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**The Role of Peer Interaction in Developing EFL Students'  
Communicative Competence**

**The Case of First Year Students (LMD)–University of  
Mohamed Essedik Ben Yahia-Jijel**

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the Master Degree in Language Sciences**

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## Dedications

### In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

We would give our undeniable and unforgettable thanks to the most graceful and most compassionate the almighty (Allah), that has provided us with a lot of blessing that can never be counted.

To the light of my eyes, my **mother** and **father** for their endless love,

To my husband **Badis**,

To my sister **Wahida**,

To my lovely brothers **Adel** and **Hussein**, and my uncles **Bachir**, and **Nouredine**,

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To my teachers throughout my career of the study.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Classroom interaction has become an important strategy in learning classes, especially in second and foreign language classrooms. Research in the field shows that interaction with peers stands to be helpful in developing learners' communicative abilities where they are given a wide range of opportunities to use language naturally. It has been noticed that students of English do face problems in the course of communication in or outside classroom settings. Learners' communicative abilities would probably be developed if they are provided with opportunities to interact and practice the language with their peers. The present research work attempts to evoke the importance of peer interaction as a good strategy in helping students to develop not only their knowledge about language, but more importantly about how to use it appropriately and effectively. For purposes of data collection, questionnaires appeared to be of particular relevance. Two questionnaires have been administered to both first year (LMD-license) students from the English Department and teachers of Oral Expression to get information about the role of peer interaction in promoting students' communicative competence. The analysis of the questionnaires confirms the stated hypothesis and the results shows that both students and teachers view peer interaction as a good strategy that can be implemented in foreign language classes in order to develop students' communicative abilities. The results also educe the centrality of peer interaction to foster communicative competence.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**%:** Percentage

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**EFL:** English as a foreign language

**GTM:** Grammar Translation Method

**L2:** Second Language

**TL:** Target Language

**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

The effectiveness of language teaching and learning has been the subject for many years. Most of researchers have focused on second language acquisition, from Krashen's Comprehensible Input (1966), to Swain's Comprehensible Output (1995), and Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1980). Speaking about classroom interaction, interaction is a major aspect in language teaching. As claimed by Ellis (1985), a great deal of time is devoted to interaction between the teacher and learners and to interact among learners themselves; the quality of interaction has a major influence on learning. Krashen (1982) states that "classroom should function to provide the learner with the comprehensible target language input in an effectively supportive climate" (cited in Chaudron 2000, p. 6). Peer interaction, in particular, was put under investigation as Vygotsky (1987) who emphasizes the role of social interaction with other people in developing understanding such as an adult or a more experienced peer.

Communication needs more than producing correct sentences. There are other factors that affect the use of a language; so, second language learners need a good understanding of these factors. This understanding will enable them to use grammatically correct and syntactically complex language in the right context. A learner who can use the language effectively and appropriately can be referred to as « communicatively competent ».

The concept of communicative competence began in the 1960s as a criticism to the so-called "linguistic competence" introduced by the structural linguist Chomsky (1965), who based the linguistic theory on an ideal speaker-listener, with perfect linguistic knowledge. Later on, communicative competence was developed by the contribution of

other researchers as Canale and Swain (1980, 1983), Celce-Murcia (1990), and Bachman (1995).

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

There was a focus on the grammatical rules of the target language, i.e., adopting the traditional method which is Grammar Translation Method in the teaching process. Recently, there has been a shift in interest and focus towards communicative methods that aim to promote communication. Interaction is important in classroom situations which provide a suitable environment to communicate through the use of some activities that help learners develop their communicative abilities. However; it has been noticed that students do find problems in the daily classroom practice. Such difficulties relate to interacting and communicating the target language. The present research work attempts to answer the following questions:

- How relevant is peer interaction to developing students' communicative abilities?
- What are the activities teachers can engage their students in in order to develop their communicative abilities?

## **3. Aim of the Study**

The main aim of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately. This research aims to:

- Highlight the notion of peer interaction and its significance in foreign language classrooms.
- Showing whether peer interaction is a contributing factor in developing EFL students' communicative abilities.

#### **4. Hypothesis**

If students are provided with opportunities for interacting with their peers in the classroom, they will develop their communicative competence.

#### **5. Means of the Research**

The study is concerned with university level students of English (first year). The target population in this research is first year students of English and teachers of the Oral Expression module (first year level). Given the large population of first year students (230 students), a representative sample of 70 students has been chosen. Given the limited number of teachers of first year Oral Expression (4 teachers), the results obtained are not meant for generalization, but are rather descriptive.

For the purpose of data collection, two questionnaires for both teachers and students are used. A questionnaire to teachers of oral expression who have been teaching English has been administered, making sure that their responses and suggestions are the product of interaction with the learners during the year. The second one has been directed to first year students of English to know their opinions about the role of peer interaction in developing students' communicative abilities.

The main reason behind the use of the questionnaires is to investigate how students learn the foreign language, and know if communicative competence can be developed through peer interaction.

#### **6. Structure of the Study**

This study is a descriptive research work; it is organized in the form of three data chapters: the first and the second chapters are devoted to the theoretical framework of the study, and the third one focuses on the analysis of the data obtained and the interpretation of the questionnaires' results.

The first chapter highlights the nature of language teaching and classroom interaction. In addition, the notion of peer interaction in classroom contexts and its importance is also put forward, shedding light on the interaction hypotheses in language learning, with particular reference to Long's interaction hypothesis and Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. The main aspects of peer interaction as well as the role of the teacher when students are interacting with each other are discussed; then explaining cooperative and collaborative language learning, to conclude with classroom interaction techniques that students could be provided with to interact with their peers.

The second chapter gives an overview of communicative competence, shedding light on Hymes' work on communicative competence and its development. The contribution of models introduced by Canale and Swain (1980), Celce-Murcia (1995), Bachman (1990) are also part of the chapter, to conclude with communicative competence in foreign language teaching.

The third chapter will be for the analysis of data collected and the interpretation of teachers' and students' questionnaires to know whether it agrees with the hypothesis or not

# **Chapter One**

## **Peer Interaction**

Introduction

**1.1.** The Nature of Language Teaching and Classroom Interaction

**1.2.** Definition of Peer Interaction

**1.3.** Importance of Peer Interaction in Language Learning

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**1.8.** Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

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**1.9.2.** Group/Pair Work

Conclusion

# **Chapter One**

## **Peer Interaction**

### **Introduction**

The concept of interaction plays a significant role in the process of second language learning; it is supported in classrooms because it is the context where learners are encouraged to communicate using different techniques that offer them opportunities to practice the target language (TL). The starting point in this chapter will be from the nature of language teaching and classroom interaction. In addition, the notion of peer interaction in classroom contexts and its importance is put forward, shedding light on the hypotheses highlighting interaction in language learning, with particular reference to Long's interaction hypothesis and Vygotskian theory of cognitive development and the importance of peer interaction. The main aspects of peer interaction as well as the role of the teacher when students are interacting with each other are discussed; then explaining cooperative and collaborative language learning, to conclude with classroom interaction techniques that students could be provided with to interact with their peers.

### **1.1. The Nature of Language Teaching and Classroom Interaction**

The traditional view of language teaching and learning conceptualizes classroom instruction to convey information from the knowledgeable teacher to the 'empty' and passive learner; this view is taken by the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) which is a teacher-centered approach. The main interest of GTM is raising students' awareness about grammatical features of the language through explicit teaching of grammar rules, followed by the application of these rules, and then the translation of sentences into the mother tongue.

This method is form-focused and does not give students the opportunity to participate or practice the TL in order to use it for communication. For this reason, current researches support the idea that students need to interact in the classroom using the TL. The view obtained by communicative language teaching (CLT), as stated by Brown, “In the era of CLT, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication: it is what communication is all about” (Brown, 2001, p. 165). CLT is based on theories about Language Acquisition; its aim is to stimulate communication through the use of interaction in the TL. Brown and Yule (1983; cited in Ellis, 2003) characterize communication as involving two general purposes: The interactional function, where language is used to establish and maintain contact, and transactional function, where language is used referentially to exchange information. CLT, then, is directed to enabling learners to function interactionally and transactionally in a second language. CLT proposes that tasks should provide the opportunity for learners to use language in order to communicate meaning without focusing on accuracy. This would encourage fluency (Brumfit, 1984) and lead learners to explore creative ways of expressing themselves using their knowledge of the language.

## **1.2. Definition of Peer Interaction**

The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics defines classroom interaction as “the patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication and the types of social relationships which occur within the classroom” (2002, p. 74).

Ellis (1999, p.1) defines interaction as “the social behavior that occurs when one person communicates with another”. He states that interaction refers to communication between individuals, particularly when they are negotiating meaning in order to prevent a breakdown in communication.

Ellis (2003) claims that interaction is composed of three main aspects:

- **Negotiation of Meaning:** The process by which two or more interlocutors identify and then attempt to resolve a communication breakdown. However; negotiation of meaning may or may not result in mutual understanding.
- **Communication Strategies:** Strategies such as paraphrasing, used by learners to overcome communication problems caused by a lack of or an inability to access second language knowledge.
- **Communicative Effectiveness:** A term used to by Yule (1996; cited in Ellis, 2003, p.74) to refer to the ability of communicators to achieve successful outcomes in a task by identifying the referents that need to be communicated and by taking their partners' perspective.

A peer can be defined in a number of ways, for example in terms of equivalence of age, skill, proficiency, or class group (Falichikov, 2001).

Goldschmidt (1976) defines a peer as someone of the same social stand while a peer group consists of those of the same status with whom one interacts. Teaching by peers in learning contexts involves teaching students who are at a similar age of educational level (cited in Falichikov, 2001).

Philip, Adams, & Iwashita (2014, p. 2) define peer interaction as the context in which the participants are all language learners who are together for the purpose of learning.

Peer interaction is described as any communicative activity carried out between learners, where there is minimal or no participation from the teacher. Long & Porter (1985) suggest that "peer interaction allowed for learners to practice communication patterns

beyond the 'teacher lockstep' mode, granting learner opportunities, to engage in negotiation as well as to take on new conversational roles" (Philip et al., 2014, p.2).

### **1.3. The Importance of Peer Interaction**

Before discussing the importance of peer interaction, it is crucial to provide an account about the role of classroom interaction in second language learning.

Classroom interaction is viewed as significant because it is argued that: Only through interaction that the learner can decompose the TL structures and derive meaning from classroom event, Interaction gives learners the opportunities to incorporate the TL structures into their own speech. The meaningfulness for learners to classroom event of any kind, whether thought of as interactive or not, will depend on the extent to which communication has been jointly constructed between the teacher and learners. (Allwright, 1984; Breen, 1985; cited in Chaudron, 2000, p.10). Classroom interaction considers healthy relationships with other classmates and enables experts, such as teachers, to create a context in which novices can participate actively in their own learning and respect the integrity of learners. (Antoin, 1999; cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 117). Interaction assists learners by giving themselves more time to process the input when they have to clarify something that they have said (Ellis, 1997, p. 47). Through interaction, learners' attention is drawn to some element(s) of language with the possible consequence that that element/those elements will be incorporated into a learner's developing system (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.330). According to Ellis (1984, p. 95):

Interaction contributes to development because it is the means by which the learner is able to crack the code. This takes place when the learner can infer what is said even though the message contains linguistic items that are not yet part of his competence and when the learner can use the discourse to help him/her modify or supplement the linguistic knowledge already used in production (cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.349).

