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An Investigation on the Contributing Factors to Students'

Reticence in EFL Speaking Classes

The Case of Third Year License Students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben

Yahia/ Jijel

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English language sciences

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Dedication

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

This work is dedicated to:

My parents whose prayers and best wishes always accompanied and inspired me to persevere with hard moments and carry on regardless;

My brothers: Zohir, Rabia, and Samir who were always most willing to help finance my studies;

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

My youngest sisters: Siham and Houda who are the kindles that enlighten our life.

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Abstract

Given the international status of the English language, it becomes a little more than a requirement for English foreign language learners (EFL) to hone their communicative skills. Remarkably, EFL learners are faced with a host of problems in learning the target language, especially with regard to the speaking skill. The current research work aims to investigate the contributing factors to third year students' reticence in Speaking classes. It is based on the hypothesis that third year students experience significant difficulties in investing oral production in Speaking classes. To this end, the data were collated by dint of questionnaire, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was administered to 55 third year License students of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. Likewise, focus group discussions were conducted with 12 third year students from the sample that answered the questionnaire. The semi-structured interview, on the other hand, was conducted with 3 teachers of Speaking classes. The analysis of the research findings consistently evidenced that third year License students experience reticence in Speaking classes, i.e. the hypothesis has been supported. Notably, anxiety, shyness, lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary items, class size, and timing of the session are singled out as important reticence-engendering factors in Speaking classes.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

%: Percentage

CA: Communication Apprehension

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EFLs: English Foreign Language Learners

ESL: English as a Second Language

Etc.: Et Cetera

FL: Foreign Language

F/S: Foreign/Second

i.e.: That is to say

IRF: Initiation-Response-Feedback

L2: Second Language

Q: Question

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SLL: Second Language Learning

TL: Target Language

UTC: Unwillingness to Communicate

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General Introduction

With the rising value of learning and mastering a foreign/second (F/S) language in the modern era, possessing good verbal communication skills has become more than an asset. In the realm of second/foreign language teaching and learning, a great many teaching methods have been propounded by different language teaching specialists. Ever since its inception in the 1970s, communicative language teaching (CLT) gained widespread popularity, and, in sober fact, it has been regarded as an approach that has the magic solution for how students can develop their command of the foreign/second language. Undeniably, the application of CLT and the adherence to its tenets can help teachers to make their classrooms more communicative wherein learners can develop both real-life and language skills. However, English foreign language (EFL) university teachers at the Algerian universities are still struggling to establish communicative classrooms. Common anecdotal observations show that teacher-fronted instruction is still enjoying some prevalence in classrooms, i.e. teachers still do much of the talk in class and students are heavily reliant upon their teachers.

Foreign/second language learning seems to be a thoroughly enjoyable and pleasurable experience as one gets exposed to a new world which is nothing like the native one. However, it is a task fraught with difficulties, for it requires much time, unceasing efforts, and full commitment on the part of learners who strive to level up their foreign/second language skills. In the EFL/ESL classrooms, Speaking classes are deemed highly important because they can afford rich opportunities to engage in participation through which learners can better their oral communication. For some learners, however, Speaking classes are an utterly different sort of thing because they just create uneasiness and discomfort for them. Consequently, such learners experience a great deal of quietness and taciturnity.

Despite the fact that teachers of Speaking classes always heighten students' awareness of the importance to speak at every opportunity, many students remain uncommunicative. Even worse, teachers sometimes resort to singling out students in order to get some words out of their mouths. Indeed, there are a myriad of factors that might lead to students' quietness and passivity in F/S language classrooms. Such phenomenon is usually termed reticence. In this regard, reticence refers to students' reluctance to speak in a language classroom. Typically, reticent students have a tendency to behave passively and uncommunicatively in communicative situations. Accordingly, they avoid getting involved in classroom participation, discussion, or interaction and thus do not contribute to enriching the overall learning in class.

1. The Background of the Study

The topic of reticence has been studied by a great deal of researchers. In this regard, Riasati (2014) stated that "different researchers have employed different ways of identifying students' reasons of reticence" (p. 116). Therefore, it is worthwhile to cite some studies that have been carried out in this respect.

Liu (2005) carried out a study where she examined Chinese students' reticent behaviour in oral English classrooms. The researcher collated the data by means of semi-structured interview, classroom observation, and reflective journals. The study revealed that the causes of students' reticence in oral English language classrooms were Chinese culture, personality, low English proficiency, lack of confidence, fear of losing face, unfamiliarity with the topic, poor pronunciation, lack of vocabulary knowledge, pursuit of perfection, and difference between Chinese and English cultures.

Similarly, the findings of Liu's (2005) study seem to be mostly corroborating the findings revealed by Hamouda (2013). He explored the causes of students' non-participatory behaviour at the University of Qassim, Saudi Arabia, and whose study was

quantitative in nature. The results of the study showed that students were reluctant in oral language classrooms due to such variables as low English proficiency, fear of speaking in front of the class, fear of negative evaluation, shyness, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes.

Likewise, Hamouda's findings are borne out by other studies elsewhere. For example, Baktash and Chalak (2015) investigated the extent to which Iranian students experience reticence and the contributing factors to such phenomenon. The Researchers used questionnaire and semi-structured interview as data collection instruments. The analysis of the data showed that the reticent level was high amongst EFL Iranian students. In addition, low English proficiency, the teaching method, and lack of confidence were identified as factors that triggered students' reticence.

Somewhere else, Donald (2010) investigated the issue of reticence from the perspectives of teachers and students. The researcher used three research instruments, notably filmed data, focus groups, and stimulated recall interview. Results of the study revealed that fear of making mistakes, extended wait-time, error correction, and the way errors were corrected played a vital role in determining students' reticence.

Equally, Savaci (2013) conducted a research study in which she sought to investigate the factors causing EFL Turkish students' reluctance to speak during Speaking classes. In collating the data, the researcher relied on both qualitative and quantitative methods, notably questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The study showed that Turkish students' reluctance is mainly ascribed to such factors as lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, Turkish culture, etc. Needless to say, these findings are, beyond reasonable doubt, no different from the research findings revealed by other researchers in the afore-mentioned studies.

