                       b. Female

2. Age    a. 18-20                       b. 20-25                       c. More than 25

3. How good are you at English?

- a. Excellent     b. Good     c. Average     d. Poor

**Section Two: Oral Proficiency**

4. Speaking is key to second or foreign language acquisition.

- a. Strongly agree     b. Agree     c. Neutral     d. Disagree   
e. Strongly Disagree

5. Do you think that Speaking Classes (Oral Expression) are effective in improving your oral proficiency?

- a. Yes     b. No

Why do you think so?

.....  
.....

6. What problems do you face when you speak English?

- a. Anxiety     b. Lack of vocabulary   
c. Expression of ideas     d. Sentence construction     e. Lack of self-confidence   
f. Lack of motivation     g. None

Others.....

7. Do Speaking Classes (Oral Expression Sessions) help you overcome your speaking problems?

- a. Yes     b. No

How?.....  
.....

8. Which of the following activities does your oral expression teacher usually use?

- a. Role-play
- b. Debates
- c. Discussions
- d. Communication Games

Others.....  
 .....

9. Do all learners get equal chances to speak during Speaking Classes (Oral Expression)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If no, please justify

.....  
 .....

10. Do you think that the hours devoted to Speaking Classes at University are sufficient to improve your oral proficiency?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why?.....

.....

11. How often do you practice speaking English outside the classroom?

- a. Never
- b. Occasionally
- c. Sometimes
- d. Usually
- e. Always

**Section Three: English Speaking Clubs**

12. Do all members use English at the meetings?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why?.....  
.....

13. Do all members, male or female, participate equally?

- a. Yes  b. Female dominated  c. Male dominated

14. How often do you get to choose the topics for the meetings?

- a. Never  b. Occasionally  c. Sometimes  d. Usually   
e. Always

**Section Four: Attitudes towards the Role of English Speaking Clubs in Improving Oral Proficiency**

15. What do you think of the English Speaking Club?

- f. Fun and enjoyable  b. Beneficial in improving speaking  c. Neutral   
d. Boring and useless  e. A waste of time

Others, please specify.....

16. Has the English Speaking Club helped you overcome the speaking problems mentioned in question 6?

- a. Yes  b. No

17. Which of the following oral proficiency areas has the English Speaking Club improved?

- g. Self-confidence   
h. Motivation   
i. Anxiety   
j. Fluency   
k. Accuracy

l. Nothing has changed

Others.....

.....

18. Which of the following activities does your club moderator often use?

e- Role-play

f- Debates

g- Discussions

h- Communication Games

Others.....

19. Which of the activities above do you find beneficial for improving your oral proficiency?

.....

20. Who does most of the talking during the club meeting?

a. Learners

b. Moderator

c. Both

21. Does your university have any speaking-oriented extracurricular activities?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, what are they?

.....

22. Do you recommend that EFL learners should join English Speaking Clubs?

a. Yes

b. No

Why do you think so?

.....  
.....

**Thank You for Your Contribution**

## **Appendix B**

### **Teacher Interview**

Q01. What is the importance of speaking in a second or foreign language?

Q02. What are the characteristics of a good speaker of English?

Q03. What problems do EFL learners usually face when they speak English?

Q4. How do you help them overcome these problems?

Q05. What do you think about English Speaking Clubs?

Q6. Do you think that joining an English Speaking Club can enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency?

Q07. In your opinion, what can be done in order to lead an effective speaking session either in a Speaking Club meeting or a Speaking Class in regards to warm-ups, activities, and so on?

Q8. Do you think that more English speaking clubs should be established to provide learners with more opportunities to enhance their oral proficiency?

## Résumé

L'oral est considéré comme l'une des plus importantes compétences de FLE que les apprenants doivent maîtriser. Cependant il est considéré comme un domaine problématique dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des langues en particulier. En ce qui concerne les compétences orales. Les études ont tenté d'explorer les attitudes des enseignants et des apprenants de FLE envers les clubs anglophones dans l'amélioration des compétences orales. Il est donc supposé que l'adhésion serait bien accueillie par les enseignants et les apprenants dans les cinq niveaux (première, deuxième, et troisième année licence, master un ou master deux). Pour tester l'hypothèse l'étude a utilisé deux méthodes de recherche à la fois quantitative et qualitative. Les questionnaires ont été répondu par 42 étudiants d' LMD anglais qui sont au même temps membre d'un club anglophone. Un entretien a été réalisé avec des professeurs universitaires dans le département d'anglais à l'université de Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. Les résultats ont montré que la majorité des enseignants et les apprenants avaient des attitudes positives envers le rôle des clubs anglophones dans l'amélioration des compétences orales des apprenants en FLE et ils ont encouragé la mise en place de ces clubs dans l'Algérie.

## ملخص

يعتبر التحدث مهارة مهمة و واحدة من المهارات الرئيسية التي يحتاج متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إتقانها. و مع ذلك، فإنه يعتبر مجالا إشكاليا في تعليم اللغة و تعلمها خاصة فيما يتعلق بالطلاقة و الدقة أي الكفاءة الشفوية. حاولت الدراسة الحالية استكشاف مواقف معلمي و متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية تجاه دور نوادي التحدث باللغة الانجليزية في تحسين الكفاءة الشفوية للمتعلمين و بالتالي تم طرح فرضية أن الانضمام إلى نوادي التحدث باللغة الانجليزية سيكون موضع ترحيب من قبل كل من المعلمين و المتعلمين من المستويات الخمس(ة) سواء سنة أولى، سنة ثانية، أو سنة ثالثة ليسانس، إضافة إلى سنة أولى و ثانية ماستر من الطلاب اللذين هم في نفس الوقت أعضاء في نوادي للتحدث باللغة الانجليزية.وظفت هذه الدراسة كلا من أسلوبي البحث الكمي و النوعيمن أجل اختبار هذه الفرضية، و بذلك تم جمع البيانات باستخدام استبيان الطالب عبر الانترنت إضافة إلى مقابلة شفوية مع الأساتذة. تم الرد على الاستبيان من طرف 42 طالب، تخصص لغة إنجليزية، الذين هم في نفس الوقت أعضاء في نوادي جزائرية للتحدث باللغة الانجليزية و هي : 'The Hive، WATI' ، و نادي التحدث باللغة الانجليزية التابع لأكاديمية TEFLبالإضافة إلى ذلك تم إجراء مقابلة مع أساتذة فصل التحدث بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى ، جيجل. و بذلك أظهرت النتائج أنه بغض النظر عن عدم شيوع نوادي التحدث باللغة الانجليزية ، كان لدى معلمي و متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مواقف إيجابية تجاه دور هذه الأخيرة في تحسين الكفاءة اللغوية لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وشجعوا على إنشاء المزيد من أندية التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية في الجزائر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة الشفوية ، نوادي التحدث باللغة الانجليزية