Ellis (1999, p. 238) states that “interaction provides learners with input, it serves to focus their attention on specific linguistic forms, it is more than an input mechanism; it helps to activate cognitive processes that are responsible for acquisition”.

Peer interaction is precisely considered to have an impact on students’ second language development. Adams (2007) argues that through constant exposure to the TL during peer interaction, learners who engage in peer interaction practice and receive corrective feedback may be able to strengthen form-meaning connections and through this develop and refine TL knowledge (cited in Philip et al., 2014, p.65). Peer interaction seems to be particularly good context because learners have more opportunities to produce language in peer interactions. Piaget (1971) believed that cooperation between peers is likely to encourage real exchange of thought and discussion (cited in Falchikove, 2001). Peer interaction can provide a platform for peers to further their knowledge by working together through socially constructed activities as it allows peers to be "engaged in problem solving and knowledge buildings" (Swain, 2000 ; cited in Mynard & Carson, 2013, p.89).

Harmer (2001) points out that learners' time to speak is very little when they engage in a teacher-learner interaction but their time would be expanded in peer interaction (cited in Philip et al., 2014, p.2).

Blum-kulk and Siow (2009) describe peer talk as having a collaborative (in sense of participants working together to achieve a common goal, multiparty (in that it can involve at least two or more participants), symmetrical (equivalence of age, educational level) participation (cited in Philip et al., 2014, p.2).

In collaborative work, learners are actively exchanging, debating, and negotiating ideas within groups, helping each other to understand and learn.

## **1.4. Interaction Hypothesis**

Research on interaction is conducted within the framework of the Interactive Hypothesis. It is introduced by Long (1980), it states that learners acquire new linguistic forms as a result of attending to them in the process of negotiation of meaning in order to address a communication problem. It places an emphasis on the role of input, but claims that “the ‘best’ input for language acquisition is that which arises when learners have the opportunity to negotiate meaning in exchanges where an initial communication problem has occurred” (cited in Ellis, 2003).

The Interaction Hypothesis concerns itself with the negotiation of meaning during conversational exchanges that arise when interlocutors seek to prevent a communicative impasse occurring or to remedy an actual impasse that has arisen, these exchanges refers to what Long (1983) called “modifications” (i.e. change in the structure of the conversation to accommodate potential or actual problems of understanding) (cited in Ellis, 1999, p.4). Learners, according to him, will learn by adapting their speech to understand, and will also learn from adjustment made by other speakers who are more competent than those they are interacting with. Hatch (1978) states that learners can learn a second language through the process of interacting rather than just manifesting what they have already learned in interaction (cited in Randall, 2007, p. 3).

Pica (1992, 1994) proposes that opportunities to negotiate meaning assist learners in three principal ways: First, Pica suggests that the conversational modifications that arise through negotiation breakdown the input into units that can be easily processed by learners. Secondly, Pica suggests that negotiation provides learners with feedback on their own use of the L2. Finally, Pica suggests that negotiation prompts learners to adjust, manipulate, and modify their own output (cited in Ellis, 2003).

## **1.5. Peer Interaction in Vygotskian Theory**

Another theorist, who has focused on the significance of social interaction in language learning, is Vygotsky. In his theory, which is a sociocultural theory, Vygotsky (1987) emphasizes the role of social interaction with other people in developing understanding such as an adult or a more experienced peer.

Vygotsky (1987) argues that development is most likely to occur when two participants differ in terms of competence about some skills or tasks, work collaboratively on it, and arrive at shared understanding (cited in Tudge, 1999, p.196). According to him, humans are “thoroughly social” beings who learn and develop by having experiences. In Moll’s words, “Vygotsky theory emphasizes the value of peer interaction and the importance of activity and learning in the process of doing”, adding that linguistic development occurs “as a result of meaningful verbal interaction between experts and novices in the environment” (Schinke, Llano, 1995; cited in Helbebrand & Varona, 1999, pp.54-5).

Vygotsky argues that collaboration with a more competent partner, whether adult or peer, could be beneficial. In this theory, he brings two key concepts: Intersubjectivity and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

- **Intersubjectivity**

The term is based on "the view that individuals come to a task, problem, on conversation with their own subjective ways of making sense of it. If they then discuss their points of view, shared understanding may be attained"(Tudge, 1999, p.197). Rommveit (1994) states that Vygotsky's theory helps to explain collaborative processes, that provide learners with opportunities to work together to pursue knowledge, skills, ideas. The learners start these collaborative processes with different understandings or a "state of Intersubjectivity" (cited in Albert, Corea, & Macadino, 2012, p. 18). Smolk,

DeGoes, and Pino (1995) define intersubjectivity as a "condition for, or characteristic of, true human communication, implying for the interlocutors a reciprocal faith in a shared experiential world" (Albert, Corea, & Macadino, 2012, p. 18).

- **The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Vygotsky (1987) defines ZPD as "the area of development and which a child can be led in the course of interaction with a more competent partner, either adult or peer" (cited in Tudge, 1999, p.196). According to Vygotsky (1987), the zone is something that is created in the course of social interaction, "we propose that an essential feature of learning is that created zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of processes that are able to operate only when a child is interacting with people in his environment and in collaboration with his peer" (Vygotsky, 1978; cited in Tudge, 1999, p. 197). Vygotsky establishes two levels of development: the developmental level of a novice, that is, the level of what an individual can do without help, and the potential level of development or what can an individual do with help of an expert, the distance between these two levels are called the ZPD, this distance is so great that an individual cannot bridge it unless he is helped by a more knowledgeable person (cited in Ellis, 2000; cited in Mayo, 2007, p.93)

## **1.6. Aspects of Peer Interaction**

Speaking about peer interaction implicates the aspects of this pedagogical process, the aspects of peer interaction are as follow:

### **1.6.1. Comprehensible Input**

According to Corder (1967, p.305), input refers to what is available to the learner; this term is associated with Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Krashen (1981) defines comprehensible input in a particular way. "Essentially, Comprehensible input is that bit of language that is heard/read and that is slightly ahead of a learner's current state of

grammatical knowledge” (Krashen, 1981; cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.309). He claims that “an important condition for language acquisition to occur is that the acquirer understands (through hearing or reading) input language that contains structure ‘a bit beyond’ his or her level of competence. If an acquirer is at stage or level  $i$ , the input he or she understands should contain  $i+1$ ” (Krashen, 1981; cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.309). In other words, the language that learners are exposed to should be just far enough beyond their current level of competence that they can understand most of it and feel challenged to make progress (Krashen, 1981; cited in Brown, 2000, p.277).

Thus students of English language need opportunities to practise language at a level that is comprehended. What is important for L2 learners is to understand the input that focuses on meaning not on form. Comprehensible input is best obtained through learners themselves when they negotiate meaning in peer interaction.

### **1.6.2. Negotiation of Meaning**

This term refers to the conversational exchange that arises when interlocutors seek to prevent a communicative impasse occurring or to remedy an actual impasse that has arisen. Hatch (1978; cited in Richards and Schmidt, 2002) argues that learners can learn a second language through the process of interacting rather than just manifesting what they have already learnt through interaction. In other words, negotiation of meaning refers to some expressions that are used in conversations in order to ask for clarification when participants do not understand what the speakers have said and to utterances that are produced by speakers to clarify their ideas.

According to Ellis (1999 p. 204), negotiation of meaning sequences occur when there is a breakdown in communication that leads interlocutors to remedy it through talk. It consists, according to him, of ‘trigger’ followed by an indicator (where a speaker indicates

a problem arisen), and a response (where an attempt is made by the first speaker to resolve the problem).

### **1.6.3. Turn Taking Behavior**

To get all students involved and ensure their participation in any conversation, interlocutors should make decisions about who is to speak; this is turn taking. The term refers to the way in which participants in conversations get their chance to speak. It depends on the listener waiting for the appropriate moment when a turn can be made and which is usually the speaker pauses sufficiently or ends a syntactic unit with final intonation (Chaudron, 2000, p. 142). According to Thornbury (2005), the fundamental rule of turn taking is: Speakers should take turns to hold the floor. This implies that no two speakers should be speaking at once, at least not for any sustained period of time. There are two further rules, although the first of these is arguably culturally specific: (1) long silences are to be avoided, (2) listen when other speakers are speaking, the skills by means of which these rules are observed include: recognizing the appropriate moment to get a turn, signaling the fact that you want to speak, holding the floor while you have your turn, recognizing when other speakers are signaling their wish to speak, yielding the turn, signaling the fact that you are listening. It is one of the management behaviors teachers use.

### **1.6.4. Peer Feedback**

The term feedback refers to the comments or other information that learners receive concerning their success or failure in learning tasks (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 199); it is generally provided by the teacher in the classroom for the purpose of error correction. According to Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 329-30), interactional feedback is an important source of information for learners. Most generally, it provides them with information about the success (or more likely lack of success) of their utterances and gives additional

opportunities to focus on production or comprehension. There are numerous ways of providing feedback to learners from the explicit (stating that there is a problem) to the implicit (feedback during the course of an interaction).

In peer interaction, students can give feedback to each other without any intervention of the teacher. Yang (2004) defines peer feedback as “feedback provided by peers comparing feedback by teachers” (cited in Jiang, 2011, p. 70). Peer feedback is sometimes referred to as peer response, peer review, peer rating, peer assessment, or peer editing. Liu and Hansen (2002) define feedback in more detailed way as “the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor, in connecting and critique each other’s draft in both written and oral formats” (cited in Jiang, 2011, p. 70).

Peer feedback does not mean just correcting errors, but also aims to train students to give and receive feedback from one another through the process of negotiation of ideas; it aims to involve students in revising drafts, and evaluating their own feedback while the teacher takes the role of a trainer (Jiang, 2011, p. 70).

### **1.6.5. Comprehensible Output**

Interaction also provides learners with opportunities to use the target language which is called output. As Swain (1995) argues, comprehensible output refers to the need for a learner to be “pushed toward the delivery of a message that is, not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately” (Swain, 1985 cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 326-7). Output pushes learners to process more deeply with more mental effort than input. It stimulates learners to move from the semantic, strategic processing in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production. It

plays a significant role in language (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.327). Having a lot of comprehensible input alone is not enough to learn a new language. In this sense, Swain (2005; cited in Randall, 2007, p.8) reasons: “The learners need abundant opportunities to create comprehensible output in situations that matter to the individual. Comprehensible output takes place through contact with the more competent other, or in interactive situations such as collaborative dialogues”.