On the whole, all these findings make it clear that reticence is a prevalent phenomenon in F/S language classrooms, which is caused by a whole host of variables that vary from one setting to another. Apparently, the different results yielded by these studies are in support of each other either partially or completely. Low English proficiency, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, fear of negative evaluation, fear of losing face, error correction, personality, and cultural beliefs are identified as important reticence-inducers in foreign or second language classrooms. Upon closer examination, a great consistency is found between the findings of these research studies although conducted in different contexts with different data collection tools. That is, the studies enjoy internal reliability.

In fact, there exists a body of research on the topic of reticence; nevertheless, the existing literature does not reflect the Algerian context because each context has its unique specificities. Besides, most studies investigated the contributing factors to students' reticence from the perspective of students. Interestingly, all this imply an interesting area for further research to be conducted from the teachers' and students' perspectives using different approaches to the topic.

2. Statement of the Problem

In fact, there are some research studies that have been carried out on the factors affecting the speaking skill at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel; however, none of these research studies explored the factors contributing to students' reticence in Speaking classes. Thus, the current research seems worthwhile to fill up the existing slot at the English department. More than that, based on the researcher's common informal observations, many students tend to shun speaking in Speaking classes even when given the opportunity to. Therefore, there is a call for this research to be conducted in order to reveal the contributing factors that render students reticent in Speaking classes.

3. Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) Do third year students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel experience reticence in Speaking classes?
- 2) To what extent do third year students experience reticence in Speaking classes?
- 3) What are the factors triggering third year students' reticence in Speaking classes?
- 4) What strategies do teachers of Speaking classes use to induce reticent students to actively take part in oral interaction?

4. Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that EFL third year License students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel experience significant difficulties in investing oral production in Speaking classes.

5. Aims of the Study

This study sets out to explore third year students' experience of reticence in EFL Speaking classes and the extent to which they experience reticence. Additionally, it aims to identify the factors triggering students' reticence and reveal the strategies that teachers of Speaking classes use in order to induce reticent students to take part in oral interaction.

6. Significance of the Study

Reticence is a commonly found phenomenon in almost EFL/ESL classrooms. Indeed, the pervasiveness of such phenomenon in F/S language classes is generating a broad spectrum of interests amongst researchers and scholars. Hence, a number of research studies have been carried out in attempt to identify its causes and propose some solutions for such phenomenon. This research is worthwhile in the sense that its findings can help

EFL students to be aware of the factors that contribute to reticence in Speaking classes, and thereby adopt some strategies to cope with reticence in EFL Speaking classes. Equally, the findings can alert teachers of Speaking classes to be adept at handling students' reticence in such classes.

7. Research Design

The current study will be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. To answer the above-stated questions, three research instruments will be employed, viz. a questionnaire, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire will be administered to third year students of English; likewise, focus group discussions will be held with a number of third year students. The Semi-structured interview, on the other hand, will be conducted with teachers of Speaking classes.

8. Organization of the Study

The present study will be divided into two chapters. The first chapter will be devoted to reviewing the relevant background literature; it comprises three sections. The first section discusses classroom interaction, then the second section expounds on the definition of reticence and studies carried out on this phenomenon. The third section, on the other hand, draws on the factors contributing to students' reticence in F/S language classroom. The second chapter will represent the practical part; equally, it consists of three sections. The first section sets out the methodology of the research; subsequently, the second section is devoted to data analysis. Finally, the third section takes its prime concern the interpretation of the most significant and worthy findings.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Section One: Interaction in Second Language Classroom

Introduction

1.1. Classroom Interaction

1.1.1. Definition of Classroom Interaction

1.1.2. Types of Classroom Interaction

1.1.3. Forms of Classroom Interaction

1.1.3.1. *Teacher-learner interaction*

1.1.3.2. *Learner-learner interaction*

1.1.4. The Importance of Classroom Interaction in Second Language Classroom

1.1.5. Interaction Hypotheses and Second Language Acquisition

1.1.5.1. Input Hypothesis

1.1.5.2. Interaction Hypothesis

1.1.5.3. Output Hypothesis

Conclusion

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Section One: Interaction in Second Language Classroom

Introduction

This section takes as its major concern some key issues germane to second language classrooms. First, it starts with some definitions of classroom interaction in conjunction with its types and forms. It subsequently discusses classroom interaction vis-à-vis second language acquisition by underlying the importance of classroom interaction in the L2 classroom. Then, it highlights the role of input, interaction, and output in setting the stage for potential learning by elaborating on three main hypotheses from second language acquisition literature.

1.1. Classroom Interaction

Learners learning a foreign or second language are driven by different needs and motives; one of these needs and motives is to use the foreign/second language for communication in both its spoken and written forms. To meet this goal, classroom plays a very rudimentary role in affording ample opportunities for learners to participate, interact and enrich classroom talk. In the Algerian context, however, English is taught as a foreign language, which means that it has no role to play practically in the society. Thus, classroom is the only place wherein learners can converse in English; they generally do this through one main tool which is classroom interaction. In fact, classroom interaction has attracted the attention of many researchers; therefore, it is worthwhile to draw on some of its various definitions and expound on what they have believed about it.

1.1.1. Definition of Classroom Interaction

Broadly speaking, interaction has often been a subject of interest to researchers, giving it a number of definitions. For example, Brown (2000) referred to interaction as “the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people,

resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other” (p. 165). Equally, Gass and Selinker (2001) regarded interaction as exchanges in which there is a sign that some utterances have not entirely been understood and that prompt conversation partners to interrupt the flow of exchange in order for participants to get a grip on what the conversation is about (as cited in Zhang, 2001, p. 92). Taken together, it can be said that interaction is a process through which interactants exchange feelings, thoughts, and ideas and when communication misunderstanding takes place, the interactants usually interrupt the conversation seeking clarification in order to have mutual understanding.

Many researchers addressed the issue of classroom interaction. In this regard, Allwright (1984) stated that classroom interaction is the process through which classroom language learning is managed (as cited in Yu, 2008, p. 49). Endorsing the centrality of interaction, Brown (2000) asserted that “in the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication” (p. 165). Expressed differently, interaction is the bedrock of communication, especially in the era where communicative language teaching is the norm.

Brown (1994) asserted that for classroom interaction to take place, the teacher has to create an atmosphere wherein learners' spontaneity can thrive, wherein learners can perform unrehearsed language, and wherein the opportunity provided to students to freely express themselves makes what they will say or do unknowable (as cited in Choudhury, 2005, p. 78).

