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Investigating Psychological Barriers to Speaking Fluency

The Case of First-Year LMD Students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University

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Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Investigating Psychological Barriers to Speaking Fluency” is our 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 materials not documented, We shall be responsible for the consequences.

Signature

Date

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most compassionate, all praise is due to Allah alone, the sustainer of the entire world.

I proudly dedicate this modest work to:

The cherished memory of my father.

The most ardent being bestowed me with her never-ending prayers and encouragement, my mother.

My sister Sabrina who was always ready to listen and put up with my moans and groans. Definitely, her encouraging words were just the spur I needed when things got tough.

My brother Kareem for his unconditional love and support.

My dearest friends, Amina, Soulaf, Ikhlass, Ilham, Chaima, and Mina who have been my pillars of strength and source of inspiration.

Soulaf.

Dedication

O Allah, I begin this dedication by expressing my deepest gratitude to You, the source of all blessings and guidance

To my dearest family and friends; words cannot express the depth of my gratitude and love for each and every one of you. This dissertation represents the culmination of years of hard work, determination, and countless hours spent in pursuit of knowledge.

To my parents, who have always been my biggest cheerleaders, thank you for sacrificing so much to provide me with endless opportunities.

To my siblings, Racha, Amine, and Naim who have always been there to lend a listening ear, share laughter, and remind me of the importance of balance in life, thank you.

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Abstract

Algerian students when they communicate in English as a foreign language ,their speaking fluency is affected by psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and shyness. This study aims at investigating the psychological barriers that hinder students of English from improving their speaking fluency. To fulfill this aim, the study was based on a mixed method of data collection tools. A questionnaire was administered to 60 first-year license students at the Department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel, aiming at exploring their psychological barriers. Additionally, a classroom observation was conducted with 20 participants in the same department for the sake of identifying the effects of psychological barriers on their speaking fluency. The results indicated that a considerable number of learners have psychological hindrances that impede them from speaking fluently; mainly, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation to speak. Based on the obtained results, some pedagogical recommendations were proposed to enhance students' speaking fluency.

Keywords: psychological barriers, speaking fluency, effects, anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, lack of confidence

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English Foreign Language

LMD: License Master Doctorate

P: Page

Percentage: %

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

The widespread adoption of the English language in daily life and its perception as a necessity to integrate people from all over the globe are among the most significant impacts of globalization, which makes English now a key language in intercultural communication. Therefore, a major concern for language instructors has always been identified in how to help their students master the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing to achieve a high level of proficiency in the English language. According to Akhmetova et al (2020), “the effectiveness of the process of mastering a foreign language is associated with the psychological readiness of a student to learn and apply a foreign language in practice, overcoming language barriers and difficulties” (p. 122). This denotes that students have several barriers, mainly psychological ones, which hinder them from mastering the target language.

Fluency in speaking is regarded as the most important and demanding aspect that has to be mastered by students. According to Ur (1996), "Many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in how to speak" (p.120). Therefore, the basic objective of foreign language learning is to be a fluent speaker of that language. However, fluency is closely correlated with personality and is therefore affected by psychological traits such as anxiety, shyness, motivation, and so on (Brown, 2001). This is also in line with Gebhard (2000) who said that the student's problem in speaking is caused mostly by their shyness or anxiety.

2. Statement of the problem

The consistent challenge faced by EFL students in speaking a foreign language, particularly English, has been a long-standing issue. The majority of these students encounter

difficulties in attaining fluency in English, primarily because of a range of psychological factors. This study seeks to explore the various psychological barriers that hinder first-year EFL students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University from developing fluent spoken English language.

3. Aims of the Study

This research paper aims at shedding light on:

1. Determining the psychological barriers that impact EFL students' speaking fluency.
2. Investigating the effects of psychological barriers on EFL students' speaking fluency.

4. Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following questions :

1. What psychological obstacles impede the ability of first-year EFL students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University to speak English fluently?
2. What are the effects of psychological barriers on EFL students' speaking fluency?

5. Research Methodology

The study in hand will be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. It will implement two techniques for collecting data namely, a questionnaire and classroom observation. Firstly, a questionnaire will be addressed to 60 First year EFL students out of 236 at the English language department of Mohammed Seddik ben Yahia University-Jijel. The questionnaire is composed of three parts: the first part seeks to elicit general information from the learners, while the second part comprises a set of questions to investigate the psychological barriers of students. The third section explores the connection between psychological obstacles and the ability to speak fluently. To get close to the issue under investigation, and to get more varied

data, a classroom observation will be carried out with 20 participants from two groups, 10 students from each group of first-year students of English in oral expression sessions.

6. Structure of the Study

To accomplish the goals of this study, the research is divided into two chapters. The first chapter comprises a review of the literature, which is further divided into two sections. The initial section discusses the psychological barriers experienced in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, such as anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation, along with their underlying causes. The second section focuses on speaking fluency, covering its definitions, characteristics, different aspects, ways for improving it, and the effects of psychological barriers on speaking fluency. On the other hand, the second chapter constitutes the practical part of the study, which involves analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire distributed to first-year students of English and classroom observation sessions conducted in the oral expression sessions. Additionally, this chapter includes a discussion of the results obtained from both data collection tools.

Chapter One: Psychological Barriers & Speaking Fluency

SECTION ONE: PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

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Introduction

Psychological barriers are recognized as one of the most significant issues that hinder English as a Foreign Language students' speaking performance. Even though EFL students in Algeria have been studying English since high school, they still face difficulties when it comes to speaking the language. This problem is not only due to a lack of grammar or vocabulary but also due to psychological factors. This section aims to explore the psychological barriers that face EFL learners and their underlying causes.

1.1.1 Definition of Psychological Barriers

According to the online Oxford Learner's Dictionary, a barrier is something that prevents progress or makes it difficult for someone to achieve something. According to Zimnyaya (2004), a barrier is "subjective formation, the subject's experience of a certain complexity, unfamiliarity, a non-standard, contradictory situation"(as cited in Akhmetova et al., 2020, p.122). Similarly, Parygin (1999) defined a psychological barrier as a state or property of an individual that hinders the realization of spiritual and mental potential in the process of his/her life. Shakurov (2001) explained psychological barriers as the "external and internal obstacles that resist the manifestations of the subject's life activity and functioning"(pp. 3-18).

In the educational process, psychological barriers reveal themselves as difficulties that students encounter solving educational problems, which not only fall back on their learning activity performance but also lead to dissatisfaction with the educational process itself, and its organization, as well as impede the implementation of cognitive aspect and other needs. Moreover, in foreign language learning, psychological barriers are mental conditions that prevent students from using their maximum potential, applying what they have learned, or expressing themselves (Akhmetova et al., 2020, p.122). Overall, Student's acquisition of

second and foreign languages is significantly influenced by psychological factors, particularly in the speaking area. EFL learners must understand these psychological barriers for it can help them identify the underlying causes of their speaking difficulties. Therefore, highlighting these psychological factors is essential.