Researchers argue that learners will develop language more frequently and correctly by producing the target language. Ellis (1998) argues to the favor of this view:

One function of output is that it provides the opportunity for meaningful use of ones linguistic resources, Schmith.... has argued that one learns to read by reading, and write by writing. Similarly, it can be argued that one learns to speak by speaking (cited in Chaudron, 2000, p.91).

Thus, for successful learning of a language, learners need opportunities not just to be exposed to the target language, but also to produce language through interaction.

### **1.6.6. Teacher Talk**

Teacher talk in second language was a primary concern of classroom interaction, Krashen’s (1981) input hypothesis gives most attention to this talk, he states that « teacher talk is central to the process of language learning where his talk should be comprehensible » (Hall & Verplaetse, 2000, p. 5). Fillmore (1985) identifies a number of features of teacher talk stating that teachers should avoid translation, emphasize on communication and comprehension by ensuring message redundancy, repetition, tailoring questions to suit the learners’ level proficiency, frequent use of pattern and notions, grammatical talk (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 118), teachers use such features to better convey students’ previously expressed ideas and to create meaningful interaction (Argondizzo, 2004, p. 115). Teachers talk is investigated in terms of amount and quality of talk and

teacher-student interaction, research demonstrates that teachers tend to do most of the talking, for this reason; teachers have often been criticized for their dominance of the talk and advised to talk as little as possible as Cullen (1998) states that « too much teacher talking time deprived students' opportunities to speak » (Argondizzo, 2004, p. 115). Teachers in peer interaction are no more dominate the talk, they intervene if necessary to solve or prevent a communicative breakdown from occurring.

### **1.7. The Role of the Teacher in Peer Interaction**

In a traditional classroom, the teacher had a dominant role of an all knowing leader who 'filled' empty students with knowledge. Since peer interaction takes place between learners with minimum intervention from the teacher, the teacher has some other roles to act rather than taking part in interaction. These are some roles as noted by Harmer (2001, pp. 58-63).

#### **Controller**

When teachers act as controllers, they are in charge of the class and of the activity taking place in a way that is different from a situation where students are working on their own in groups. Controllers take the role, tell students think, organize drills, read aloud, and in various other ways exemplify the qualities of a teacher-fronted classroom.

#### **Organizer**

One of the most important roles that teachers have to perform is that of organizing students to do various acts. This often involves giving the students information, telling them how they are going to do the act, putting them into pairs or groups, and closing things down when it is time to stop.

### **Assessor**

One of the things that students expect from their teachers is an indication of whether or not they are getting their English right. This is where teachers act as assessors. Offering feedback and correction and grading students in various ways.

### **Prompter**

Sometimes when students are involved in a role play activity, for example, they lose the thread of what is going on, or they are 'lost for words', (i.e., they may still have the thread but unable to proceed for a lack of vocabulary). They may not be quite sure how to proceed.

### **Resource**

Students might ask how to say or write something, or what a word or phrase means. They might want to know information in a middle of the activity, about that activity or they might want information about how to look for something. This is where we can be one of the most important resources they have.

### **Tutor**

When students are working on longer project, such as pieces of writing, a preparation for a talk or debates, teachers can act as a tutor, working with individuals or small groups, pointing them in directions they have not yet thought of taking. In such situation, teachers are combining the roles of prompter and resource, acting as a tutor.

### **Observer**

Teachers need to observe what students do so that they can give them useful and individual feedback, to judge the success of the different materials and activities that they take into lessons so they can make changes in the future.

Teachers need to be flexible enough to be able to switch between the various roles they have, judging when it is appropriate to use one or other from them, and to be aware of how to carry out that role and how to perform it.

## **1.8. Collaborative and Cooperative Learning**

The term cooperative work is considered as an umbrella term that includes collaborative learning; it is also used as a synonym for collaborative work (Philip et al., 2014). Collaborative learning is opposed to competitive learning. In this type of peer learning, students have to depend on each other to complete a task. Olsen and Kagan (1992) define cooperative learning as follow:

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning being motivated to increase the learning of others (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.192).

Collaborative work involves a set of skills including: asking for help, giving reasons, disagreeing politely, paraphrasing, asking for repetition, listening attentively, making suggestions, encouraging others to participate, checking that others understand, etc. Schneider (1993) suggests that cooperative learning accompanied with those collaborative skills instruction can change the social ecology of classroom, providing an environment more conducive to facilitate peer interaction (cited in McCafeerty, Jacobs, & Dasilva-Iddings, 2006, p.33).

## **1.9. Classroom Interaction Techniques**

According to many teaching theories, classroom interaction can be created through communicative activities which are important for motivating the students and for establishing good relationships between the teacher and students and among students

themselves, thereby encouraging a supportive environment. Littlewood (1981, p. 62) uses the "social interaction activities" to refer to these activities, they include: Simulations and role plays, discussions, pair and group work.

### **1.9.1. Simulations and Role Plays**

Simulations and role plays are an effective means of involving students in particular types of language use. They are particularly suitable for practicing the socio-cultural variations in speech acts, such as complementing, complaining, and the like. Depending on the level of the students, role play can be performed from prepared script, created from a set of prompts and expressions or written using and consolidating knowledge gained from instruction or discussion of speech act (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p.106). According to Harmer (2007), students act by taking roles of characters that are different from themselves, they have to speak and act from their new characters' point of view. In simulations, students act as if they were in real life situations; the teacher can ask them to simulate a job interview or a presentation to a conference,

According to Harmer (2001, p. 275), simulations and role plays may be good for three reasons: (1) they are fun and thus motivating ; (2) they allow hesitant students to be more forthright in their opinions and behaviors; (3) they allow students to use wider range of language by including the real life in their role plays.

According to Littlewood (1981, p. 49), simulations and role plays involve the following techniques:

- Learners are asked to imagine themselves in a situation that could occur outside the classroom.
- They are asked to adopt a specific role in this situation.

- They are asked to behave as if the situation is really existing in accordance with their role.

This kind of activities can be used to encourage general fluency and to train students for specific situations that occur in reality.

### **1.9.2. Discussions**

Discussions are the most common act used. Typically, the students are introduced to a topic via reading or a listening passage, etc. then, they are asked to discuss a related topic in order to find a solution, a response, or the like. Discussions have the great advantage of provoking fluent language use. As a result, most teachers would like to organize discussion sessions on a more formal basis. For successful discussions, students need time to gather their thoughts before any discussion; teacher can put them into groups to explore the discussion topic before organizing a discussion with the whole class. Teachers can help students by giving cards containing statements of arguments about the topic or encourage them by suggesting things they can say in order to push the discussion along (Harmer, 2007, p.128)

### **1.9.3. Pair and Group Work**

In an interactive activity, the teacher may divide the whole class into pairs and groups. Harmer (2001) asserts that pair works increase the amount of each student's speaking time. It allows students to work and interact independently without teachers' guidance, and this leads to promoting learners' independence. Group work is like pair work because it increases the amount of talking time for individual students, but unlike pair work because more students will contribute in the interaction; they will have different ideas and varied opinions. So, group work ensures a high level of interaction. Nunan (1989) states that:

On the basis of our combined research, it appears that group work and for that matter pair work as well is

eminently capable of providing students with opportunities to produce the target language, and to produce the TL, and to modify interaction in keeping with foreign language acquisition theory, such modified interaction make input comprehensible to learners and to lead ultimately to successful classroom language acquisition (cited in Shafaei, 2010, p.107).

Cohen (1994, p. 3). argues that students in groups can communicate about their task with each other including asking questions, explaining, making suggestions, criticizing, listening, etc. “Peers provide assistance so a student does not feel hopelessly confused about what he or she is supposed to do”. He adds that group work is socially helpful in that it will improve intergroup relations by increasing trust and friendliness (p. 6).

## **Conclusion**

Peer interaction in foreign language classes provides learners with opportunities to practice the TL, express themselves freely, and negotiate meaning through turn taking, with minimal intervention of the teacher so that learner’s time to talk would be increased. The teacher is responsible for the organization of the techniques that learners need to engage in to do tasks in terms of collaboration.

## **Chapter Two**

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#### **2.1. Definition of Key Concepts**

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## **Chapter Two**

### **Communicative Competence**

#### **Introduction**

In addition to phonological and grammatical knowledge, it is necessary for students to acquire ways to communicate with others using their TL. That knowledge is referred to as « communicative competence ». In this chapter, mention will be made about some definitions of key concepts as competence, competence vs. performance, linguistic competence vs. communicative competence, shedding light on Hymes' work on communicative competence and its development by the contribution of models introduced by Canale and Swain (1980), Celce-Murcia (1995), Bachman (1990), to conclude with communicative competence in foreign language teaching.

#### **2.1. Definition of Key Concepts**

##### **2.1.1. Competence**

The term competence in general refers to the ability to do something. Before the mid 1960's, competence in a language was defined narrowly in terms of grammatical knowledge.

Competence in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics has not always been used to mean the same thing. Stern (1983) equates 'competence' with 'proficiency'. Chomsky (1967) uses competence to refer to static knowledge which excludes any notion of 'capacity' and 'ability'. Savignon (1980) views competence as dynamic. Taylor views competence as a state or product not a process, he distinguishes between competence and proficiency describing proficiency as the ability to process and function (cited in Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell, 1995, p. 6).

### **2.1.2. Competence verses Performance**

The distinction between competence and performance is introduced by Chomsky (1965); he states that "we thus make a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer knowledge of the language) and performance, the actual use of language in concrete situations (cited in Brown, Malnkjar, & Williams, 1996, p.2).

In a strong sense, "competence refers to the linguistic system or grammar that an ideal native speaker has internalized whereas performance mainly concerns the psychological factors that are involved in the perception and production of speech" (Canale and Swain, 1980; cited in Renner, 2003, p.4)

Competence in language (in generative grammar) as it is defined in Longman dictionary of applied linguistics (2002, p.94) refers to the implicit system of rules that constitutes a person's knowledge of language. This includes a person's ability to create and understand sentences including sentences they have never heard before, knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language, and the ability to recognize ambiguous and deviant sentences. However; performance is defined as the actual use of language, how a person uses his knowledge in producing and understanding sentences. For example, people may have a competence to produce infinitely long sentences but when they actually attempt to use this knowledge (to perform) there are many run out of breath, or their listeners may yet bored or forget what has been said if the sentence is too long. In second and foreign language learning, a learner's performance in a language is often taken an indirect indication of his or her competence (p.392).

### **2.1.3. Linguistic Competence verses Communicative Competence**

Linguistic competence theory of Chomsky focuses on the characteristic of the abstract abilities speakers process that enable them to produce grammatical correct sentences in a

language, it is characterized as interpersonal, and static construct (Block, 2003, p. 60).

Chomsky (1965) holds that:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.159).

Habermas (1970) states that “I propose to use this term ‘communicative competence’, in a similar way as Chomsky does with linguistic competence. Communicative competence should be related to a system of rules generating an ideal speech situation, not regarding linguistic codes that link language and universal pragmatics with actual role systems. Dell Hymes, among others, makes use of the term communicative competence in a sociolinguistically limited sense. I don’t want to follow this convention” (cited in Richkeit, Strohner, & Vorweg, 2008, p. 17).