To put it in a nutshell, interaction is truly held important for people to exchange their thoughts and feelings and overcome communication problems. Equally, interaction in the classroom plays a key role because it is the way through which teachers can reach students and encourage them to get involved in whatever topics are discussed, and it is the way

through which learners can express what they are for and against, and thereby allowing their thoughts and feelings to be heard.

1.1.2. Types of Classroom Interaction

Nhu and Tuan (2010) stated that classroom interaction comprises two types, namely non-verbal interaction and verbal interaction. Non-verbal interaction is exclusively related to students' behavioral responses. Differently stated, it is where students interact with others through their behaviours such as head nodding, hand raising, body gestures, and eye contact. Verbal interaction, on the other hand, involves both written and spoken interaction. Written interaction, by implication, is that kind of interaction in which students write out their ideas and thoughts. That is, they interact with others through documents, written words and the like. Oral interaction, by contrast, denotes that students interact with each other by speaking, asking and answering questions, making comments, and engaging in classroom discussions.

In line with this, Robinson (1994) referred to these two types of interaction as follows "interaction is the process referring to 'face-to-face' action. It can be either verbal, channeled through written or spoken words, or non-verbal, channeled through touch, proximity, eye contact, facial expressions, gesturing, etc" (p. 7). On the whole, it can be said that classroom interaction is divided into two types, notably verbal and non-verbal interaction. The former can be realized through spoken or written forms; the latter, on the other hand, can be realized through learners' behavioral responses. Having shed light on the types of classroom interaction, it is also worthwhile to consider its forms.

1.1.3. Forms of Classroom Interaction

According to Angelou (1993) classroom interaction is deemed one of the ten principles upon which effective teaching is premised; it consists of teacher-learner interaction and

learner-learner interaction. Interestingly, these two forms will be elaborated on in what follows.

1.1.3.1. *Teacher-learner interaction.* In fact, teacher-learner interaction is one form of classroom interaction. Cazden (1988) and Tsui (1995) pointed out that in such pattern of interaction the teacher often asks students questions and students answer the questions or vice versa. Generally, teacher-learner interaction happens between the teacher and the whole class, small groups, or individual students. This form of interaction is typical of traditional classrooms where the teacher dominates classroom discourse and hardly ever gives students the chance to talk. Here, it is the teacher who decides on the topics for classroom talk and it is up to him/her to determine when to start and when to stop talking. Accordingly, Thornbury (1996) found that this typical pattern of interaction, usually found in teacher-dominated language classroom, follows the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequence (as cited in Nhu & Tuan, 2010, pp. 30-31).

Nhu and Tuan (2010) maintained that in the IRF cycle the teacher initiates the conversation with a question directed to a student who is supposed to give the answer to the question. Subsequently, the teacher reacts to students' response by providing feedback. Such form of interaction, in a very real sense, renders the class less communicative. In a similar vein, Van Lier (1996) further asserted that this model is characterized by a "closed, rather than, an open format" (p. 152). That is, this model restricts the interaction to the teacher who usually interacts with learners through asking questions and giving feedback, and therefore depriving learners of interacting with other classroom partners.

1.1.3.2. *Learner-learner interaction.* Learner-learner interaction is another form of classroom interaction. By implication, learner-learner interaction occurs amongst learners. Generally, in this interaction framework, the teacher has the role of a monitor and learners are the major participants in that interaction. Usually, when learner-learner interaction

occurs in groups, it is called learner-learner interaction. However, when it occurs in pairs, it is referred to as peer interaction (Nhu & Tuan, 2010).

Many researchers acknowledged that pair and group works give rise to classroom interaction (Choudhury, 2005; Brown, 2007). In so far as pair and group works are concerned, Nhu and Tuan (2010) maintained that it is generally believed by many researchers that practice is of great significance when carried out collaboratively with either small groups or peers rather than with the teacher or with the whole class. Interestingly, students tend to initiate questions during small group rather than whole class activities. In a similar vein, Harmer (2001) stated that "it is possible to say that small groups of around five students provoke greater involvement and participation than in larger groups" (p. 11). To put it concisely, working in small groups is much more beneficial to learners than working in larger groups, partly because it allows learners to get involved in doing tasks and assume their responsibility.

Other researchers, however, regarded pair and group works as equally important. In this vein, Sullivan (2000) avidly supported the idea that pair or group works render the class very active, believing that learners in pairs or groups usually have the right to talk freely and are free of the teacher's power. She further pursued saying that working in pairs or groups makes learners feel equal and the teacher's power is diminished within the group. Thus, the teacher is advised to frequently use group work in order to maximize opportunities for learners to participate and alleviate the psychological burden of speaking in front of the whole class (as cited in Nhu & Tuan, 2010, p. 36). In line with this, Ur (1991) listed some of the advantages of group work and supportively stated that "it fosters learner responsibility and independence, can improve motivation and contribute to a feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class" (p. 232).

Taken all together, it can be said that the importance of pair and group works is widely recognized by many researchers. Nonetheless, some of whom preferred pair work or small groups to large groups. Having considered the forms of classroom interaction, it is also important to underline its importance in second language classroom.

1.1.4. The Importance of Classroom Interaction in Second Language Classroom

In fact, classroom interaction is conducive to second language acquisition. Ellis (1985) defined second language acquisition as “the subconscious or conscious processes by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or tutored setting” (p. 6). Differently stated, second language acquisition can be learnt either consciously or unconsciously in schools or in the social milieu.

Importantly, many second language acquisition (SLA) researchers acknowledged that classroom interaction can potentially contribute to students' second language development, mainly because it provides learners with target language practice opportunities. In this regard, Ellis (1994) stated that “interaction also provides learners with opportunity to talk in the L2” (p. 280). In line with this, Yu (2008) stated that not only does classroom interaction in the target language offer language practice and learning opportunities but also it constructs the language development process itself. After having considered the importance of classroom interaction in L2 classrooms, the subsequent part of this section will be devoted to interaction hypotheses and second language acquisition.

1.1.5. Interaction Hypotheses and Second Language Acquisition

Of particular interest to SLA researchers is how second language learning/acquisition takes place. Significantly, researchers who took an avid interest in this field put forward a number of hypotheses premised upon certain claims that were held accountable for second language acquisition. Therefore, touching upon some of these hypotheses whose main

concern is to explain how the acquisition of a second language takes place seems to be pertinent.