1.1.2 Psychological Barriers and Their Causes

1.1.2.1. Anxiety

All the students experience anxiety occasionally. It is a fact of life that learners go through days filled with worry, trepidation, and even fear. Whether during a presentation for the class, in front of an audience or native speakers, or during examinations and participation, anxiety is likely the primary feeling encountered by second or foreign-language learners when practicing their speaking skills. Spielberg (1983) defined anxiety as “The subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (cited in Jean, 2007, p.41). In other words, anxiety is an unpleasant state of mind and a basic human feeling, mainly a distressful one, that a person deals with and results in negative responses or behaviors like getting tongue-tied, perspiring, or speaking quickly. Scovel (1991, p. 18) further proclaimed that “anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object”. Other researchers considered anxiety as a feeling of tension, apprehension, and nervousness associated with the process of learning a foreign language (Horwitz, 2001, p.113).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) stated that “Language anxiety can be defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening and learning” (p.284). Horwitz et al (1986) defined language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to

classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p.128). That is to say, language anxiety is a reflection of one’s psychological condition nervousness, worry, and anxiety in a particular language-learning setting.

According to Horwitz and Cope (1986), many people find language to be particularly stressful, especially in speaking settings. In this regard, there is a relationship between speaking fluency and language anxiety. The latter can lead to a decrease in speaking performance or the speaker's ability to communicate in general. Those who feel anxious may be less likely to participate in conversations or take risks in their speaking, i.e., the more anxious the student is, the lower performance he displays.

1.1.2.1.2. Causes of Anxiety

According to Horwitz and her colleagues (1986), foreign language anxiety can be associated with three major interrelated components: test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension. First, test anxiety interferes with one’s ability to take a test. It was defined by Dusek (1980) as “an unpleasant feeling or emotional state that has physiological and behavioral concomitants that are experienced in formal testing or other evaluative situations” (cited in Zadeh, 2012, p.468). Test anxiety results from fear of failing to perform. It can be explained by the high requirements that learners put on themselves to be perfect masters of the foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986). Second, communication apprehension according to McCrosky (1977) is “a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people” (cited in Horwitz et al. 1986, p.127). Being shy or finding it difficult to talk, listen or understand spoken words are all indications that learner is apprehensive because they believe they will be misunderstood or unable to comprehend when speaking to others. Finally, Fear of negative evaluation is an expansion of test anxiety (Horwitz et al.1986, p.128). It is explained as the learners' expectations to be evaluated

negatively by others in any kind of situation (Worde, 2003). Individuals with this type have low-self esteem; they worry about leaving a negative impression on the social environment (Weeks, Heimberg, Fresco, Hart, Turk, Schneider & Liebowitz, 2005)

1.1.2.2.1 Shyness

Shyness is a mental condition that EFL learners struggle with when they communicate in English. Izard (1972) described shyness as an intense, identifiable emotion that exhibits signs of stress and panic on the learner's face. Shy learners may feel hesitant, uncomfortable, or self-conscious when they are asked to speak in a classroom setting. Baldwin (2011) explained that addressing an audience is among the most prevalent fears that students encounter, and the sensation of shyness can lead the learners to have mental blocks or concerns about forgetting what to say.

It has been noted that the majority of EFL learners experience shyness while communicating in a language due to their fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed by their peers. The prospect of appearing foolish in front of others is an undesirable one, leading to a reluctance to speak up and a preference to remain quiet rather than risk embarrassment. As a result, shy individuals are more likely to refrain from speaking than to attempt communication (Saurik,2011, p. 101)

1.1.2.2.2 Causes of Shyness

Experts and professionals have not agreed on what causes shyness and shyness behavior. According to Biemer (1983,p.55), psychoanalysts believed that shyness is a reaction to unfulfilled primal wishes of the id;personality-trait specialists feel that certain people are born with a predisposition to social anxiety; developmental psychologists view intense and frequent social anxiety among young children that has its roots in early parent-child relationships, and behaviorists believe that shyness is best explained as learned habits of

responding with anxiety and impaired performance in social situations. These habits are learned through one's own negative personal experiences in interacting with others or through vicarious experiences, i.e., through observation of what is perceived to be aversive in the interpersonal experiences of others. In other words, Shyness, in general, can be caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, and social factors, for instance: negative early experiences, such as rejection, bullying, or criticism, can lead to shyness in later life or Overprotective parenting can hinder a child's ability to develop social skills and lead to shyness. Other reasons that may increase shyness among learners can be classified as either internal such as fear of public speaking, low self-confidence as well as lack of preparation, or external like audience evaluation and large classes.

1.1.2.3.1. Lack of Confidence

According to Norman & Hyland (2003), confidence plays a crucial role in learning, influencing students' participation and progress. Self-confidence is particularly important, as it enables students to take risks and actively engage in learning activities. Students with high self-confidence are secure in their abilities and are motivated to set and work towards achieving their goals, without being overly concerned about the potential outcomes, on the other hand, lack of confidence is a significant psychological factor that often leads to students feeling unconfident when their peers do not understand their message. Consequently, they may choose to remain silent, indicating their reluctance to communicate. Nunan (1999) argued that such students experience communication anxiety, which can hinder the development of their English communication skills. Therefore, it is essential for teachers of English to pay close attention to their learners' confidence levels and take measures to improve them. To achieve this, teachers should learn from both theoretical and practical knowledge on how to facilitate the development of learners' confidence in verbal communication in their second language.

1.1.2.3.2. Causes of Lack of Confidence

Chen (2010) identified the reasons for the lack of confidence among learners and asserted that their limited proficiency and approach towards English speaking are the main contributing factors, that is to say, learners consider their English speaking skills weak and lack the confidence to communicate effectively. Lack of motivation from L2 teachers is also closely linked to learners' confidence issues (Brown, 2002). To clarify the given context, some English language teachers fail to encourage learners to believe in their verbal communication abilities and to view any obstacles as surmountable. Consequently, learners find the learning of speaking skills to be demotivating and demoralizing, rather than encouraging. From this discourse, it can be concluded that providing encouragement and inspiration from teachers to learners can help them to improve their speaking proficiency and become confident while speaking the language.

1.1.2.4.1. Lack of Motivation

It is known that motivation is considered one of the internal factors that influence EFL students' academic performance and determine their success/ failure in foreign language learning. Even though researchers provide various definitions of motivation, they all agree to describe it as an internal force or energy that pushes and reinforces a person to take a particular action or behave in a certain way. According to York (1976) "motivation can be defined as those forces within an individual that pushes him to satisfy basic needs or wants" (p. 27). Gardner (1985) referred to motivation as "the combination of effort plus desires to achieve the goal of learning the language" (p. 110).

According to Sasson (2019), the lack of motivation is to have insufficient levels of excitement and passion for doing a job or work. In this context, Dornyei and Ushida (2011) defined a demotivated student as "someone who was once motivated but has lost his or her

commitment/ interest for some reason” (p. 138). Thus, a person who lost the desire to learn something is a demotivated learner. Losing interest and willingness to participate in the environment, activities, or other tasks in the classroom are all indications of a lack of motivation.