Chomsky's theory was criticized by Hymes (1967) who holds that linguistic theory needed to be seen as a part of a more general theory incorporating communication and culture (cited in Brown, 2000, p. 246) i.e. to speak a language, it is not enough to know its grammatical rules, but rather, grammatical knowledge should be supported by knowledge of how to communicate. Hymes (1972) argues that Chomsky’s concept could not serve as a relevant component in a theory of real-life communication (cited in Richkeit et al., 2008, p.17).

Linguistic competence refers to the spontaneous flexible and correct manipulation of the language system. However; communicative competence involves appropriateness and readiness on the part of the learner to use relevant strategies in coping with certain language situation (cited in Yang & Ma, 2012, p. 377).

Linguistic competence is a static concept based on grammatical rules and related to concrete monolingual native speakers. However, communicative competence is a dynamic social concept based on the negotiation of meaning between two or more speakers (Flor, usojuan, & Guerra, 2003, p. 10). Communicative competence is interpersonal and dynamic construct that can be examined by means of the overt performance of two or more individuals in the process of communication (Brown, 2000, p. 246).

Hymes rejects the dichotomy of competence and performance. Instead, he looks upon the two concepts as two sides of a coin: Performance is the observable part, and competence is the inferred ability to produce the observed performance in the future. Hymes suggests that both competence and performance may be influenced by special cognitive and social factors, and that their interrelationship should be investigated with empirical methods. Instead of a dichotomy of competence/performance, Hymes (1972, p. 281) proposes that the following four questions should be asked for a comprehensive study of language and communication (cited in Richkeit et al., 2008 pp.17-8).

Instead of a dichotomy of competence/performance, Hymes (1972, p. 281) proposes that the following four questions should be asked for a comprehensive study of language and communication:

- Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible.
- Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means implementation available.
- Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate in relation to context in which it is used and evaluated.
- Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.159)

## **2.1.4. Communicative Competence**

Communicative Competence is put under investigations by many researches, starting by Hymes and followed by others by introducing models.

### **2.1.4.1. Hymes' Work**

Communicative competence theory was introduced by Dell Hymes (1972). He provides us with a much broader definition of competence which intended

To account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about, with whom, when where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others, this competence, moreover; is integral with attitudes, values and motivation concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, attitudes towards, the interrelation of language with other code of communicative construct (cited in Peterwagner, 2005, p.10).

Hymes refers to communicative competence as the aspect of our competence that enables to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meaning interpersonally within specific contexts. Savignon (1983) notes that "communicative competence is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants (Brown, 2000, p.264).

Hymes (1972) argues that in addition to linguistic competence (the rules for describing sound systems and for combining sound into morphemes and morphemes into sentences), one also need notions of sociolinguistic competence (the rules for using language appropriately in context) (cited in Soler, & Jordà, 2002, p. 41).

Hymes (1972) refers to the capabilities of a person, it is dependent on "Tacit knowledge and ability for use and the inclusion of ability for use as a part of competence allows in not only cognitive factors such as motivation. Communicative competence is what enables a

person to perform appropriately in speech events. It includes not only grammatical competence which allows a person to judge whether and to what degree something is formally possible, but also the competence to judge feasibility, appropriateness and whether (and to what degree) something in fact done". (Brown et al, 1996, p.114)

Brown (2001) describes the goals of communicative competence as follow: "communication goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, the authentic language and contexts, and to students' eventual need to apply classroom learning to previously unrehearsed contexts" (cited in Lems, Miller, & Saro, 2010 pp. 11-2).

### **2.1.5. Criteria of Communicative Competence**

Communicative Competence is characterized as being appropriate and effective

- **Appropriateness**

Appropriateness as proposed by Hymes (1972) is, " a competent communication should be judged as appropriate according to the social factors in a given situation". According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1989, p.7), "appropriateness reflects tact or politeness and is defined as the avoidance of violating social or interpersonal norms, rules, or expectations" (cited in Rickheit et al., 2008, p. 25).

Producing appropriate utterances in a particular situation depends on the individual to whom those utterances are addressed, and the other individuals present during the interaction (Tarone & Yule, 1989, p.19).

- **Effectiveness**

Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) points out "effectiveness derives from control and is defined as successful goal achievement or task accomplishment" (Rickheit et al., 2008, p. 25). Effectiveness involves achieving the goals we have for specific interactions, these

goals might be explaining an idea, comforting a friend, negotiating a raise, or persuading someone to change behaviors, “the more effectively your communication, the more likely you are to be competent in achieving your goals” (Wood, 2012, p.30).

Given that communication is enacted to reach a certain goal, a central criterion for communicative competence is effectiveness. This is a functional attribute, which may relate to the ability to achieve or to infer a speaker’s meaning (e.g. that an utterance is meant ironic), or to the achievement of the goal behind this intent (e.g. that this irony is meant as a critique or as a joke) (Rickheit et al., 2008, p. 25).

Spitzberg (2003) concludes: “However, combining appropriateness and effectiveness provides a framework that most competence theorists accept as generally viable. Competence, according to the dual criteria of appropriateness and effectiveness, is the extent to which an interactant achieves preferred outcomes in a manner that upholds the emergent standards of legitimacy of those judging the interaction” (Rickheit et al., 2008, p. 25).

## **2.1.6. Development of Communicative Competence**

Chomsky's linguistic competence was criticized by Hymes who claims that linguistics should be a part of communicative competence. Hence, Hymes argues that communicative competence is composed of both 'tacit knowledge and ability for use (cited in Peterwagner, 2005, p.10). Hymes theory of communicative competence is a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community, he views that a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use (Brown et al., 1996, p.114).

### **2.1.6.1. Canale and Swain Model (1980, 1983)**

Canale and Swain (1980) were interested in communicative competence; their interest came from the need to develop language tests for learners of French which involved

measuring their language of use, and proficiency in the use of language (cited in Peterwagner, 2005, p.10).

Canale and Swain's model (1980) consists of four components:

- **Grammatical Competence**

This component as it is defined by Canale and Swain (1980) encompasses "knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology" (cited in Brown, 2000, p. 247). A learner cannot be proficient in a language without developing a certain level of grammar (Tarone & Yule, 1989, p.18).

- **Sociolinguistic Competence**

It refers to the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of language and discourse. This type of competence "requires an understanding of the social contexts in which a language is used: the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction. Only in full contexts of this kind can judgments be made on the appropriateness of particular utterances" (Savignon; 1983 cited in Brown, 2000, p. 247).

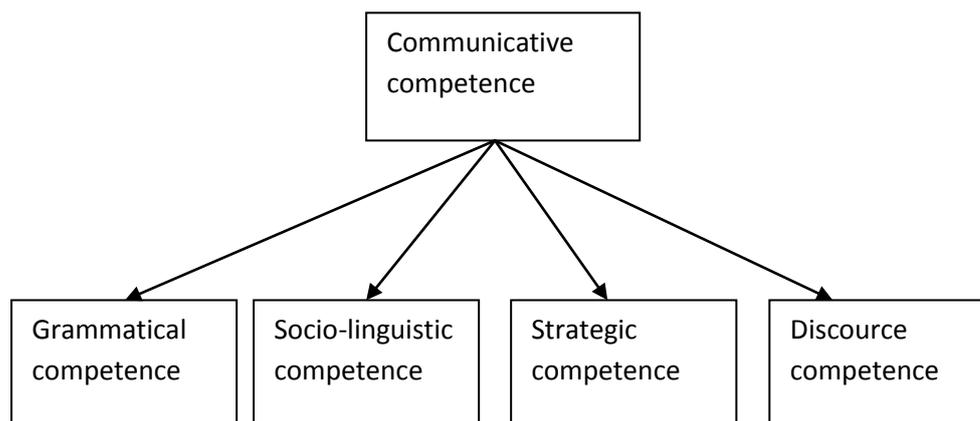
- **Strategic Competence**

Canale and Swain (1980) describe this component as "the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called to compensate for the breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence" (in Brown, 2000, p. 247). Investigation of strategic competence is associated with communication strategies which enable language users to organize their utterances as effectively as possible to get their messages across to particular listener, using these strategies is considered "as the ability to repair and compensate breakdowns in a communication" (Tarone & Yule, 1989, p.19).

- **Discourse Competence**

It refers to the ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a

meaningful whole out of a series of utterances. “Discourse means everything from simple spoken conversation to lengthy written texts (articles, books, and the like). While grammatical competence focuses on sentence-level grammar, discourse competence is concerned with intersentential relationships” (Brown, 2000, p. 277).



**Figure1:** Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale’s Model of Communicative Competence (cited in Jordà, 2005, p. 52).

Canale (1980) adds the last component (discourse competence) to the original model (1980), it is distinguished from sociolinguistic competence stating that sociolinguistic competence refers to socio-cultural norms, while discourse competence includes formal cohesion and semantic coherence (cited in Jordà, 2005, p.52).

Unlike Hymes (1972) who views communicative competence as including the ability for use as well as knowledge, Canale and Swain (1980) exclude "ability for use" from their definition of communicative competence and include ability for use in what they called "communicative performance", which they define as "the realization of these competencies and their interaction in the actual production and comprehension of utterances, and subsequently as the actual demonstration of this knowledge in real second language

situations and authentic communicative competence (cited in Brown et al., 1996, p. 143). They provide the following reasons to justify their deviation from Hymes (cited in Peterwagner, 2000, pp. 12-3).