1.1.5.1. Input Hypothesis

Many researchers acknowledged the importance of input in language learning. Ellis (1985) asserted that the availability of second language input and the occurrence of a set of internal factors that account for how second language data are processed are considered two prerequisites for second language acquisition to take place. Similarly, Saville-Troike (2006) stated that "language input to the learner is absolutely necessary for either L1 or L2 learning to take place" (p. 105). Expressed differently, the provision of language input to the learner is held equally important for both first and second language learning to be achieved.

Krashen, an influential figure in second language acquisition literature, proposed his famous hypothesis of comprehensible input. Krashen referred to comprehensible input as language that is either heard or read and which is slightly beyond the learners' current state of competence. He believed that language that contains structures that the learner already knows obviously does not aid acquisition. Equally, language containing structures that are way ahead of the learners' current level of knowledge is also of no use. In Krashen's terms, learners' current state of knowledge is 'i' and the next stage is 'i+1', and thereby learners should be exposed to input at the 'i+1' level so that it aids learners in their L2 acquisition (as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 309).

Moreover, Krashen (1985, 1992) asserted that for learners to foster second language development, comprehensible input is a necessary and sufficient condition. Essentially, learners will acquire a second language through access to comprehensible input and their low affective filter (as cited in Wei, 2012, p. 111). In other words, it can be stated that

input comprehensibility and learners' low affective factor are, in fact, held invaluable assets for second language to be achieved.

Krashen's input hypothesis has two main corollaries. The first one is that speaking is the result of acquisition, not its cause. Krashen believed that speaking emerges as a result of existing knowledge that had already been acquired through comprehensible input. The second corollary is that the sufficiency and comprehensibility of input help learners to speak; therefore, the teacher's role is to make sure that students receive sufficient and comprehensible input (krashen, 1985, chapter 1).

Of a particular importance, Krashen (1982) did not deny the indirect role of output in SLA. Admittedly, he stated that "output has a contribution to make language acquisition, but it is not a direct one" (p. 60). Differently stated, output is not the very direct cause that leads learners to foster second language acquisition. Krashen appeared to support, albeit partially, the belief of some researchers who deemed participation in conversation as responsible for language acquisition. For him, conversation is not the causative factor; rather, it is one way through which input can be obtained, believing in the possibility of acquiring language without even talking. The following figure illustrates the indirect contribution of output to language acquisition, and subsequently provides Krashen's interpretation of how it works.

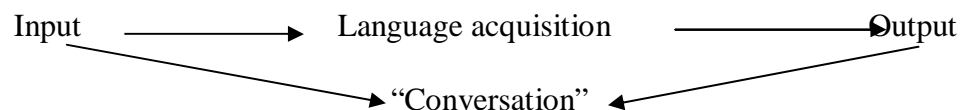


Figure1: How Output Contributes to Language Acquisition Indirectly.

- "Comprehensible input is responsible for progress in language acquisition"
- "Output is possible as a result of acquired competence"
- "When performers speak, they encourage input (people speak to them). This is conversation" (Krashen, 1982, p. 61).

Indubitably, the crucial role of input in second language acquisition literature is widely recognized by many researchers. For example, Long (1983, 1985) also acknowledged the centrality of comprehensible input in SLA. Of a particular importance, he believed that learners can promote their comprehension of input through using such effective means as interactional or conversational adjustments best represented in comprehension requests, clarification requests, and confirmation requests. Long further claimed that the presence of these interactional features leads to meaning negotiation, and thereby promotes acquisition (as cited in Nhu & Tuan, 2010, p. 40).

The fact that conversational adjustments promote input comprehensibility that will further aid learners' second language acquisition was staunchly supported by other researchers. As an instance in point, Ellis (1997) approvingly stated that "the comprehensible input that results from input modification, and in particular from interactional modification, facilitates the natural development of second language" (p. 4). In other words, second language development can potentially be facilitated through comprehensible input that grows out from input modification, and much particularly from interactional modification.

It is an unquestionable fact that input is very important for learners to acquire the L2. Krashen's input hypothesis generated, indeed, a big deal of interest that pushed other researchers to add, rather than reject, some hypotheses such as the interaction and output hypotheses that will be expounded on in what follows.

1.1.5.2. The Interaction Hypothesis

The interaction hypothesis, propounded by Long (1981), stresses the importance of interaction in facilitating second language development. Whereas Krashen believed that comprehensible input is a necessary and sufficient condition for second language

acquisition to take place, Long appeared to have a slightly different, but not contrasting, view from Krashen's.

According to Long (1996) the interaction hypothesis is premised upon four main assumptions. First, comprehensible input is truly held necessary but not sufficient source for second language acquisition to be achieved; rather, it is one amongst several processes prerequisite for an L2 to take place. Second, learners need to attend, notice, and consciously perceive the discrepancies between the input and output in order to turn the input into intake. Third, negotiation of meaning during interaction helps promoting noticing. Fourth, negative feedback that learners gain during meaning negotiation can be facilitative for an L2 development (as cited in Nhu & Tuan, 2010, p. 41). The argument raised against Krashen about the fact that comprehensible input is necessary but not sufficient condition for SLA was avidly supported by Gass (1997) who asserted that "input alone is not sufficient for acquisition" (p. 138).

Other researchers also acknowledged the key role of interaction in L2 learning. For example, Lightbown and Spada (2006) subscribed to Long's interaction hypothesis and asserted that interaction is crucially important to foster second language acquisition, mainly because it allows learners to modify speeches, interaction patterns, and therefore helps learners to involve in conversations (as cited in Nhu & Tuan, 2010, p. 41).

Long (1981, 1983, 1996) claimed that the process of meaning negotiation is of great import to learning; thus, some beneficial effects are worth mentioning. First, it helps learners in understanding, and hence results in learners receiving more input which is, in turn, necessary for SLA to occur. Second, because interaction takes place in meaningful context to learners, this will help learners to derive some support which will further help them in understanding better and get their messages across. Support can also be derived from their conversation partners; that is, when learners fail to deliver or understand

something during interaction, other learners with whom they are interacting can rephrase utterances, supply some words, etc. In doing so, this negotiation leads to the provision of scaffolding to learners, which will allow them to express the exact meaning they want to put across. Third, interaction can lead to the elicitation of negative feedback which refers to information about what is and is not correct in speakers' production (as cited in Nhu & Tuan, 2010, p. 42).