1.1.2.4.2. Causes of Lack of Motivation

Researchers have had a lively discussion about motivation-related elements that influence the teaching and learning process. Attitude is regarded as a key factor that plays a fundamental role in affecting the student’s motivation. According to Oller (1979, p. 138), “Attitudes are merely one of the factors that give rise to motivation which eventually results in attainment proficiency in a second language” There are two types of students, those who advance quickly usually have positive attitudes, and those who never achieve their learning goals because of their negative attitudes.

Another aspect that is linked to motivation is the learner’s anxiety. Dornyei (2007) viewed anxiety as one of the most prevalent elements that undermine second language motivation and learning effectiveness. That is to say, the learning process is successful in safe educational settings where students are encouraged to voice their thoughts because they feel shielded from embarrassment and sarcasm.

According to Harmer (1991) physical conditions, teachers as well as their teaching methods are all factors that influence the student’s motivation (cited in Masaryk & Remiasova, 2007). Physical conditions may refer to a comfortable, supportive environment with plenty of space, good lighting, fresh air, and the use of materials and pictures, etc, which all enable students to typically engage better in the classroom. Therefore, for Harmer (1991) overcrowded, poorly light classrooms can be highly demotivating (cited in Masaryk & Remiasova, 2007). Furthermore, teachers and their methods are of crucial importance in

increasing or decreasing their student's motivation. The teacher is in charge of directing the student's interest and attention to learning. Additionally, the teacher's enthusiasm for the tasks at hand greatly influences the level of motivation among students.

Conclusion

When it comes to speaking effectively, EFL learners encounter challenges that cannot be only attributed to grammar and vocabulary but also encompass psychological barriers. This section has explored those psychological barriers and their causes including anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation that hinder EFL learners from the process of learning.

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Conclusion

Introduction

The acquisition of a new language necessitates the mastery of four fundamental skills, namely speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Many language learners perceive speaking as the hardest to develop, primarily due to two reasons. Firstly, speaking demands instantaneous action, as the listener awaits the speaker's response. Secondly, unlike writing, which permits revising and editing, spoken words cannot be edited once uttered. Furthermore, achieving fluency is a complex task in the context of speaking a foreign language. Fluency refers to the ability to speak easily and smoothly, and it stands as one of the primary goals of English as a foreign language learners. Nevertheless, attaining fluency poses a significant challenge for language learners. This section gives an overview of fluency and its types, with a particular emphasis on speaking fluency, which is the goal of EFL learners. It also explores ways to achieve that goal and the characteristics that define it.

1.2.1.1 Definitions of Speaking

According to Siahaan(2008, p. 95), Speaking is a productive language skill. It is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (Chaney, 1998, p. 13). Similarly, speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). According to (Bailey, 2000, p.25), speaking is a process of interaction where speakers intend to build meaning through producing, receiving, and processing information. All in all, it can be concluded that speaking is a skill people use to communicate with each other; it is a fundamental aspect of human communication and is essential for everyday interactions.

1.2.1.2 Speaking Aspects

According to Brown(2001, pp. 406-407), there are five aspects of the speaking skill:

A: Vocabulary: A set of words used in a particular language or by a particular person or a group of people.

B: Grammar: The rules and structure of a language, including syntax, morphology, and semantics, that determine how words are combined to form sentences and express meaning.

C: Fluency: The ability to speak or write a language smoothly, quickly, and accurately, with good rhythm and intonation, and with appropriate grammar and vocabulary.

D: Pronunciation: The way in which a word is pronounced, including the stress, intonation, and rhythm of the sounds.

E: Comprehension: The ability to understand spoken or written language and to interpret its meaning accurately. (ibid.)

1.2.2 Definition of Fluency

Teachers of English have the propensity to think we all have a similar sense of what fluency is (Chambers, 1997), however, the literature review reveals that fluency is an inclusive term because there are a variety of distinct definitions and conceptions provided by various authors which make it difficult to agree on one exact definition. For instance, Fluency is defined by Hughes (2002) as the learners' capacity to speak reasonably, clearly, and accurately without excessive hesitancy to avoid disrupting communication because listeners will not pay attention (p. 113)

Fillmore (1979, as cited in Brown, 2003, p.1), suggested that Fluency includes the abilities to:

- 1- To feel time with talk.
- 2- Talk in coherent, reasoned, and “semantically sense” sentences.
- 3- Have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts.
- 4- Be creative and imaginative in using the language.

Blackwell (2015) has held that: “fluency refers to the listener’s perspective on the perceived smoothness of a speaker’s production process” (p.449). Moreover, Lennon (1990) stated, “In its narrow sense, the concept of fluency in ELT refers to one component of oral proficiency” (p. 389). Furthermore, Lems et al (2017) added that in language learning, fluency means speaking proficiently as a native speaker (p.172). That is to say, in language learning fluency means being able to speak like a native speaker. Also, fluency refers to how easily and smoothly a speaker is able to produce speech and this can be judged from the perspective of the listener, who may perceive the speaker as being more or less fluent based on how effortless their speech sounds.

Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined speaking fluency as “The ability to communicate ideas effectively with continuous speech and without causing comprehension difficulties”(p. 204) That is to say, a fluent speaker is someone who can make their speech understandable to others, which is one thing EFL learners should be aware of when integrating themselves into communication. Parrot (1993) on his part, conceived speaking fluency as a skill of communicating messages, producing coherent sentences, responding and speaking with continuity, and using communication strategies (cited in Zhang, 2009).

1.2.3 Types of Fluency

1.2.3.1. Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is "the ability to read rapidly with ease and accuracy and to read with appropriate expression and phrasing" (Grabe, 2009, p. 648). That is to say, reading fluency is

the ability to read smoothly and accurately, while also understanding the meaning of what is being read. Fluent readers are able to decode words effortlessly and automatically, allowing them to focus their attention on the meaning of the text.

1.2.3.2. Writing Fluency

According to Harmer (2004) and Latif (2012), writing fluency refers to the ability to create written language quickly, effectively, creatively, and cohesively. This involves the use of appropriate linguistic structures to achieve a specific rhetorical and social purpose.

1.2.3.3. Oral-reading Fluency

The capacity to read words with precision and speed while demonstrating appropriate vocal expression and phrasing is known as oral-reading fluency is sometimes distinguished from oral fluency (Rasinski,2006)

1.2.3.4. Speaking Fluency

Speaking fluency refers to the ability to communicate effectively and cohesively in a spoken language. According to Browne and Fulcher (2017), students often misinterpret the meaning of speaking fluency; assuming that it simply refers to the ability to speak quickly. Consequently, when they learn a new language and are able to speak rapidly, they believe they have achieved fluency in that language. Fluency in speaking is achieved when students are able to express themselves without hesitation or fear of making errors. This means they can communicate their thoughts and ideas smoothly, without the need for frequent pauses or disruptions in their speech.