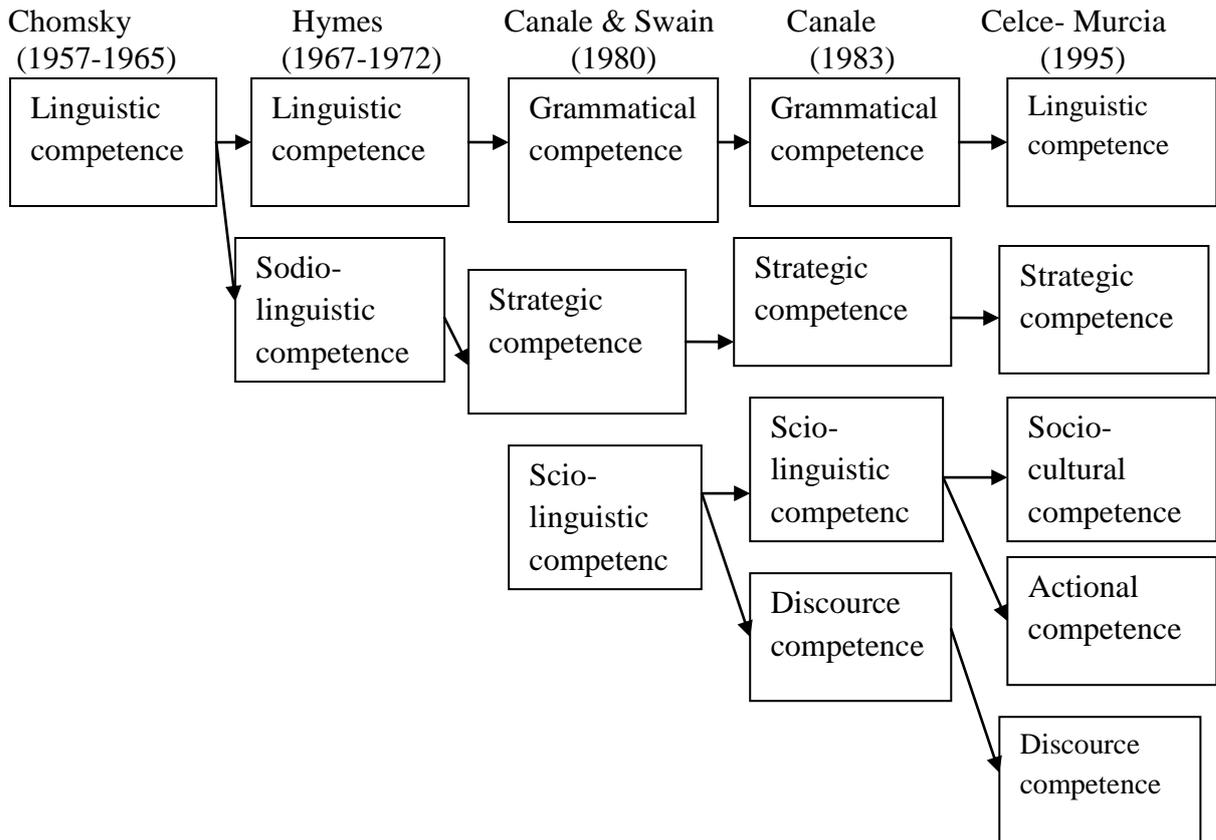
- This notion has not yet been researched enough within the framework of communicative competence.
- They doubt whether there is any theory of human action that could adequately explicate 'ability for use'.
- They are concerned about "the logical possibility of language users having "linguistic deficits" (or communicative deficits) i.e. inadequate explicate language competence resulting in social class and power differences.

#### **2.1.6.2. Celce-Murcia et al.' s Model (1995)**

Celce-Murcia and his colleagues refine and elaborate the four components of communicative competence presented in Canale and Swain's Model. Grammatical competence is replaced by linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence which they renamed socio-cultural competence (cited in Compernelle, 2014, p. 37).

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) add another component to communicative competence which they call actional competence, they define actional competence as "competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent, that is, matching actional intent with linguistic form based on the knowledge of an inventory of verbal schemata carry illocutionary force (speech acts and speech act sets)" (Compernelle, 2014, p. 37). They re-labeled grammatical competence into linguistic competence to explicitly include the sound system and the lexicon as well as the grammar (morphology and syntax). The socio-

cultural competence refers to the cultural background knowledge needed to interpret and use a language effectively (cited in Soler & Jordà, 2008, p. 42).



**Figure2:** Chronological Evolution of Communicative Competence (Soler & Jordà, 2008, p. 43).

### 2.1.6.3. Bachman Model

Another model of communicative language abilities has been proposed by Bachman (1990) and Bachman & Palmer, as an elaboration of the Canale & Swain model. The latest version of the Bachman & Palmer model divides language knowledge into two main categories, which are in turn broken down into subcategories.

## **1. Organizational Knowledge**

The knowledge of the "components involved in controlling the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences and for ordering these to form texts" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 8).

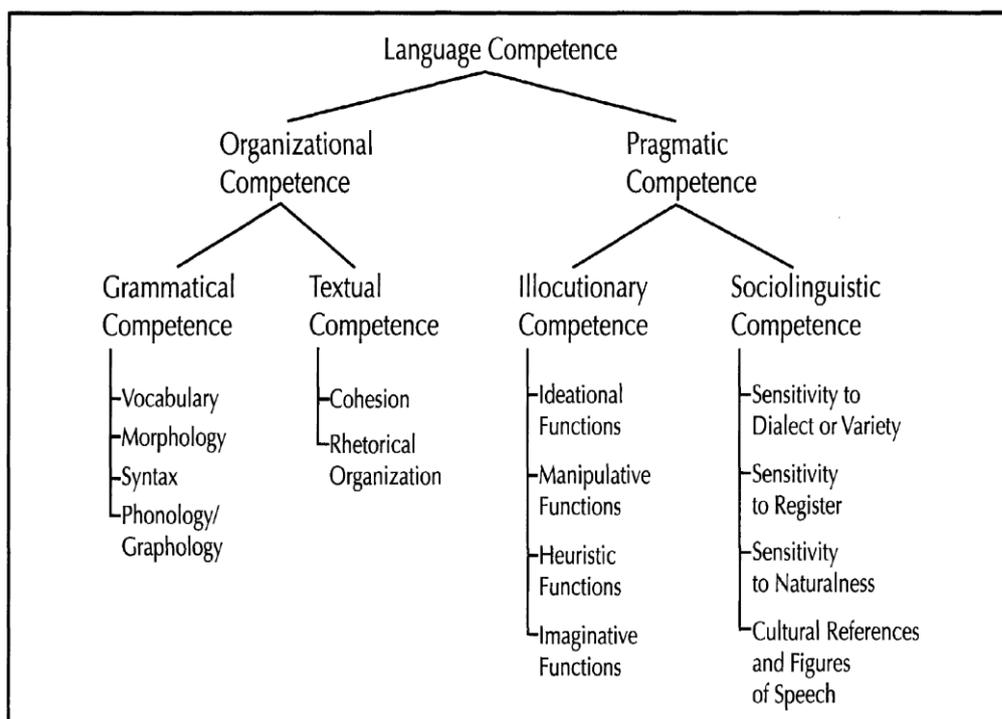
- a. Grammatical knowledge similar to Canale & Swain's grammatical competence.
- b. Textual knowledge similar to but more elaborate than Canale and Swain's discourse competence.

## **2. Pragmatic Knowledge**

The knowledge of the "components that enable us to relate words and utterances to their meanings, to the intentions of language users, and to relevant characteristics of the language use contexts" (MS; cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2005, p. 8).

- a. Lexical knowledge: the knowledge of the meanings of words and the ability to use figurative language.
- b. Functional knowledge: the knowledge of the "relationships between utterances and the intentions, or communicative purposes of language users" (MS; Celce-Murcia et al., 2005, p. 8).
- c. Sociolinguistic knowledge: similar to Canale & Swain's sociolinguistic competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 2005, p. 9).

Bachman's model can be described as both a competence and a performance model. It consists of knowledge (what he also calls competence) and the capacity for implementing or executing that competence in appropriate contextualized communicative language (Brown et al., 1996, p.148).



**Figure3:** Components of Language Competence (Bachman, 1990; cited in Brown 2000, p.249).

## 2.4. Communicative Competence and Foreign Language Teaching

The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as “communicative competence” (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 69).

### 2.4.1. The Methodological Framework of Communicative Language Teaching

CLT is characterized by the following features (Brown, 2000, pp. 266-7):

- Classroom goals are focused on all components of communicative competence and not only linguistic competence.
- Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language for meaningful purposes and other aspects of

language that enable learners to accomplish those purposes.

- In the communicative classroom, students have to use language productively and receptively in unrehearsed context.

### **2.4.2. The Role of the Teacher**

Communicative language teachers create activities that stimulate learners to communicate in the classroom, these activities contain authentic materials that can be used in real context. The main role of the teacher where this approach is implemented is that of a facilitator; he facilitates the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The CLT teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, pp.77-8).

### **2.4.3. Accuracy and Fluency**

Fluency and accuracy seem as complementary principles underling communicative techniques. Fluency may gain a more important role than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use (Brown, 2000, p. 267).

Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns. Fluency practice can be contrasted with accuracy practice which focuses on creating correct examples of language use differences between activities that focus on fluency and that focus on accuracy are as follow (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.26):

#### **Activities Focusing on Fluency**

- Reflect the natural language use.
- Focus on achieving communication.

- Requires meaningful use of language
- Requires the use of language communication strategies.
- Produce the language that may not be predictable.

### **Activities Focusing on Accuracy**

- Reflect classroom use of language.
- Focus on the formation of correct examples of language.
- Practice language out the context.
- Practice small samples of language.
- Do not require meaningful communication.
- Control choice of language.

### **Conclusion**

Communicative competence came as a reaction to Chomsky's linguistic competence. The main difference between the two concepts is that linguistic competence refers exclusively to knowledge, whereas communicative competence includes both knowledge and ability to use this knowledge in its appropriate context. Communicating effectively and appropriately in any given language requires more than just linguistic knowledge. The ability to use this linguistic knowledge appropriately in the given socio-cultural context is also essential.

## **Chapter Three**

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Introduction

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## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Design and Data Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

The previous two chapters have been devoted to the theoretical framework of peer interaction and communicative competence. This chapter, however; is devoted to the practical side of the work and will hopefully shed light on the results obtained from the two questionnaires.

In this research work, two questionnaires have been submitted to collect the necessary relevant information. The teachers of oral expression, being in the appropriate position that allows them to give valid answers, because of their clear insights about the topic of investigation, represent the target population.

#### **3.1. The Students' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is directed to students of the first year LMD system at the department of English at Mohammed Essedik Ben Yahia University of Jijel, in the second semester of the academic year 2014. The target population includes all the students of the first year LMD (230 students), but since it is impossible to deal with all students, a representative sample of 70 students has been selected.

##### **3.1.1. Aims of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is designed to explore the attitudes of EFL students towards peer interaction in helping them to develop their communicative competence. Moreover, it investigates students' awareness about other related aspects to this type of interaction.

### **3.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire is composed of fifteen (15) questions arranged in logical order; it includes a mixture of closed and open ended questions. Closed ended questions require the students to answer by "yes" or "no", or to choose from given suggestions. Open ended questions require to students to give their personal opinion.

Question (1) to (4) are devoted to students' background information namely their age, gender, their objective from learning English, and how they consider their overall proficiency in English Language.

Questions (5) to (11) are about students' attitudes towards peer interaction in the classroom. They are asked for the purpose of exploring students' participation in the classroom, what state they prefer, and their opinions about the use of peer interaction. Questions (10) and (11) tend to evoke students' attitudes towards teachers' correction of their mistakes and the type of feedback they prefer to be provided with.

Questions (12) to (14) are meant for exploring students' attitudes towards the most important aspect in learning a language, and their preferred activity(s) to engage in. Question (14) tends to explore their satisfaction with activities they do in the classroom; to conclude with question (15) which is designed to collect some suggestions about the ways students think are better to develop their communicative abilities.

### **3.2. The Teachers' Questionnaire**

The target population consists of all teachers of English who teach first year oral expression module at the department of English at the university of Mohammed Essedik Ben Yahia, Jijel.

### **3.2.1. Aims of the Questionnaire**

It is the core of the subject research to consider teachers' opinions about the role of peer interaction in developing students' communicative competence. The questionnaire also aims at investigating teachers' awareness of peer interaction and its importance in promoting learners' communicative competence needed for successful communication.