Unquestionably, Long acknowledged the importance of comprehensible input for L2 learning. Of great importance, he believed that the effectiveness of comprehensible input can greatly be increased when learners engage in meaning negotiation.

1.1.5.3. The Output Hypothesis

Swain's output hypothesis stresses the necessity of using language productively. While Krashen (1982) strongly believed that acquiring spoken fluency is solely a matter of understanding input by listening or reading and not a matter of practicing talking, Swain appeared to have a relatively different view from Krashen's.

Essentially, the output hypothesis, put forward by Swain (1985), evolved out of criticism addressed to the input hypothesis. Through her evaluation of Canadian French immersion students, Swain (1985, 1991) deductively argued that input is not a sufficient source for L2 acquisition to take place. Despite the fact that students have been immersed in comprehensible input for enough time, immersion students still continued to make glaring mistakes. Subsequently, Swain (1985, 1993, 1995) proposed the necessity of comprehensible output in her famous output hypothesis (as cited in Wei, 2012, p. 113).

Swain (1985) referred to comprehensible output as "the need for a learner to be 'pushed' toward a delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently and appropriately" (p. 249 as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 326).

Expressed differently, she believed that not only do learners need to be stretched to convey what they want to say, but to convey the message in such a way that is clear and explicit.

Swain (1985) stated that although comprehensible input is invaluable for acquisition, it is not a sufficient source for second language acquisition to be achieved. She enthusiastically argued for affording opportunities for learners to use language productively, i.e. produce comprehensible output.

In her works, Swain (1995, 1998, 2000) identified four main functions of comprehensible output. It enhances fluency; it promotes noticing; it serves SLL process through hypothesis testing; it serves as a metalinguistic function. First, producing the TL can enhance second language learners' fluency. It is widely believed that 'practice makes perfect'; thus, bettering students' fluency through output is non-controversial. Second, output has a noticing or consciousness-raising function. Swain and Lapkin (1995) claimed that producing the L2 will lead learners to notice the gap in their interlanguage and this can be achieved by either internal or external feedback. Third, output has a hypothesis-testing function. Using language productively will allow learners to try out their hypothesis about the L2; they can test the comprehensibility of their output through the feedback they obtain from their conversation partners. Fourth, output serves as metalinguistic function. Generally, when learners reflect upon their target language production, their output has a metalinguistic function (as cited in Liu, 2013, p. 111).

Indisputably, Swain, similar to Long, did not deny the crucial role input plays in language learning. She argued, however, for providing learners with the opportunity to use the L2 productively because their output has a number of important functions.

Conclusion

In summation, this relatively short section has been devoted to shedding some light on the various definitions of classroom interaction together with its types and forms.

Subsequently, it highlighted the significance of classroom interaction in L2 classrooms. It, then, expounded on three main hypotheses whose main concern is how second language acquisition can take place, namely the input, interaction, and output hypotheses.

Section Two: Reticence in EFL/ESL Oral Classrooms

Introduction

1.2. Reticence and Studies Carried out on this Phenomenon in Foreign/Second Language Classroom

1.2.1. The Original Work on the Construct of Reticence

1.2.1.1. The Definition of Reticence

1.2.2. Research into Reticence in EFL/ESL Classroom

1.2.2.1. EFL Chinese Students' Reticence in Oral Classrooms

1.2.2.2. Saudi Students' Reluctance to Participate in Classroom

1.2.2.3. EFL Iranian Students' Reticence in Classroom

1.2.2.4. Turkish Students' Reluctance to Speak in EFL Speaking Classes

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Conclusion

Section Two: Reticence in EFL/ESL Oral Classrooms

Introduction

After having touched upon classroom interaction together with its types, forms, significance, and its relation to second language acquisition, this section will highlight some definitions of reticence and review some studies conducted in this respect. In fact, it is widely believed that oral language classrooms can help EFL learners to develop their communicative abilities, mainly because there is much greater exposure to speaking orally and on the spot. Nevertheless, many learners experience uneasiness and discomfort when attending such classes. As a matter of fact, such feelings can potentially militate against students using the L2 and ultimately culminate in reticence.

2.1. Reticence and Studies Carried out on this Phenomenon in Foreign/Second Language Classroom

There are many studies that have been conducted on the topic of reticence in foreign/second language classrooms, but before launching into a relatively detailed examination of these studies, it is worthwhile to touch upon the various definitions of the construct of reticence.

2.1.1. The Original Work on the Construct of Reticence

In fact, the first-ever researcher who spoke of reticence was Gerald M. Philips. After the publication of the "The Problem of Reticence" article in 1965, Philips introduced the construct of reticence to the field of speech communication. Interestingly, Philips' groundbreaking contribution is, indeed, regarded as the impetus that set the scene for introducing such constructs as communication apprehension (CA) (McCroskey, 1970) and unwillingness to communicate (UTC) (Burgoon, 1976). Importantly, McCroskey and

Burgoon were inspired by the work of Philips that interested them to advocate these two constructs (Keaten & Kelly, 2000).

McCroskey (1977) pointed out that the constructs of reticence, communication apprehension, and unwillingness to communicate were very often treated interchangeably in much of previous research. He, however, drew a distinction between them. In this regard, McCroskey (1977) considered communication apprehension as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p. 78). That is, communication apprehension stems from two sources, either fear or anxiety that is provoked by anticipated or real communication with other people.

McCroskey argued that communication apprehension is different from other constructs as reticence and unwillingness to communicate and the difference lies in the fact that CA considers fear/and or anxiety as the casual elements. Concerning reticence, it is, however, the most global constructs of all, mainly because it refers to an individual’s trait that pushes that individual to remain silent and avoid participating in communication. In so far as unwillingness to communicate is concerned, it generally refers to a global predisposition towards communication avoidance (McCroskey, 1977).

1.2.1.1. The Definition of Reticence

A number of researchers defined reticence in a relatively different way. Philips (1984) stated that “when people avoid communication because they believe they will lose more by talking than by remaining silent, so we refer to this as reticence” (p. 52 as cited in Keaten & Kelly, 2000, p. 166). In other words, reticence can be identified in people’s avoidance behaviour to communicate because of their negative belief that talking can lead to more adverse effect than remaining silent. However, Keaten and Kelly (2000) reconceptualised reticence but without rejecting its essence; they defined reticence as follows “when people

avoid communication because they believe that it is better to remain silent than to risk appearing foolish, we refer to this behavior as reticence” (p. 168). That is, reticence can be manifested in people who avoid communication because of their concern about seeming foolish.