1.2.4 Importance of Speaking Fluency

Speaking in a natural way is what EFL learners are willing to achieve. According to Brumfit (1984), fluency can be defined as the ability to use a language in a natural and native-

like manner. Speaking fluently can enable a speaker to communicate their ideas more coherently, without causing difficulties in comprehension for the listener. This skill also facilitates the speaker's ability to maintain a continuous flow of speech, which can aid in conveying their message more effectively, moreover, speaking fluently, can boost the confidence of EFL learners, which is important for overcoming the fear of speaking in English. This can lead to more effective language learning, as learners become more willing to take risks and practice their speaking skills. According to Richards et al. (1985), fluency serves as a standard of an individual's level of communicative proficiency. Therefore, it is unlikely for language learners to reject the idea of speaking fluently. This shows how important for EFL learners to improve and develop fluency. Nation (1997) discovered that an enhancement in speaking fluency results in an improvement in the accuracy of grammatical structures and the level of control over the content being communicated. This illustrates the significance of fluency for EFL learners, as enhancing it can result in an improvement in the accuracy of language. Overall, speaking fluency is an essential skill for EFL learners, and they are in need to learn how to improve it.

1.2.5 Characteristics of Speaking Fluency

Fluency has always been a tremendous task in language teaching and learning. The ability to speak fluently in a second language is a primary goal for EFL learners. Therefore, it is worth determining what a variety of characteristics fluent speakers can hold. According to Hartmann and Stork (1976), "A person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structures accurately whilst concentrating on content rather than form, using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational speed when they are needed" (cited in Brown, 1995, p. 11) . Brumfit (1984) also believed that the main facets of a fluent speaker are to be "speed and continuity, coherence, context-sensitivity, and creativity" (Brown, 1995, p. 11). That is to say, a fluent speaker is someone who can communicate with ease and use

both accurate and suitable intonations, vocabulary, and syntax. Moreover, the fluent speaker is creative in expressing the concepts of the speech as well as generating a continuous speech without hesitations or pauses.

1.2.5.1 Pausing

Pauses in speech are significant elements of communication that play a crucial role in conveying meaning, expressing emotions, and enhancing overall understanding. According to Lundholm (2015), a pause is “a temporary stop in action or speech”. Moreover, He defined a pause as follows: "A pause is a silence that occurs during an ongoing conversation and during a speaker's turn or at a turn change." (p. 14). Pauses are natural and occur in everyday conversations, They serve as strategic tools for effective communication take place in the conversation for various reasons, such as breathing, thinking, word-searching, and turn-taking management (ibid.).

1.2.5.2 Good Pronunciation

According to McArthur and McArthur (1982), the pronunciation of a language is “(a) the act or result of producing sounds of speech, including articulation, intonation, and rhythm, and (b) the sound system of a language” (as cited in Al-Tae, 2005, p. 1). Fangzhi (1998) stated that “It is important to pay attention to pronunciation since it results in whether or not someone’s message can be delivered or not” (p. 39). To put it simply, when a foreign language learner has the ability to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas clearly, it means they have achieved an understandable pronunciation. Merely having a good grasp of grammar rules and vocabulary is insufficient if the learner struggles with proper pronunciation. Therefore, “Mispronunciation of words is one of the main factors that hinder students from participating; this is the reason that prevents them from doing speaking activities freely and with no stress” (Mebarki, 2016).

1.2.5.3. Speech Flow

1.2.5.3.1. Intonation

Intonation is regarded as a main feature to be developed to enhance language fluency. According to Roach (2001), “Intonation is the melody of speech, and is to be analyzed in terms of pitch variation” (p.33). That is to say, intonation consists of sequences of tones and pitch movements to produce musical sounds. More simply, intonation is “the pitch pattern in a sentence” (Ladefoged, 2006, p. 23). To sum up, it helps speakers communicate meaning through the rise and fall of the voice while producing speech.

1.2.5.3.2. Stress

Stress can be simply defined as the emphasis placed on a syllable of a word. According to Rogers (2000, p.94), Stress is “a complex auditory impression which the listener perceives as making one syllable more prominent than its neighbors”. Dale and Poms (2005) suggested that Stress refers to the amount of volume that is given to a particular sound, syllable, or word by the speaker while saying it. In speaking, Stress enables the speaker to make meaningful utterances. Its patterns can be used to distinguish between two words' or phrases' meanings that would otherwise seem to be the same.

1.2.5.3.3 Rate

Speech rate plays a vital role in communication, impacting how information is received and understood by the audience. The rate refers to the average syllable count spoken within a given time frame, typically per second or minute (Thomson,2015). In other words, the rate of speech refers to the speed at which a person speaks, which can range from fast to slow. It can be influenced by various factors such as emotions, feelings, and the nature of the message being conveyed. Rate is typically measured in words per minute, indicating the speed

of speaking. The rate of speech can be quantified by calculating the number of words or syllables spoken within a given time frame, as indicated by Wood in 2004.

1.2.6 Ways to Evolve Speaking Fluency

Developing and improving speaking fluency is a valuable skill that can greatly enhance communication effectiveness and confidence. Fluent speaking involves the ability to express thoughts and ideas smoothly, with clarity, coherence, and appropriate pacing. While achieving fluency may require time and practice, there are four strategies and techniques that individuals can employ to evolve their speaking fluency according to (Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 1988, Maurice, 1983, Schneider, 1993).

1.2.6.1 Repetition

Repetition is a strategy that can be employed to enhance speaking fluency. By intentionally repeating certain words, phrases, or sentences, individuals can reinforce their linguistic skills and improve the flow and rhythm of their speech.(Gatbonton and Segalowitz,1988, Maurice, 1983, Schneider, 1993).

1.2.6.2Expand the Duration of Speaking

Expanding the duration of speaking has a positive impact on fluency. When individuals have more time to speak, they can maintain a comfortable pace without feeling rushed. This alleviates the pressure to quickly convey their thoughts and allows them to formulate and articulate ideas more effectively. As a result, their speech becomes smoother and more fluent. The increased time enables them to organize their thoughts, select appropriate words, and construct coherent sentences, leading to a more polished and fluent delivery. (Gatbonton and Segalowitz,1988, Maurice, 1983, Schneider, 1993).

1.2.6.3 Prepare Before Speaking

Sufficient planning has been identified as a contributing factor to improved fluency and reduced pause duration, as mentioned in the research conducted by Foster and Skehan(1996). Sufficient planning before speaking enhances fluency by promoting coherent organization, improving word selection and sentence construction, boosting confidence, facilitating smooth transitions, and enabling effective time management.

1.2.6.4 Set Time Limits

Establishing a relaxed speaking environment encourages learners to speak at a faster pace and minimize pauses; consequently, they will achieve fluency. This technique fosters fluency by improving students' ability to think quickly, organize their thoughts on the spot, speak more efficiently, and maintain a smooth flow of speech. Ultimately, these practices contribute to the overall development of their speaking skills and enhance their proficiency in the language.(Gatbonton and Segalowitz,1988, Maurice, 1983, Schneider, 1993).