### **3.2.3. Description of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire consists of eighteen (18) questions arranged in a logical order. The questions are a mixture of closed questions that require teachers to answer by "yes" or "no" or to choose from a number of choices. And open ended questions where the teachers are requested to give other alternative answers when necessary.

Questions (1) to (4) are devoted to get some background information about the chosen sample of teachers. The teachers are requested to mention the degree they hold, their experience in teaching English and Oral Expression module. Question four (4) is asked to investigate teachers' objectives from teaching Oral Expression.

Questions (5) to (9) are devoted to explore teachers' attitudes towards peer interaction. Question (5) seeks to elicit information about teachers' preference as to the role(s) to act in their classes. Question (6) and (7) are designed to know what type of class work teachers generally engage their students in and whether they find problems in engaging students to work with their peers. Question (8) tends to know what type of classroom activities teachers generally prefer to use.

Questions (9) to (17) are all designed to explore teachers' attitudes towards language and the development of communicative competence. Question (9) is to know whether teachers seek to develop students' awareness about the importance and usefulness of communication. Question (10) and (11) are to explore teachers' opinions about how they

consider a language and its teaching. Question (12) tends to know whether teachers encourage interaction and communication in the classroom; then questions (13) to (16) are about the use of feedback; they tend to explore the use of feedback in interactional classrooms. Question (17) is to know teachers' opinions about the use of peer interaction to develop students' communicative abilities.

The last question is an open ended one where teachers are requested to provide further suggestions they think important to develop students' communicative abilities.

### **3.3. The Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

After collecting data from the administered questionnaires, the next step is the analysis of the data collected; so the focus will be on the students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire respectively.

#### **3.3.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

##### **Q1. Age:**

Table 3.1. Age of Students.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>19</b>	5	7.14 %
<b>20</b>	30	42.84%
<b>21</b>	15	21.42%
<b>22</b>	10	14.28%
<b>23</b>	6	8.57%
<b>24</b>	2	2.85%
<b>27</b>	1	1.42%
<b>46</b>	1	1.42%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

The table above reveals that the age of students vary between 19 and 27 years old. However, there is a student who is 46 years old.

## Q2. Gender:

Table 3.2. Gender of Students.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	11	15.71%
<b>Female</b>	59	84.28%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

As it is shown in this table, female students outnumber males, in which it has recorded a number of 59 subjects out of 70 representing 84.28% from the whole population; whereas males are 11 subjects representing 15.71% from the whole population.

## Q3: Why did you choose to study English?

Table 3.3. Students' Reasons for Studying English.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>To learn how to communicate in English</b>	34	48.57
<b>For some academic purposes</b>	24	34.28
<b>a+b</b>	2	2.85
<b>None of them</b>	10	14.28

This question is directed to students in order to figure out what their purposes from studying English are. The results obtained from this table show that 48.57% of students' answers are related to the fact that they are studying English for the sake of being able to

communicate in English, which may show their interest to communicate with native speakers of English. Then, 34.28% of them link their choices to some academic purposes. Then, 14.28% are not interested in communicating using English or studying English for some academic purposes; they rather demonstrate that their main interest is to get a better job. However; only 2.85% of the respondents are interested in communication and target some academic purposes using English.

**Q4. How do you consider your overall level of proficiency in English?**

Table 3.4. Students' Estimation of their Level of English.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	2	2.85
<b>Good</b>	36	51.42
<b>Average</b>	32	45.71
<b>Weak</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

Students in this item are requested to rank their overall proficiency rating from "excellent" to "weak". It is noted that 2.85% respondents consider their level in English as "excellent", 51.42% say that their levels are regarded as "good", and the rest of the subjects (45.71%) consider their level as average. Surprisingly, no one consider his or her level as Weak.

**Q5: Do you participate in the different classroom activities?**

Table 3.5. Students' Participation in Classroom.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	52	74.28
<b>No</b>	18	25.71
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

This question seeks to know whether EFL students are active or passive in the classroom. The result above shows that 74.28% from the whole population take part in the classroom activities. However, only 25.17% think they do not participate.

**- If Yes, how often?**

Table 3.6. Students' Attitudes towards the Frequency of Participation in Oral Classes.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Always</b>	7	13.46%
<b>Often</b>	15	28.84%
<b>Sometimes</b>	26	50%
<b>Rarely</b>	4	7.69%
<b>Total</b>	52	100%

Students who answer by “ye” are asked to indicate in the second part of this item their frequencies of the participation in oral classes. 50% are given to sometimes, come next, 28.84% recorded for “often”, then, 13.46% opted for always, and 7.69% for “rarely”.

**Q6: What type of classroom interaction techniques do you prefer?**

Table 3.7. Students' Preferred Interaction Techniques.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Group work</b>	34	48.57
<b>Pair work</b>	21	30
<b>Individual work</b>	15	21.42
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

Students in this question are requested to provide information about the type of classroom activities they prefer. 48.57% of the respondents answer this question by choosing group work, and about 30% argue that they prefer pair work, while 21.42% of them prefer to work individually.

**Q7: Do you feel satisfied when you interact with peers?**

Table 3.8. Students' Attitudes towards their Satisfaction about Peer Interaction.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60	85.71%
<b>No</b>	10	14.28%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

This question is designed to know if students feel satisfied when they interact with their peers. 85.71% of the whole population shows their satisfaction about peer interaction, and about 14.28% of the students state that they are not satisfied.

**Q8: Do you often engage in communication in the classroom without being asked by the teacher?**

Table 3.9. Students' Attitudes towards their Initiation of Communication in Classrooms.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	43	61.42
<b>No</b>	27	38.57
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

Table nine (9) illustrates students' engagement in communication in the classroom without being asked by the teacher. The first part of the question shows that 61.42% from the whole population engage willingly and participate without being asked because they want to do so. However; the rest of them (38.57%) tend to speak only when the teacher asks them to participate.

**-If yes, how often?**

Table 3.10. Students' Attitudes towards the Frequency of Participation in Communication.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Always</b>	3	6.97%
<b>Sometimes</b>	36	83.72
<b>Rarely</b>	4	9.30
<b>Total</b>	43	100%

In the second part of the question, students are asked to rank their frequencies of participation. Only three of them (6.97%) note that they always participate without being

asked by the teacher, and 83.72% of the respondents' answers are recorded for sometimes, then 9.39% for rarely.

**Q9: Do you consider peer interaction as a motivating factor to learn?**

Table 3.11. Students Attitudes towards the Impact of Peer Interaction on their Motivation.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60	85.71
<b>No</b>	10	14.28
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

This item seeks to explore whether peer interaction has an impact on students' motivation. As expected, 85.71% of students state that peer interaction makes them feel motivated to learn, and only 14.28% state that interacting with peers does not motivate them at all.

**Q10: In case you make mistakes, does your teacher?**

Table 3.12. Students Attitudes towards Teachers' Error Correction.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Correct them immediately</b>	30	42.85%
<b>b. Wait until you finish</b>	39	55.71%
<b>c. Ignore the mistakes</b>	1	1.42%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

Concerning error correction, Table (11) indicates that 42.85% of the students say that their teachers correct their mistakes immediately, 55.71% of subjects state that they are not

interrupted, and that their teachers wait until they finish, , and only 1.42% of the subjects state that their teachers ignore the mistakes.

**Q11: Do you prefer?**

Table 3.13. Students' Preferences of Error Correction.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. The teacher to correct your mistakes</b>	41	58.57%
<b>b. Another student to correct the mistakes</b>	1	1.42%
<b>c. To correct your own mistakes</b>	23	32.85%
<b>a+b</b>	4	5.71
<b>a+b+c</b>	1	1.42
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

From the data illustrated above, it can be noticed that a large number of students express their preference to be corrected by their teachers (58.57%), followed by 32.85% of them who prefer to take the responsibility of correcting one's mistakes, only 1.42% is recorded for peer correction, 5.35% is recorded for both self-correction and teacher correction and 1.42% for the three choices.

**Q12: What do you consider important in learning a language?**

Table 3.14. Students' Purposes from Learning a Language

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Learning its grammar</b>	9	12.85%
<b>b. Learning its vocabulary</b>	11	15.71%
<b>c. Learning its culture</b>	1	1.42%
<b>d. Learning to communicate effectively</b>	28	40%
<b>a+b</b>	7	10%
<b>a+c</b>	4	5.71%
<b>a+d</b>	3	4.28
<b>c+d</b>	4	5.71%
<b>b+d</b>	2	2.85%
<b>a+b+c+d</b>	1	1.42%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

The data of this table shows that 40% prefer to learn English through learning how to communicate effectively, 12.85% think that learning grammar rules is the best way to learn a language, 14.28% of the subjects state that they consider learning vocabulary as being important, the rest of the students is divided into multiple choices restricted in (a+c (10%); b+c (5.71%); a+d (4.28); c+d (5.71%); b+d (2.85%); a+b+c+d (1.42%).

**Q13: What type of classroom activities do you often engage in?**

Table 3.15. Students' Preferences of the Techniques Developing Communicative Competence.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Discussions and debates</b>	31	44.28%
<b>b. Roleplays/Simulations</b>	5	7.14%
<b>c. Games</b>	19	27.14
<b>d. Songs</b>	2	2.85
<b>a+c</b>	10	14.28
<b>a+d</b>	3	4.28
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

This item is designed to know what activities students prefer to engage in. 44.28% of subjects agree on discussions and debates, followed by 27.14% recorded for games, 14.28% of students preferred both discussions, debates, and games. Only 7.14% of them acknowledge that they engage more in role plays and simulations, 2.85% of them opted for songs, the remaining students (4.28%) chose a+d.

**Q14: Do you feel satisfied with activities you do in class?**

Table 3.16. Students' Attitudes towards' their Satisfaction about Classroom Activities.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	49	70%
<b>No</b>	21	30%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

A vast majority of the students representing the percentage of 70% affirm that they are satisfied with the activities they practice in their classrooms, while 30% of them express their dissatisfaction.

### **Q15: How do you think you can better develop your communicative abilities?**

Students in the last question are asked to provide us with further suggestions they think are better to develop their communicative abilities. Some students think that listening to native speakers is helpful, others argue that peer interaction should be supported by the participation of the teacher inside the classroom, and with native speakers if possible. The use of media in learning a foreign language is suggested, as well as practicing the language outside the classroom through conversations and debates.

### **3.3.2. Interpretation of the Results**

The results demonstrated in table (1) show that the EFL students are approximately of the same age (peers in terms of age). Table (2) reflects that females are more interested in studying the English language than males. Students are aware of the importance of English language as it is demonstrated in the table (3), which reflects their interest to use language as a means of communication (48.57% from the whole population) or for some academic purposes (34.28%). 97.13% of EFL students rank their level of proficiency in English between good and average, coming to the conclusion that students are really interested in studying English. It can also be concluded that they are self-confident to give themselves such judgment; this variable (self-confidence) would be helpful for them to get a better proficiency in the coming years.