On the whole, it can be stated that Philips’ and Keaten and Kelly’s definitions are slightly different. Whereas Philips’ definition of reticence considers that people’s communication avoidance is due to the belief they hold that they will lose more by talking than by remaining silent, i.e. speaking will just lead to adverse effects than adopting silence, Keaten and Kelly stated that people’s tendency to avoid communication is due to their belief that it is much better to remain silent than risk appearing foolish, i.e. people tend to avoid communication out of fear of foolishness.

A careful reading of the definitions of reticence can reveal that researchers discussed this construct from a social point of view. That is, people’s predisposition to avoid communication in social settings. Similarly, this construct was used in foreign/second language classrooms by many researchers but to describe learners who are reluctant to speak in a language classroom. In this study, reticence refers to students’ reluctance to speak in the F/S language. Typically, reticent students are predisposed to remain quiet and passive, and are unresponsive to any opportunity that exposes them to use the L2.

In point of fact, performing in the classroom via a medium learners are yet to develop can be considered as far more than a challenge for learners; many researchers believed that learners’ performance in the second/foreign language is a challenging task. As a case in point, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) acknowledged that “any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual’s self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear or even panic” (p. 128). Stated differently, performance in L2 classrooms can potentially shake students’ self-belief about their being good L2

communicators which will, in turn, lead learners to experience reticence, self-consciousness, fear, and panic.

Virtually, encountering such problem in classroom can be a matter of concern for teachers. Chaudhury (2005) asserted that “dealing with reticent students in language classroom is one [of] the major issues a language teacher is faced with” (p. 77). Admittedly, students’ reticence can cause teachers frustration and dissatisfaction in the classroom, especially for instructors who try to get all students involved and strive to equally hear and respect everyone’s voice. Having considered the definitions of reticence, it is also pertinent to expatiate upon some studies carried out on the topic of reticence.

1.2.2. Research into Reticence in EFL/ESL Classrooms

Students’ reticence in EFL/ESL oral classrooms is, and has always been, a topic of interest to a great deal of researchers. Accordingly, colossal endeavours have been put in an attempt to investigate what causes such phenomenon in F/S language classrooms. Unquestionably, the extensive literature consistently evidenced that reticence is widely experienced by EFL/ESL learners. Hence, it is worthwhile to draw on a number of research studies that have been conducted on reticence in different contexts, viz. China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and Taiwan.

1.2.2.1. EFL Chinese Students’ Reticence in Oral Classrooms

Liu (2005) conducted a study in order to investigate the causes for both Chinese students’ reticence and active involvement in oral classroom activities. Data were collated by means of reflective journals, classroom observation, and semi-structured interviews. Of a particular interest, the researcher relied on classroom observation in order to compare between students’ self-reported participation in their journals and their real behaviour in various classroom activities.

As regards to the causes of students' reticence, teachers' interviews and students' interviews and journals revealed that a number of factors contributed to such phenomenon. Basically, some amongst which were low English proficiency, anxiety, personality as shyness and introversion, fear of making mistakes and being laughed at, lack of confidence, lack of familiarity with the environment as well as partners. Moreover, students ascribed their passivity to Chinese culture which values silence and modesty, Chinese educational system that considers teachers as the authority figures in the class and students' job was to listen quietly and attentively. Thus, students at the level of university were behaving out of habit. Strangely enough, teachers did not use any strategies that can help students be more active apart from routinely exhorting them to participate; likewise, students felt helpless and relied only on the increasing exposure to spoken English.

On the whole, Liu's qualitative study showed that reticence exists among EFL Chinese students and their reluctance to speak is attributable to a wide range of factors such as affective and cultural factors.

1.2.2.2. Saudi Students' Reluctance to Participate in Classroom

Similarly, Hamouda (2013) undertook a research study in which he sought to investigate the causes of Saudi students' reluctance to speak in English classroom discussions and reveal the strategies used by students to participate. The researcher relied on questionnaires as a data collection tool.

Based on the results from the questionnaires, students attributed their non-participation to a wide variety of reasons, some amongst which were fear of speaking in front of the whole class, lack of preparation, incomprehensible input, negative teacher traits as poor teaching skills, teacher's harshness and strictness when commenting on students responses, fear of teacher's way of error correction, class arrangement such as sitting in the front of the class, lack of practice of English due to class size and limited class time, lack of

interest, poor pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Not only did participants ascribe their reluctance to these reasons but also to their lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, shyness, low English proficiency, fear of being laughed. The latter is in consonance with Liu (2005) whose study also revealed that Chinese students' reticence is partly ascribed to such factors as personality, fear of making mistakes, low English proficiency, lack of confidence, and fear of being laughed at.

With regard to the strategies that students use in order to participate in classroom which is one of the objectives of Hammoud's study, respondents appeared to use a number of strategies. First, most respondents stated that they think carefully and silently rehearse what they have in their minds before they participate. Second, students also stated that they usually write down what they want to say. As such, students feel more confident when putting their ideas into paper. Third, students reported that they ask their classmates who are sitting next to them what to say before they participate. Fourth, some students stated that they prefer to listen to their classmates' participation in order to improve their linguistic skills.

All in all, Hamouda's quantitative study revealed that Saudi students' non-participatory behaviour in English classroom discussions is ascribable to a whole host of factors; some of which were linguistic, affective, and physical factors. Besides, students appeared to use some strategies to help them participate in classroom.

1.2.2.3. EFL Iranian Students' Reticence in Classroom

Likewise, Backtash and Chalak (2015) undertook a research study where they investigated the extent to which EFL Iranian students experience reticence and the factors underlying such phenomenon. In collecting the data, the researchers relied on the Reticence Scale questionnaire, a reliable instrument used to measure the level of reticence along six dimensions, and semi-structured interviews.

The results of the questionnaire showed that students feel nervous and tense when talking, stumble over their words because they feel that their thoughts are jumbled and disorganized, while some others appeared to wait for so much time to say something. The subject of class discussion also posed a problem for students in the class.

Also, the researchers conducted a semi- structured interview with a number of students. The interviewed participants attributed their reticence to their lack of English proficiency, lack of self-confidence, and shyness. It is patently obvious that the results of the interview tally with what has previously been reported by Hamouda (2013) and so by Liu (2005) who both reported some of these factors to be reticence-inducers.