1.2.7. The Effects of Psychological Barriers on Speaking Fluency

Psychological barriers can significantly impact speaking fluency. These barriers are rooted in the mind and emotions of individuals and can create obstacles that hinder effective communication. Some common psychological barriers to speaking fluency include anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation; these factors lead to limited participation which means that learners will not utilize the language extensively. Consequently, this can lead to a decline in fluency. In addition, when people feel anxious or self-conscious about their ability to speak a language, they are less likely to be fluent because they are more focused on making mistakes and sounding perfect, rather than on speaking smoothly without hesitation. (Hieu, 2011; as cited in Bani & Albalawi, 2016, p. 273)

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the different definitions and understandings of fluency; emphasizing its importance in effective communication. It also explored various types of fluency, including reading, writing, oral-reading, and speaking fluency, with particular emphasis on speaking fluency. Repetition, increasing speaking duration, pre-speaking preparation, and setting time limits were suggested as ways to evolve fluency. Finally, some effects of psychological barriers on speaking fluency were tackled.

CHAPTER TWO: FIELDWORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

2.1. Data Collection Instruments

2.2. Data Analysis Procedures

Section One: Questionnaire for Students

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Section Two: Classroom Observation

2.2.1. The Description of classroom observation

2.2.2 Observation Checklist Analysis

1.3.2 Classroom Observation Results Interpretations:

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter investigates the psychological obstacles that impede students' fluency in English as a Foreign Language classes within the Department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel University. The primary focus of this chapter lies in describing the methodology employed, as well as analyzing and interpreting the data gathered from students through the questionnaire and classroom observation. As our research centers around learners, their opinions serve as an important instrument to address our research questions.

2.1. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments utilized for gathering information in this study included a questionnaire and a classroom observation. The questionnaire was designed to gather self-reported information from the students, allowing them to express their thoughts, experiences, and perceptions related to speaking fluency and the psychological barriers they may face, it consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions. According to Nunan (1992), “a questionnaire is an instrument for the collection of data usually in a written form consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subjects” (p. 231 as cited in Mebitil, 2011, p. 54). On the other hand, a classroom observation was carried out to allow us to observe courses in EFL oral expression classes and gather data. The purpose of employing these instruments was to acquire extensive information regarding the subject being investigated and to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data

2.2. Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis of the data will be conducted in two ways. Firstly, the quantitative results will be calculated and analyzed in terms of percentages. These calculated percentages will then be presented in tables for clear presentation and comparison. Secondly, the qualitative data will be presented either as summaries or direct quotations to illustrate the analysis of the

data related to the research questions. By analyzing both types of data together, patterns and details will be identified, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

SECTION ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

2.1.1. Sample of the Questionnaire

The whole population of this study consists of 236 first-year LMD students (eight groups) at the Department of foreign languages, the branch of English at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University. We randomly selected 60 students from this population to participate in the questionnaire. Those students were selected because they are newly introduced to the Oral Expression module and face various psychological barriers that significantly affect their speaking fluency.

2.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to 60 First-year EFL students at the Department of English at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University. It begins with an introductory paragraph that introduces the research topic and explains the purpose of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: "Section One" covers general information about the respondents, "Section Two" focuses on psychological barriers, and "Section Three" contains questions about oral fluency and psychological barriers. The entire questionnaire consists of twenty (20) questions. The questionnaire includes various types of questions. Open-ended questions encourage learners to provide personal opinions or background information, allowing them to freely express themselves. On the other hand, closed-ended questions require students to respond with "Yes" or "No" or select the correct answers from a set of options, with an expectation for them to justify or explain their choices

2.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

Part one: General Information

1/Your gender

Table 01: Students' Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	10	17%
Female	50	83%
Total	60	100%

In Table one, it is noticed that the number of females (50) with a percentage of 83% exceeded the number of males with a difference of 40 students and a percentage of 17%. The data provided indicate a significant gender imbalance in first-year English classrooms.

2/Studying English was?

Table 02: The Choice of Studying English

Options	Number	Percentage
Your Choice	50	83%
Obligatory	10	17%
Total	60	100

Table 02 shows that when it comes to the choice of studying English, 50 students accounting for 83% answered with their own choice, while 10 students accounting for 17% claimed that studying English was obligatory.

Part Two: Students' Psychological Barriers

3/ Are you an outgoing, talkative person who likes to participate in group work?

Table 03: Personality Traits

Options	Number	Percentage
No (Introvert)	30	50%
Yes (Extrovert)	30	50%
Total	60	100%

Data in the above table represent two personality traits; introversion and extroversion. The number of introverts is 30 accounting for 50%, similarly, the number of extroverts is 30 accounting for 50%.

4/What do you think are the factors that prevent you from speaking English in the oral expression sessions?

Table 04: Students' Hindrance Factors

Reasons	Number	Percentage
A-Anxiety	14	23.33%
B- Shyness	27	45%
C- Lack of confidence	16	26.66%
D-Lack of motivation	11	18.33%
Total	60	100%

The purpose of this question is to identify the factors that prevent students from speaking English in oral expression sessions. 27 students are noted in this respect with a rate of 45%, the second is lack of confidence with 16 students at a rate of 26.66%, next is anxiety with 14 students with a rate of 23.33% and the last factor is lack of motivation with 11 students with a rate of 18.33%.

Sub-question: Students' justifications include the following:

1. Fear of making mistakes,
2. Fear of public speaking,
3. Lack of vocabulary,
4. Lack of confidence, and feeling shy and uncomfortable talking in English.

5/ Do you feel afraid to speak in front of your classmates?

Table 05: Students' Fear of Speaking.

Options	Number	Percentage
YES	19	31.66%
NO	41	68.33%
Total	60	100%

Table05 is related to students' fear of speaking. It is noticed that 41 students accounting for 68.33% answered no, while 19 students accounting for 31.66% answered yes.

Sub-question: Students' justifications included:

1. feeling shy, anxious, and uncomfortable,
2. Fear of making mistakes,

3. Lack of vocabulary and confidence.

6/ Do you feel embarrassed when you interact with your friends in the classroom?

Table 06: students 'embarrassment to interacting with others

Options	Number	Percentage
YES	12	20%
NO	46	80%
Total	60	100%

The above table is related to students' embarrassment of interacting with others. 46 students accounting for 80% answered no, whereas 12 students accounting for 20% answered yes.

7/ Do you feel motivated to attend speaking classes?

Table 07: students' motivation

Options	Numbers	Percentage
YES	15	25%
NO	45	75%
Total	60	100%

The previous table is related to students' motivation. 15 students accounting for 25% answered yes, while 45 students accounting for 75% answered no. Students' justifications included teachers' feedback, classmates' support, and their passion to be fluent.

If yes why?

1. Teachers' feedback.
2. Classmates' support.
3. Passion to be fluent.

8/ Does the teacher encourage you to speak?

Table 08: Teachers' Encouragement for Students

Options	Numbers	Percentage
YES	59	98.33%
NO	1	1.66%
Total	60	100%

Table 08 is related to teachers' encouragement for students. 59 students with a rate of 98.33% answered yes, on the other hand, only 1 student answered that their teachers do not encourage them to speak.

9/ Do you feel confident when you speak in oral expression classes?