EFL students are aware of the role of participation in the classroom as it is shown in table (5); participation provides them with opportunities to practice the TL with their classmates; they try to use language as much as they can with their peers. It can be said that this confirms the conclusion shown in table (4) about the ranking of their levels and that they are motivated to study English in order to achieve their purposes.

From the result obtained from the table (7), students are likely to learn better when they

collaborate with their peers in group work, since 48.57% express their preference to collaborate with their classmates; these students justify their answers stating that group work is helpful to exchange ideas with classmates, discussing a topic in a group provides different opinions and this would enrich the discussion.

Group work is a good opportunity to communicate using English and at the same time correcting each others' mistakes. Group work facilitates the task and it becomes easier to find the solution. 25% of students who prefer to work in pairs justify their choice by stating that there is communication and sharing of ideas as in group work, but it is better in the sense that it provides more time to speak and to listen to each other; it is easy to deal with one another, i.e. the greater the number of group work members is, the more problems would be. Concerning students who like to work individually (21.42%), they state that they prefer this type because they tend to avoid disagreement when they try to find solutions to the task, receive feedback on their own work, and depend on oneself without any collaboration with the others. Working individually is appropriate to show ones' own abilities and avoid dominance of one participant or more in group and pair work, and it is better to work individually to diagnose weaknesses and strengths.

Since 85.71% of students express their satisfaction with interacting with peers, it can be concluded that interacting with peers is widely accepted by EFL students; however, it should be supported by the participation of the teacher who is considered as a source of input and can add new things instead of just observing classmates interacting. 61.42% of students who participate without being asked by the teacher are outnumber those who hesitate to do; this reflects their willingness to engage by taking the initiative to speak and this can be interpreted by their self-confidence. However, those who wait their teachers to invite them might lack confidence and are afraid of making mistakes or receiving negative feedback from their teachers and peers. In short, speaking in the classroom requires self-

confidence especially in large classes where the teacher is not to be able to notice if there are silent students. In this case, he or she is not able to ask each time all the students to speak and even if he does so, the time provided to them would be insufficient to improve their language and then develop their communicative competence.

### 3.3.3. The Analyses of Teachers' Questionnaire

#### Q1. What degree do you hold?

Table 3.17. Teachers' Degrees.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Licence</b>	0	0%
<b>b. Master</b>	0	0%
<b>c. Magister</b>	4	100%
<b>d. Doctorate</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

From table (17), it can be noticed that all teachers of first year of Oral Expression have got a Magister degree.

## Q2. How long have you been teaching English?

Table 3.18. Teachers' Teaching Experience.

Options	Subjects	%
a. 6 years	1	25%
b. 8 years	2	50%
c. 9 years	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

The most important findings that can be noticed from table (18) is that the sample chosen of teachers have more than 6 years teaching English as a foreign language, 25% of teachers' answers are recorded for 6 and 9 years of teaching experience, 50% is recorded for 8 years.

## Q3. How long have you been teaching the Oral Expression module?

Table 3.19. Teachers Teaching Experience in Oral Expression.

Options	Subjects	%
1-3 Years	4	100%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

In addition to their experience in teaching English, teachers are also teaching Oral Expression module, and have between 1 and 3 years of experience.

#### Q4. What do you target when teaching Oral Expression?

Table 3.20. Teachers' Objectives in Teaching English.

Options	Subjects	%
<b>a. Developing learners' grammatical knowledge</b>	0	0%
<b>b. Developing learners' vocabulary</b>	0	0%
<b>c. Teaching the target language culture</b>	0	0%
<b>d. Developing learners' fluency in English</b>	0	0%
<b>e. Enabling learners to communicate effectively using English</b>	3	75%
<b>c+d+e</b>	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

In this item, teachers are asked to specify their objectives of teaching Oral Expression. 75% of the answers are given to enabling learners to communicate effectively using English, 25% respond that in addition to developing the grammar knowledge and fluency, they tend to enable their students to communicate effectively in English.

**Q5. In the daily teaching practice, do you prefer acting as?**

Table 3.21. Teachers' Roles in the Classroom.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. A source of input</b>	0	0%
<b>b. A controller</b>	0	0%
<b>c. An assessor</b>	0	0%
<b>e. A prompter</b>	1	25%
<b>d. A guide</b>	3	75%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

Concerning the role of the teacher in the classroom, teachers' answers are approximately the same. 75% of teachers answer that they prefer to act as a guide, and 25% prefer the role prompter.

**Q6. What type of class work do you generally prefer engaging your students in?**

Table 3.22. Teachers' Preferences of Classwork Types.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. group work</b>	2	50%
<b>b. Pair work</b>	1	25%
<b>c. Individual work</b>	0	0%
<b>a+b+c</b>	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

50% of teachers make their students work in groups, and 25% is recorded for both group and pair work, and 25% is given to all the types of classwork. However, no answer is recorded for individual work.

**Q7. Do you generally find problems in engaging students to work with their peers?**

Table 3.23. Students' Problems in Peer Work.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Yes</b>	2	50%
<b>b. No</b>	2	50%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

When asked if they find problems in engaging students to work with their peers, 50% of teachers indicate that they find problems and 50% of them states that they find no problems.

**Q8. What type of classroom activities do you often tend to use?**

Table 3.24. Teachers' Preferences of Activities Used in Peer Interaction.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Discussions and debates</b>	2	50%
<b>b. Role plays/Simulations</b>	0	0%
<b>c. Games</b>	0	0%
<b>d. Songs</b>	0	0%
<b>a+b+d</b>	1	25%
<b>a+c+d</b>	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

There are various activities teachers adopt in the oral classes practice. 50% of the answers are given to discussions and debates. It is obvious that teachers make use of a mixture of activities in order to provide students with opportunities to participate in the activities they enjoy more. 25% of them prefer the option of (a+b+d), which aims to motivate students to learn in a funny way, 25% opted for (a+c+d).

**Q9. Do you seek to develop students' awareness about the importance and the usefulness of communication?**

Table 3.25. Teachers' Attitudes towards Developing Students' Awareness about the Importance and of Communication.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Yes</b>	4	100%
<b>b. No</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

All teachers in this item opted for "yes" (100%).

**Q10. How do you consider language?**

Table 3.26. Teachers' Views about Language.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. A system of grammatical rules</b>	0	0%
<b>b. A social means of communication</b>	4	100%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

Teachers' views about language are quite alike, 100% of teachers express that language is a social means of communication.

**Q11. Teaching a target language equates:**

Table 3.27. Teachers' Views about Language Teaching.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Teaching the rules governing its grammar and phonology</b>	0	0%
<b>b. Teaching the rules governing communication</b>	4	100%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

According to the results obtained from this table, 100% of teachers respond by teaching the rules governing communication.

**Q12. Do you encourage your students to interact and communicate in the classroom?**

Table 3.28. Teachers' Attitudes towards Encouraging Students' Interaction.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Yes</b>	4	100%
<b>b. No</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

In this question, teachers are asked if they encourage their students to interact and communicate in the classroom. 100% of answers are opted for "yes".

**Q13. How often do you correct your students' mistakes?**

Table 3.29. Teachers' Attitudes towards their Frequency of Correcting Students' Mistakes.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Always</b>	1	25%
<b>b. Sometimes</b>	2	50%
<b>c. Rarely</b>	1	25%
<b>d. Never</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

Teachers are asked to indicate their frequencies in correcting students' errors, 50% is recorded to "sometimes", followed by 25% for "always", and 25% for "rarely".

**Q14. How do you generally respond to your students' errors?**

Table 3.30. Teachers' Responses to Errors.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. You encourage peer feedback</b>	1	25%
<b>b. You opt for teacher's feedback</b>	0	0%
<b>c. You encourage self-correction</b>	2	50%
<b>d. You ignore the errors</b>	0	0%
<b>b+c</b>	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

Concerning the types of feedback that teachers tend to use as a response to students' mistakes, 50% of the teachers opted for self-correction. 25% of them favoured both teacher and self correction, and 25% opted for peer and self correction.

**Q15. How often do you give students opportunities for peer feedback?**

Table 3.31. Teachers' Frequency of Encouraging Peer Feedback.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Always</b>	1	25%
<b>b. Sometimes</b>	2	50%
<b>c. Rarely</b>	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

In this item teachers are asked about their frequencies in giving students opportunities to correct each other's mistakes. 25% is recorded for "always", and 50% for "sometimes", and 25% for "rarely"

**Q16. What type of feedback do you generally provide your students with?**

Table 3.32. Teachers' Types of Feedback.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Implicit Feedback</b>	3	75%
<b>b. Explicit feedback</b>	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

Teachers are asked about the type of feedback they generally provide their students with. 75% of teachers answer that they provide their students with implicit feedback, 25% for explicit feedback.

**Q17. Do you view peer interaction as being important in developing students' communicative abilities?**

Table 3.33. Teachers' Views about the Role of Peer Interaction in Developing Students' Communicative Abilities.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a. Yes</b>	4	100%
<b>b. No</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

This item tends to investigate teachers' attitudes towards peer interaction in classrooms in order to develop students' communicative competence. 100% of teachers argue that peer interaction is important to get students develop their communicative abilities.

**Q18. What further suggestions do you think important to develop students' communicative abilities?**

Teachers at the last question are requested to mention further suggestions they think are better to develop students' communicative abilities. Teachers emphasize the role of cooperation in foreign language classes, in addition to other strategies and activities such as : using authentic materials, listening to native speakers, discussing topics that have two opposing views, a teacher argued that a teacher should not be the only source of input by sharing the responsibility of preparing lessons with students.

### **3.3.4. Interpretation of the Results**

The teachers have experience in teaching English since their responses show that they have taught English between 6 and 9 years; they also have experience in teaching the Oral Expression module, this will be helpful in providing valuable answers as to the role of peer interaction in developing students' communicative competence. They are able to talk about learners' needs and preferences.

The answers obtained from table (17) reflect teachers' awareness about the importance of communication. Hence, they tend to develop students' communicative abilities. In addition, they rather give prior prominence to communicating in English as being the target.

75% of the answers are given to the role of « a guide »; it is, then, obvious that teachers are no more acting as in the traditional classes (e.g., assessor and controller); rather, teachers prefer to guide their students for better learning and prompt them if they find problems in a communicative situation (e.g., losing words). It is important to encourage students to discover and use language by themselves in order to develop their communicative competence.

Developing communicative competence requires the students to work in groups and pairs with their peers; these activities are interactive where learners can collaborate to find solution to a task. However, these activities may create some problems to teachers in engaging their students in as it is illustrated in table (23), where (50%) of teachers declare that they find problems to manage such types of class work. This may lead teachers to avoid adopting them, which may in turn minimize the time and opportunities for students to collaborate in doing tasks. Hence, teachers could follow some procedures to escape such

problems. They can use techniques like grouping students according to specific norms (e.g. friendship) to avoid conflict, or discussing topics suggested by students, etc.

Teachers are likely to use techniques such as discussions, debates, and role plays, etc, to help create context for students to practice the language that could be used in natural settings; they make use of a variety of techniques, aiming at stimulating all the students to participate in the activities that they enjoy or feel motivated to engage in.