In summation, Baktach and Chalak quantitative and qualitative study showed that Iranian students are highly reticent. Their reticence in classroom is mainly ascribed to linguistic and affective factors.

1.2.2.4. Turkish Students' Reluctance to Speak in EFL Speaking Classes

Savaci (2013) conducted an action research in which she sought to investigate the reasons for EFL Turkish students' reluctance during oral performance and reveal learners' perspectives about it. The researcher relied on lickert-scale questionnaire and a semi-structured interview as means of research.

Surprisingly enough, the questionnaire results did not indicate the occurrence of reluctance amongst learners that prompted the researcher to rule out the results and rely only on the interview. The interview was conducted in Turkish with five (5) participants. Accordingly, students expressed a sigh of relief to speak in their native language, and as such students made it self-evident about their reluctance to speak in English.

According to the results obtained from the interview, learners agreed on the fact that there was heavy emphasis on grammar and vocabulary rather than on speaking during their previous English instruction, and this can, indeed, be the reason why students were

reluctant to speak English in the classroom. Also, lack of self-confidence was another factor that caused students to behave reluctantly. In this respect, all participants acknowledged the fact that they lack confidence but when speaking to Turkish people and not to native speakers. Of particular interest, students were afraid of being despised by Turkish speakers of English who are often alleged to judge people who speak English and make mistakes. Moreover, most participants claimed that teacher's error correction does not affect their participation. While other studies mentioned earlier reported that one of the factors that cause students' reticence is fear of teacher's error correction, this study appears to be in marked contrast. Furthermore, topic familiarity and interest seemed to equally play a role in determining learners' participation or reluctance.

In summary, it can be said that Turkish students' reluctance to speak is mainly attributed to such factors as lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, Turkish culture, and topic unfamiliarity.

1.2.2.5. Taiwanese Students' Reticence in ESL Classroom

Donald (2010) carried out a study in order to investigate the issue of reticence in ESL classroom and reveal the pedagogical strategies used by instructors when encountering such problem. To elicit the data, the researcher relied on filmed data taken from a Taiwanese university English conversation class, focus group which consisted of ESL learners from different contexts, and stimulated recall interviews.

The filmed excerpt showed that the instructor in this study appeared to control turn allocation, giving learners no impetus for interaction with each other. Additionally, when facing silence, it was the teacher who provided the answers, providing no wait-time for learners to process the questions. Therefore, learners appeared to be largely reluctant when called on to answer questions.

The data were also obtained by means of focus group and stimulated recall interviews. The findings of the focus group and stimulated recall interviews showed that the most factors that impacted learners' unwillingness to speak were fear of making mistakes, error correction, the way errors were corrected, and extended wait-time. One of the informants asserted that fear of making mistakes is a real concern for him/her and s/he would not dare to answer any question before making sure the correctness of any answer. Besides, another issue that emerged from the focus group was error correction, much particularly how errors were corrected. All informants agreed on the fact that error correction is important but the manner in which errors were corrected is of great importance because it allies learners' feeling of unease and distress when corrected.

In so far as extended wait-time is concerned, informants' opinions vacillated between effective and ineffective. Concerning small groups in classroom, all informants strongly believed in the benefit of small group discussions, stating that it can give them the opportunity to offer contribution to classroom and enable them to work out things they would otherwise be unable to.

To sum up, Donald's qualitative study revealed that students' reticence is mainly attributable to such factors as fear of making mistakes, fear of error correction, the manner in which errors are corrected, and wait-time.

In the light of these findings, one can easily deduce that reticence is a commonly found phenomenon experienced by S/F language learners. In fact, a careful perusal of the research findings shows that reticence stems from a wide variety of factors such as linguistic, affective, and cultural ones. Irrespective of the fact that these studies have been conducted in different contexts and approached differently by researchers, they undoubtedly yielded consistent results.

However, the findings of these research studies do not reflect the local realities. Basically, some studies have been conducted in second language acquisition contexts, for example, Donald (2010) carried out his study in an ESL context. Algeria, on the other hand, is an EFL context, i.e. a poor input environment. Besides, some studies were carried out only on very restricted participants. A good case in point is Savaci (2013) whose research findings were elicited only from five (5) participants, and thereby can only be applicable to the context within which they have been conducted. Furthermore, some studies were either qualitative or quantitative in design. Liu (2005), Donald (2010), and Savaci (2013) studies are good examples of the former. Hamouda (2013) is a good example of the latter. For all that, it is perfectly impossible to say, nor does it seem intuitively reasonable to suppose that the sizeable literature on the topic of reticence mirrors the local context. All in all, this calls for a research work to be conducted in the Algerian EFL classrooms to fill the existing slit in the literature by further approaching the topic from students' and teachers' perspectives using both quantitative and qualitative research tools.

Conclusion

This fairly short section has mainly been devoted to casting some light on reticence in EFL/ESL classrooms. It first reviewed some of its definitions and, then, took in a number of research studies that explored the factors triggering reticence in foreign/second language classrooms, highlighting the methodology of each research study, context, and findings.

Section Three: Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in EFL/ESL Classrooms

Introduction

1.3. Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in Foreign/Second Language Classrooms

1.3.1. Anxiety

1.3.1.1. *Foreign language anxiety*

1.3.1.2. *Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of language anxiety*

1.3.1.2.1. *Communication apprehension*

1.3.1.2.2. *Test anxiety*

1.3.1.2.3. *Fear of negative evaluation*

1.3.1.3. *Perspectives to investigating anxiety*

1.3.1.3.1. *Trait anxiety*

1.3.1.3.2. *State anxiety*

1.3.1.3.3. *Situation-specific anxiety*

1.3.2. Pursuit of Perfection

1.3.3. Fear of Making Mistakes

1.3.4. Cultural Beliefs

1.3.5. Lack of Self-Confidence

1.3.6. Lack of Preparation

1.3.7. Low English Proficiency

1.3.8. Fear of Error Correction

1.3.9. Peer Negative Evaluation

1.3.10. Introversion

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Section Three: Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in EFL/ESL Classrooms

Introduction

After having touched upon the different definitions of reticence and studies that have been conducted in this regard, this section has its major concern the review of different factors contributing to students' reticence in a language classroom. In fact, research into reticence has consistently proven the omnipresence of such phenomenon in foreign/second language classrooms. Importantly, the uniqueness of Speaking classes lies in the fact that learners are required to perform orally without recourse to papers, which is not the case in other skill areas where learners can even regurgitate what they have learnt through pen and papers. Consequently, the burden of speaking spontaneously can potentially provoke reticence in students. Indeed, not only is reticence ascribable to one main factor; rather, a whole host of variables were found to contribute to students' reticence in a language classroom. Thus, it is worthwhile to cite some of the prominent factors that have been found to engender reticence.