Table9: Students' Confidence

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	16.66%
No	50	83.33%
Total	60	100%

It can be noticed from Table 09 that 10 students with a rate of 16.66% feel confident when they speak in oral expression classes, while 50 students with a rate of 83.33% do not.

Part Three: Speaking Fluency & Psychological Barriers

10/ which skill are you good at?

Table10: Students' proficiency in the four skills

Skills	Number	Percentage
Writing	23	38.33%
Listening	22	36.66%
Speaking	20	33.33%
Reading	24	40%
Total	60	100%

Table 10 is related to the four skills students are good at. 23 students (38.33%) selected writing, 22 Students (36.66%) selected listening, 20 students (33.33%) selected speaking, and finally, 24 students with a rate of 40% selected reading. This means that the four skills are equally important.

11/ How well do you speak English?

Table11: Students' Level of Speaking

Options	Number	Percentage
Good	21	35%
Average	37	61.66%
Poor	2	3.33%
Total	60	100%

It is shown that 37 students (61,66%) claimed that they have an average level answer while 21 students (35%) claimed that they have a good level. Only 2 students with a rate of 3.33% claimed to have a poor level.

12/ How many hours are devoted to speaking in oral expression session?

Table 12: Students' Number of speaking Hours

Hours	Number	Percentage
One hour	5	8.33%
Two Hours	20	33.33%
Three Hours	35	58.33%

Concerning the number of hours devoted to oral expression, 35 students(58.33%) selected three hours, 20 students(33.33%) selected two hours, whereas only 5 students (8.33%) selected one hour.

13/ Do you think it is enough?

Table 13: Students' Opinions about the Sufficiency of Timing

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	30%
No	42	70%
Total	60	100%

Table 13 is related to students' opinions about the sufficiency of timing. 42 students with a rate of 70% answered No, while 18 students with a rate of 30% answered yes.

14/ Which speaking aspect do you think is the most important to be mastered?

Table14: Speaking Aspects' Importance Ranking

Aspects	Number	Percentage
Grammar	17	28.33%
Vocabulary	38	63.33%
Pronunciation	21	35%
Fluency	18	30%
Comprehension	10	16.66%
Total	60	100%

Table 14 is related to which speaking aspect is the most important to be mastered. 38 students (63.33%) chose vocabulary, 21 students (35%) selected pronunciation, 18 students (30%) chose fluency, 17 students (28.33%) selected grammar, and 10 students with a rate of (16.66) chose comprehension.

15/ What is speaking fluency for you?

Table15: Students' Definition of Speaking Fluency

1/ What is speaking fluency for you?	Number	Percentage
1/ To be able to speak like a native speaker.	20	33.33%
2/Speaking without pauses.	5	8.33%
3/Speaking with confidence.	4	6.66%
4/Speaking without making mistakes and correcting your own mistakes.	15	25%
5/ Using good vocabulary and pronunciation.	16	26.66%
Total	60	100%

It can be deduced from the table above that 20 students (33.33%) defined fluency as the ability to speak like a native speaker. 16 students (26.66%) defined fluency as the use of good vocabulary and pronunciation, 15 students (25%) defined it as speaking without making mistakes and correcting your own mistakes, 5 students (8.33%) said fluency is speaking without pauses and 4 students (6.66%) said it is speaking with confidence.

16/Select from the following characteristics of speaking fluency, you may tick more than one option.

Table 16: the characteristics of speaking fluency

Options	Number	Percentage
Pausing	4	6.66%
Good pronunciation	43	71.66%
Speech flow	19	31.66%
All the above	13	21.66%
Total	60	100%

The majority of students with a rate of 71.66% chose good pronunciation as a characteristic of speaking fluency, 31.66% of them chose speech flow, 21.66% of the students selected all the above, and only 6.66% of them chose pausing.

17/How do you achieve speaking fluency? You can tick more than one option.

Table17: Strategies to master speaking fluency

Options	Number	Percentage
Practice speaking	42	70%
Listening to (native speakers, podcasts, and movies)	47	78.33%
Build vocabulary (learning new words and phrases every day)	25	41.66%
Use English in your daily life (read books in English, label things in English, think in English....Etc)	38	63.33%
Total	60	100%

The results show that 47 students (78.33%) selected listening to (native speakers, podcasts, and movies) in order to improve their fluency, 42 students (70%) chose practice speaking, 38 students (63.33%) chose to use English in their daily life, and 25 students (41.66%) opted building vocabulary.

18/Among the following psychological barriers which one prevents you from speaking fluently?

Table 18: psychological barriers as hindrances to speaking fluency

Psychological barriers	Number	Percentage
Shyness	22	36.66%
Fear of making mistakes	40	66.66%
Anxiety	13	21.66%
Lack of confidence	14	23.33%
Total	60	100%

From the results in Table 18, the majority of students (66.66%) opted for fear of making mistakes, 22 of them (36.66%) opted for shyness, and 14 students (23.33%) selected lack of confidence and 13 students (21.66%) chose anxiety.

The justifications of students are the following:

1. Fear of making mistakes.
2. Lack of motivation.
3. Mispronunciation.
4. Difficulty in producing speech.

19/In your opinion, what are the consequences of psychological barriers to speaking fluency?

Table 19: students' opinions about the consequences of the psychological barriers to speaking fluency

Consequences	Number	Percentage
Inappropriate pauses	12	20%
Pronunciation problems	29	48.33%
Speaking hesitantly	28	46.66%
Communication failure	22	36.66%
Others	3	5%
Total	60	100%

According to students' opinions, pronunciation problems are the prime consequences of psychological barriers to their speaking fluency with a rate of 48.33%, Followed by

speaking hesitantly with a rate of 46.66%, next communication failure with a rate of 36.66%, then inappropriate pauses with a rate of 20% and finally, 5% of the students chose others.

20/How do you overcome psychological barriers to improve your speaking fluency?

Table.20.strategies to Overcome Psychological Barriers and Enhance Speaking Fluency

Ways	Number	Percentage
1. Practice the language.	20	33.33%
2. Learn new vocabulary.	11	18.33%
3. Pursuing assessments from teachers.	10	16.66%
4. Embracing the chance to learn from mistakes.	19	31.66%
Total	60	100%

According to Table 20, students accounting for 33.33% suggested practicing the language, 19 of them with a rate of 31.66% embraced the chance to learn from their mistakes, 11 students with a rate of 18.33% recommended learning new vocabulary, while 10 students accounting for 16.66% suggested seeking an assessment from teachers.

2.1.4. Questionnaire Results' Interpretations

In the light of the results obtained from the questionnaire of students, we noticed that the majority of students chose to study English out of their interest and they consider their level in English as average. Students' answers to questions 4,5, and 6 indicated that most of them encounter psychological obstacles when learning English as a foreign language such as anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, and lack of confidence. Moreover, students feel embarrassed and afraid to speak in front of their classmates, where shyness stands as a

prominent psychological barrier for a lot of them. The results obtained from questions 7, 8, and 9 showed that students did not feel confident when speaking, and though the teacher encourages his students to speak; the majority still feel unmotivated to attend oral expression classes and they justify that by their fear of making mistakes and shyness.