Teachers share the same opinion about the view that language is a social means of communication. Teachers use techniques that maximize the time talk of students like discussions and that develop their fluency. Participation in oral classes is important for students to develop their language in general and communicative competence in particular. 100% of the answers of question 12 are recorded for « yes », which reflects teachers' interest to encourage their students to participate especially if there are voiceless students. This would accordingly reduce students' inhibition to take part in the activities.

All teachers' responses in question (14) show that teachers insist that errors should not be ignored; the only difference in their answers is in the type of feedback that they provide their students with. Their responses are generally given to teacher correction and self correction. Only 25% opt for peer feedback. Teachers do not prefer this type of correction; they may think that the students are unable to provide their peers with effective correction.

75% of the teachers express their preference of implicit correction of students' errors; this may explain by taking into account students' feelings and drawing their attention to errors by using some strategies of reformulation and paraphrasing of the students' utterances in correct forms. 25% of the teachers opted for explicit feedback, and may tend to make all students pay attention to the errors and show how they are corrected for better development of accuracy.

All the teachers (100%) argue that peer interaction is important in developing students' communicative abilities, and that regular peer interaction provides students with contexts that are similar to natural settings where they can use the TL in communication, which would in turn be helpful to notice the gaps and discrepancies they have in their knowledge and try to repair them.

## **Conclusion**

The results obtained so far reveal that both learners and teachers have a clear idea about peer interaction in the classroom; and that they consider that interactive activities may help students use the TL in real communication, which will in turn have a positive impact on learners' communicative competence.

## **General Conclusion**

The concept of classroom interaction plays a significant role in the process of second language learning. The current study focuses on the role of peer interaction in the classroom in developing students' communicative competence. It also seeks to demonstrate that learning a foreign language is not a matter of developing linguistic competence, but it requires developing the ability of communicating competently in different social contexts. If teachers provide students with sufficient time to interact in the classroom, most learners could develop their communicative competence and improve their knowledge and use of the language.

Peer interaction is a useful process that teachers could engage their students in through techniques as discussions, role plays, group and pair work that teachers use. This has been confirmed by the results obtained from the analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaires given to teachers of Oral Expression and students of first year LMD (licence), where learners express their willingness to interact with their classmates using the TL in meaningful contexts. It has been hypothesized that if students are provided with opportunities for interacting with their peers in the classroom, they will develop their communicative competence. After analyzing the results of both questionnaires, it can be concluded that most teachers and learners are aware of the significance of peer interaction in developing students' communicative competence and that they consider that interactive activities may help students use the TL in real communication.

## **Pedagogical Implications**

Peer interaction is of great significance for students in the classroom where they are provided with opportunities to express themselves freely through negotiation of meaning, and collaboration to find solution to a task rather than compete for better achievement of goals with their peers. It is highly supported by teachers in their classes in order to develop students' communicative abilities. Peer interaction has a positive impact on students' motivation. Hence, teachers should support the use of this strategy to raise the motivation to learn a foreign language.

Teachers are responsible for creating an interactive atmosphere in the classroom where learners feel comfortable and at ease to participate without hesitation, by the implementation of interaction techniques that students enjoy engaging in like discussions, debates, role plays, etc. Teachers are minimally intervening; In this case, it is better to act as prompters or guides. This does not mean that the teachers ignore the other roles that are considered as a completion to those two roles as assessor of students' progress or controller of their speech correctness.

In addition, Peer feedback is an aspect of peer interaction. Students do feel reluctant to adopt such technique in their classes; thus, they should be trained to correct each others' errors and could be provided with the opportunity to do so.

Moreover, using a language does not just mean producing accurate sentences, but how to use these sentences appropriately and effectively in a given context. For this reason, learners could develop their communicative abilities and interact with peers using the TL with support from the teacher who is in turn responsible for the management of the class.

## **Limitations of the Study**

For time constraints, it has been almost impossible to deal with a large sample of students, the number has been reduced to cover only 70 students and 4 teachers. Therefore; the results of the present work are not meant for generalization, but are rather descriptive. Longer time would give us a chance to conduct an experimental study that will enrich the results of this work. The students have avoided justifying their choices, they have not expressed their ideas since they are at the first year and do not seem to be familiar with some pedagogical terms.

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## Appendices

# Appendix One

## Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a research work about the role of peer interaction in developing students' communicative competence.

Please put a tick (√) to choose the options you think appropriate or provide your own answers when needed.

May I thank you in advance for your collaboration.

1. Age: .....

2. Male  Female

3. Why did you choose to study English?

a. To learn how to communicate in English

b. For some academic purposes

c. Others, please specify.....

.....

4. How do you consider your overall level of proficiency in English?

a. Excellent

b. Good

c. Average

d. Bad

5. Do you participate in the different classroom activities?

a. Yes

b. No

-If yes how often do you participate?

- a. Always
- b. Often
- c. sometimes
- d. rarely

6. What type of classroom interaction techniques do you prefer?

- a. Group work
- b. Pair work
- c. Individual work

Please justify.....  
.....  
.....

7. Do you feel satisfied when you interact with peers?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please, justify.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you often engage in communication in the classroom without being asked by the teacher?

- a. Yes
- b. No

-If yes, how often?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely

9. Do you consider peer interaction as a motivating factor to learn?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. In case you make mistakes, does your teacher?

- a. Correct them immediately
- b. Wait until you finish
- c. Ignore the mistakes

11. Do you prefer?

- a. The teacher to correct your mistakes
- b. Another student to correct the mistakes
- c. To correct your own mistakes

12. What do you consider important in learning a language?

- a. Learning its grammar
- b. Learning its vocabulary
- c. Learning its culture
- d. Learning to communicate effectively

13. What type of classroom activities do you often engage in?

- a. Discussions and debates
- b. Role plays/Simulations
- c. Games
- d. Songs

Others, please specify.....

.....

14. Do you feel satisfied with activities you do in class?

a. Yes

b. No

15. How do you think you can better develop your communicative abilities?

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

**Thank you for your collaboration**

## Appendix Two

### Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a research work about the role of peer interaction in developing students' communicative competence.

Please use a tick (✓) to choose the options you think appropriate or provide your own answers when needed.

May I thank you in advance for your collaboration.

1. What degree do you hold?

- a. License
- b. Master
- c. Magister
- d. Doctorate

2. How long have you been teaching English?

.....

3. How long have you been teaching the Oral Expression module?

.....

4. What do you target when teaching Oral Expression?

- a. Developing learners' grammatical knowledge
- b. Developing learners' vocabulary
- c. Teaching the target language culture
- d. Developing learners' fluency in English
- e. Enabling learners to communicate effectively using English

f. Others, please specify.....

.....

5. In the daily teaching practice, do you prefer acting as?

a. A source of input

b. A controller

c. An assessor

d. A prompter

e. A guide

6. What type of class work do you generally prefer engaging your students in?

a. Group work

b. Pair work

c. Individual work

7. Do you generally find problems in engaging students to work with their peers?

a. Yes

b. No

8. What type of classroom activities do you often tend to use?

a. Discussions and debates

b. Role plays/Simulations

c. Games

d. Songs

e. Others, please specify.....

9. Do you seek to develop students' awareness about the importance and the usefulness of communication?

a. Yes

b. No

10. How do you consider language?

a. A system of grammatical rules

b. A social means of communication

11. Teaching a target language equates:

a. Teaching the rules governing its grammar and phonology

b. Teaching the rules governing communication

12. Do you encourage your students to interact and communicate in the classroom?

a. Yes

b. No

13. How often do you correct your students' mistakes?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

d. Never

14. How do you generally respond to your students' errors?

a. You encourage peer feedback

b. You opt for teacher's feedback

c. You encourage self-correction

d. You ignore the errors

15. How often do you give students opportunities for peer feedback?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

16. What type of feedback do you generally provide your students with?

a. Implicit Feedback

b. Explicit feedback

17. Do you view peer interaction as being important in developing students' communicative abilities?

a. Yes

b. No

18. What further suggestions do you think important to develop students' communicative abilities?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you for your collaboration**

## Résumé

L'interaction en classe est devenue une stratégie importante dans les classes d'apprentissage, en particulier dans les classes de deuxième langue et langues étrangères. La recherche dans ce domaine montre que l'interaction avec les pairs est utile dans le développement des capacités de communication des apprenants où ils reçoivent un large éventail de possibilités d'utiliser le langage naturel. Il a été remarqué que les étudiants d'anglais font face à des problèmes dans le cadre de la communication que ce soit dans ou à l'extérieur des classes. Les capacités de communication des apprenants seraient probablement développées si ces derniers ont la possibilité d'interagir et de pratiquer la langue avec leurs pairs. Le présent travail de recherche tente d'évoquer l'importance de l'interaction entre pairs comme une bonne stratégie pour aider les étudiants à développer non seulement leurs connaissances sur la langue, mais surtout comment l'utiliser correctement et efficacement. Aux fins de la collecte des données, le questionnaire semble être d'une importance particulière. Deux questionnaires ont été administrés aux étudiants de première année anglais et les enseignants de l'expression orale en anglais pour obtenir des informations sur le rôle de l'interaction entre pairs dans la promotion de la compétence communicative des étudiants. L'analyse des questionnaires confirme l'hypothèse énoncée et les résultats montrent que les étudiants et les enseignants considèrent l'interaction entre pairs comme étant une bonne stratégie qui peut être mis en œuvre dans les classes de langues étrangères afin de développer les capacités de communication des apprenants. Les résultats confirment également le rôle central de l'interaction entre pairs pour favoriser la compétence communicative.

## ملخص

اصبح التفاعل في القسم استراتيجية مهمة للتعلم و خاصة في اقسام اللغة الثانية او الاجنبية. اظهرت البحوث في هذا المجال ان التفاعل بين الطلبة يساعد على تطوير قدراتهم التواصلية و ذلك بمنحهم فرص واسعة من اجل استعمال اللغة بشكل طبيعي. و قد لوحظ ان طلبة اللغة الانجليزية يواجهون مشاكل في سياق التواصل داخل او خارج القسم. يمكن تطوير القدرات التواصلية للمتعلمين بمنحهم فرص للتفاعل و ممارسة اللغة فيما بينهم. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اظهار اهمية التفاعل بين الطلبة كاستراتيجية لمساعدتهم على تطوير فهمهم للغة و كذا كيفية استعمالها بطريقة مناسبة و فعالة. المعلومات تم اختيار الاستبيان كاداة مناسبة لذلك , حيث وجه استبيانين لكل من طلبة السنة الاولى قصد جمع انجليزية (ل.م.د) و كذا اساتذة مقياس التعبير الشفهي للسنة الاولى من اجل الحصول على معلومات حول التفاعل بين الطلبة في تعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية لدى الطلبة. اظهر تحليل الاستبيانين ان كل من الطلبة و الاساتذة يرون ان التفاعل بين الطلبة استراتيجية مناسبة يمكن استعمالها في اقسام اللغة الاجنبية و يؤكدون على ضرورة تشجيعه من اجل تطوير القدرات التواصلية للطلبة.