The third part of the questionnaire was concerned with the relationship between psychological barriers and speaking fluency. Most students think that time devoted to speaking in oral expression sessions is not enough i.e. 3 hours per week does not help them to participate and to engage in discussions; therefore, their speaking fluency will be affected (from the results of questions 12 and 13). Students have given different definitions for speaking fluency, however, they all agree that it is related to the ability to speak like a native speaker in which one produces errors/pauses- free speech with good vocabulary and pronunciation (from the results of questions 14, 15, and 16). Moreover, they believed that listening to native speakers, podcasts, and movies is the best way to become a fluent speaker besides practicing the English language in daily life and building vocabulary.

According to the results highlighted by questions 18 and 19, psychological barriers including fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of confidence, and anxiety impede students from speaking fluently, and they justify their answers with a lack of vocabulary, mispronunciation, and fear of judgment. In addition, the reasons given by the participants to ensure that psychological barriers become hindrances to speaking fluency are hesitation in speech, inappropriate pauses, communication failure as well as pronunciation problems, the latter is considered the prime consequence according to them.

To conclude, to overcome these psychological problems and their consequences regarding speaking fluency, first-year LMD students suggested the following solutions:

practicing the language, learning from mistakes, seeking feedback from teachers, and learning new vocabulary. (from the result of question 20 "section three")

Section Two: Classroom Observation

2.2.1. The Description of Classroom Observation

Researchers have chosen to employ classroom observation as a tool to gather qualitative data essential for describing the difficulties faced by our research participants. The objective of classroom observation is to evaluate the fluency level of students and to observe the challenges they encounter while speaking. Additionally, it serves as a means to validate the study and gather detailed data within the study's context. The observation was conducted during oral expression sessions, at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University Jijel with first-year students. The observation includes 20 students from two groups (10 participants from each group who were always attending and participating in the speaking tasks) out of the whole population. It lasted for 3 weeks i.e. the researchers attended 12 sessions started on Sunday, April 23, 2023, and ended on Wednesday, May 10, 2023.

2.2.2 Observation Checklist Analysis

This part illustrates the results gathered from the classroom observation using a checklist to observe students' fluency levels in oral expression sessions with first-year LMD students of Jijel University, in which 20 students were recorded and observed during speaking in oral expression sessions.

Table.21: Psychological Barriers and Fluency Assessment Checklist results

How students are speaking	Never	Infrequently	Frequently	Mostly	Always
Students Speak without inappropriate pauses. (A)	00	01	02	05	12
Students speak coherently. (B)	00	00	03	14	03
Students produce sentences that are free of grammatical mistakes. (C)	10	05	02	02	01
Students use appropriate vocabulary and speak with clear pronunciation. (D)	01	02	08	06	03
Students Give a clear and comprehensible speech. (E)	01	03	07	05	04
students feel anxious or shy while speaking. They seem uncomfortable or stressed. (F)	00	01	02	03	14
Students are motivated and speak confidently. (G)	10	03	02	04	01

Comment: According to Table 21, Speaking without inappropriate pauses (A): The majority of students (12 out of 20) are able to speak without inappropriate pauses, indicating a relatively good flow in their speech. However, there are still some students (8 out of 20) who experience pauses to varying degrees, which might affect the fluency of their communication.

Speaking coherently (B): A significant number of students (14 out of 20) demonstrate the ability to speak coherently.

Producing sentences free of grammatical mistakes (C): This aspect shows a relatively mixed performance among the students. While 10 out of 20 students never make sentences free of grammatical mistakes, there are still a considerable number of students (7 out of 20) who frequently or mostly produce free grammatical mistakes sentences.

Using appropriate vocabulary and clear pronunciation (D): The majority of students (14 out of 20) demonstrate proficiency in using appropriate vocabulary and clear pronunciation.

Giving a clear and comprehensible speech (E): The majority of students (16 out of 20) are able to give clear and comprehensible speeches.

Feeling anxious or shy while speaking (F): A significant number of students (14 out of 20) experience anxiety or shyness while speaking, leading to discomfort or stress.

Motivation and confidence in speaking (G): It is notable that the majority of students (14 out of 20) lack motivation and confidence in speaking.

1.3.2 Classroom Observation Results Interpretations

The checklist used during classroom observation reveals that first-year EFL students at Mohammed Seddik ben Yahia University face psychological obstacles that impede their ability to speak English fluently. The analysis of the findings addresses the research question regarding the psychological barriers hindering their fluency. The identified problems include frequent pauses, word repetition, fear of making mistakes in front of peers, shyness when communicating with the teacher, hesitation, stress during debates, lack of motivation to participate in discussions, anxiety when speaking, difficulty finding appropriate vocabulary, and inability to produce grammatically correct sentences. By addressing these areas, students can enhance their overall oral communication skills.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on describing the results of the students' questionnaire and classroom observation regarding the psychological barriers affecting the speaking fluency of first-year EFL students. Based on the results above, several psychological factors become the barriers to the students' speaking fluency which are fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of confidence, and anxiety.

Limitations of the Study

The present study aimed at investigating psychological barriers to speaking fluency. Accordingly, like any other research, the study encountered certain limitations and challenges, which are outlined below:

- 1- Due to the timing of the study, with questionnaires conducted at the end of the academic year when exams were approaching, many teachers had already completed their curriculum and students had stopped attending classes.
- 2- The process of collecting questionnaire sheets was not straightforward and presented difficulties.
- 3- An additional challenge was that a significant number of respondents did not provide explanations or justifications for the open-ended questions.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that :

- ❖ Students should understand that it is natural to face psychological barriers, but they can be overcome. They should not fear making mistakes, as they are a part of the learning process. It is also important for students to accept evaluations and feedback from their teachers.

- ❖ Teachers should create a supportive and welcoming environment that encourages learning, particularly during conversations and open discussions.
- ❖ Teachers should be aware of the sources of their students' psychological barriers, which can help them design appropriate oral tasks to minimize these barriers.
- ❖ Students should engage in regular practice of their oral skills both inside and outside the classroom.
- ❖ English language workshops should be available for students to practice real-life conversations in a relaxed setting.
- ❖ The amount of time teachers spend talking should be significantly less than the time students spend talking to avoid a lecture-style approach.
- ❖ Students should be encouraged to step out of their comfort zones and speak, even if they feel shy or have a limited vocabulary.

General Conclusion

Speaking, being the most crucial skill in foreign language learning, is greatly influenced by various factors, particularly psychological ones. This study specifically focuses on how psychological barriers have a significant impact on speaking fluency among first-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at the Department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahya University, Jijel. The research aims to explore the psychological barriers that hinder students' speaking fluency by utilizing a questionnaire administered to a sample of 60 students, and classroom observation.

To address the research problem and gain insights into the psychological factors affecting speaking fluency, three research questions were formulated. The study consists of two chapters: the theoretical Chapter was divided into two sections, the first section aimed at shedding light on psychological barriers and their causes, and the second section dealt with

speaking fluency definitions, aspects, importance, characteristics, and the effect of psychological barriers on speaking fluency. The empirical chapter consists of two sections, the first section outlines the research methodology, employing a descriptive-analytical approach, and the second one presents the results.

The research findings reveal that psychological factors, such as anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, and lack of confidence, significantly influence speaking fluency. Additionally, the study identifies difficulties hindering speaking fluency, including limited time allocated to speaking in the oral expression module, lack of motivation, frequent pauses, hesitation, and struggles with producing grammatically correct sentences.

To overcome these psychological barriers to speaking fluency. Teachers should create a supportive and welcoming environment that encourages learning, particularly during conversations and open discussions. Moreover, Teachers should be aware of the sources of their students' psychological barriers, which can help them design appropriate oral tasks to minimize these barriers. In addition, students should perceive these factors as natural obstacles that can be overcome and embrace opportunities for authentic conversation within the classroom.

In conclusion, the findings presented have answered the questions of the current study; that is to say, there is a relationship between psychological barriers and speaking fluency and it is evident that these barriers significantly impede students from achieving speaking fluency.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Students

Dear students,

This questionnaire serves as a gathering tool for a master's two academic research conducted at the Department of English at Mohamed Seddik ben Yahia University. We would be grateful if you devote some of your time and energy to answering this questionnaire that deals with investigating your psychological barriers to speaking fluency. It would be also noteworthy that your answers will be strictly confidential in that they will only be used for the purpose of research.

Guidelines: For each item tick (√) in the appropriate box or write in the space provided.

You are extremely appreciated for your incorporation, thank you in advance.

Abdelouahab Ikhlas

Boumekhita Soulaf

Department of English

Section One: General Information

1/ Gender:

a) Male

b) Female

2/ Studying English was:

a) Your choice

b) Obligatory

Section Two: Students' Psychological Barriers

3/ Are you an outgoing, talkative person who likes to participate in group work?

a) Yes (Extrovert) b) No (Introvert)

4/ What do you think are the factors that prevent you from speaking English in the oral expression sessions?

a) Anxiety

b) Shyness

c) Lack of confidence

d) Lack of motivation

Justify your answer, Please :

.....
.....
.....

5/ Do you feel afraid to speak in front of your classmates?

a) Yes

b) No

If Yes, why?

.....
.....

6/Do you feel embarrassed when you interact with your friends in the classroom?

a) Yes

b) No

7/Do you feel motivated to attend speaking classes?

a) Yes

b) No

If Yes, what motivates you?

.....
.....

8/ Does the teacher encourage you to speak?

a) Yes

b) No

9/ Do you feel confident when you speak in oral expression classes?

a) Yes

b) No

Section Three: Speaking Fluency & Psychological Barriers:

10/ Which skill are you good at?

a) Writing

b) Listening

c) Speaking

d) Reading

11/ How well do you speak English?

a) Good

b) Average

c) Poor

12/ How many hours are devoted to speaking in oral expression session?

One hour

Two hours

Three hours

13/ Do you think it is enough?

Yes

No

14/ Which Speaking aspect do you think is the most important to be mastered?

a) Grammar

b) Vocabulary

c) Pronunciation

d) Fluency

e) Comprehension

15/ What is Speaking fluency for you?

.....
.....

16/ Select from the following characteristics of speaking fluency, you may tick more than one.

- a- Pausing
- b- Good pronunciation
- c- Speech Flow
- d- All the above

17/ How do you achieve speaking fluency? You can tick more than one answer :

- a- Practice speaking
- b- Listening to (native speakers, podcasts, and movies)
- c- Build vocabulary (learning new words and phrases every day)
- d- Use English in your daily life (read books in English, label things in English, think in English.... Etc)

18/ Among the following psychological barriers which one prevents you from speaking fluently?

- a- Shyness
- b- Fear of making mistakes
- c- Anxiety
- d- Lack of confidence

Explain, please

.....
.....
.....
.....

19/ In your opinion, what are the consequences of psychological barriers to speaking fluency?

You can tick more than one answer :

- a- Inappropriate pauses
- b- Pronunciation problems
- c- Speaking hesitantly
- d- Communication failure
- e- Others

.....

20/ How do you overcome psychological barriers to improve your speaking fluency?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you.

Appendix B

Speaking Fluency Observation Checklist

Students speaking	Never	Infrequently	Frequently	Mostly	Always
Students Speak without inappropriate pauses. (A)					
Students speak coherently. (B)					
Students produce sentences that are free of grammatical mistakes. (C)					
Students use appropriate vocabulary and speak with clear pronunciation. (D)					
Students Give a clear and comprehensible speech. (E)					
students feel anxious or shy while speaking. They seem uncomfortable or stressed. (F)					
Students are motivated and speak confidently. (G)					

Résumé

Lorsqu'ils parlent anglais en tant que langue étrangère, la fluidité de parole des étudiants algériens est affectée par facteurs psychologique , tels que l'anxiété, la peur de commettre des erreurs et la timidité. Cette étude vise à examiner les barrières psychologiques qui entravent les étudiants en anglais dans l'amélioration de leur fluidité de parole. Pour atteindre cet objectif, l'étude s'est basée sur une méthodologie mixte de collecte de données. Un questionnaire a été administré à 60 étudiants de première année de licence du département d'anglais à l'université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel, dans le but d'explorer leurs obstacles psychologiques. De plus, une observation en classe a été réalisée avec 20 participants du même département afin d'identifier l'effet des barrières psychologiques sur leur fluidité de parole. Les résultats ont indiqué que un nombre considérable des apprenants rencontrent des obstacles psychologiques qui les empêchent de parler couramment, notamment la timidité, l'anxiété, le manque de confiance et le manque de motivation à parler. Sur la base des résultats obtenus, certaines recommandations pédagogiques ont été proposées pour améliorer la fluidité de parole des étudiants.

ملخص

عندما يتحدث الطلاب الجزائريون باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، يتأثر كلامهم بعوامل نفسية مثل القلق والخوف من ارتكاب الأخطاء والخجل. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في العوائق النفسية التي تعيق متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عن الكلام بطلاقة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة محمد صديق بن يحيى بجيجل. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، استندت الدراسة إلى أدوات مختلطة لجمع البيانات. تم توزيع استبيان على 60 طالبًا من السنة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة محمد صديق بن يحيى في جيجل، بهدف استكشاف العوائق النفسية التي يواجهونها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم إجراء حصص المعاينة و الملاحظة مع 20 مشاركًا من نفس القسم لتحديد تأثير العوائق النفسية على طلاقة كلامهم. أشارت النتائج إلى أن عددًا كبيرًا من المتعلمين يواجهون عوائق نفسية تعيقهم عن الكلام بطلاقة، وتتمثل هذه العوائق بشكل رئيسي في الخجل، القلق، وعدم الثقة وعدم الدافع للتحدث. استنادًا إلى النتائج المحصل عليها، تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات التربوية لتعزيز طلاقة كلام الطلاب.