1.3. Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in Foreign/Second Language Classrooms

Research into reticence revealed that students' reticence in oral classrooms is accounted for by a multitude of factors. The most factors that have been proven to induce students' reticence will be discussed in what follows.

1.3.1. Anxiety

Many researchers acknowledged the fact that anxiety affects second language learning. In this regard, Dornyei (2005) asserted that "there is no doubt that anxiety affects L2 performance" (p. 198). In a similar vein, Arnold and Brown (1999) maintained that "anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning

process” (p. 8 as cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 198). Indubitably, anxiety can negatively affect the process of F/S language learning generally and speaking skill particularly.

The construct of anxiety has been defined with some variation in phrasing by different researchers. In this vein, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) defined anxiety as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (p. 125). In other words, anxiety is the individual’s feeling of fear and discomfort that is bound up with an uncontrollably nervous system evocation. Equally, May (1977) viewed anxiety as “an emotional response to threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality” (p. 205 as cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 40). More simply put, it is the individual’s reaction towards something that threatens what is held valuable and essential to his existence.

Because students’ anxiety is so relevant to the process of F/S language learning, researchers were driven to think of anxiety which affects language learning as a separate and distinct type of anxiety that can stand on its own right. In this sense, Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that “second language research has neither adequately defined foreign language anxiety nor described its specific effects on foreign language learning” (p. 125). Consequently, Horwitz et al. (1986) attempted to ‘fill this gap’ by identifying foreign language anxiety as a distinct variable in foreign language learning and interpreting it within the context of existing theoretical and empirical work on certain anxiety reaction.

1.3.1.1. Foreign language anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) defined foreign language anxiety as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language [L2] contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (p. 284 as cited in Liu & Jackson, 2008, p. 72). Similarly, MacIntyre (1999) maintained that language anxiety refers to “worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” (p. 27 as cited in Dornyei, 1978, p. 199). Taken all together, it can be

said that foreign language anxiety refers to feelings of apprehension, anxiousness, and tension closely associated with the context of learning and speaking a foreign language.

1.3.1.2. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of language anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) identified three related anxieties to their conceptualization of foreign language anxiety. Those interrelated components encompass communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

1.3.1.2.1. Communication apprehension. Horwitz et al. (1986) defined communication apprehension as “a type of shyness characterized by fear of anxiety about communicating with people” (p. 127). They further pursued saying that communication apprehension can be manifested in difficulty in speaking in front of groups or dyads (oral communication anxiety), or listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety). In a foreign language classroom, people who have trouble speaking in front of groups are highly likely to experience greater difficulty speaking in the TL where they have immature command of the language they are learning and their performance is always monitored.

1.3.1.2.2. Test anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) delimited test anxiety to “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (p. 127). They further stated that test-anxious students often subject themselves to pressure because they believe that anything less than a perfect test performance is a total failure. Students who get anxious over tests in a foreign language class are prone to experiencing considerable difficulty because tests and quizzes are part and parcel of the learning process. Thus, oral tests can potentially evoke both test and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in students.

1.3.1.2.3. Fear of negative evaluation. The third anxiety related to FL anxiety is fear of negative evaluation. Horwitz et al. (1986) defined fear of negative evaluation as “apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the

expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (p. 128). They stated that although fear of negative evaluation seems similar to test anxiety, it is broader in scope in the sense that it is not confined to test-taking situations. Possibly, it may occur in any social, evaluative situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in a foreign language class. The uniqueness of foreign languages among other academic subjects is that they require continuous evaluation by the teacher who is a fluent speaker in the class. Equally, students can be sensitive to the evaluation of their peers.

Despite the fact that these three related anxieties are deemed as the conceptual building blocks of foreign language anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that FL anxiety is not a mere combination of these component parts, viz. communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Horwitz et al. (1986) conceptualized foreign language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process” (p. 128).

1.3.1.3. *Perspectives to investigating anxiety.* Anxiety has been investigated from three perspectives. The first perspective regarded anxiety as a general personality trait that is relevant across several situations. The second perspective is interested in the here-and-now experience of anxiety as an emotional state. The third perspective examined the specific forms of anxiety that consistently occurs over time within a given situation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

1.3.1.3.1. *Trait anxiety.* In Dornyei's (2005) terms “trait anxiety refers to a stable predisposition to become anxious in across-section of situation” (p. 198). In other words, trait anxiety refers to an individual's propensity to constantly experience anxiety irrespective of the situation the individual is in, i.e. it is a permanent inborn trait.

1.3.1.3.2. *State anxiety.* Dornyei (2005) defined state anxiety as “the transient, moment-to-moment experience of anxiety as a reaction to the current situation (p. 198). That is, it is the individual’s momentary experience of anxiety prompted by the situation the individual is in, i.e. the individual’s anxious response to a particular situation.

1.3.1.3.3. *Situation-specific anxiety.* MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b) regarded situation-specific anxiety as “the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (labeled as ‘test anxiety’), when solving mathematical problems (‘math anxiety’), or when speaking a second language (‘language anxiety’)” (p. 2 as cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 44). That is to say, it is the individual’s likelihood to experience anxiousness in a given situation such as feeling anxious during a test or when speaking a second language in the classroom.

Other researchers distinguished between facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety (Scovel, 1978; Bailey, 1983). In this regard, Scovel (1978) stated that facilitating anxiety “motivates the learner to ‘fight’ the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approaching behaviour. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to ‘flee’ the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behaviour” (p. 139). In a similar vein, Bailey (1983) further asserted that the anxiety that motivates the learner to study the target language is facilitating; however, if it pushes the learner to withdraw from the classroom, such anxiety is debilitating. Taken all together, it can be said that facilitating anxiety helps learners to achieve good performance; debilitating anxiety, by contrast, hinders good performance.

1.3.2. Pursuit of Perfection

Some learners are reluctant to participate in a language classroom because they believe that all what they should say should be mistake-free. In this regard, Brown (2005) stated that “if we never ventured to speak a sentence until we were absolutely certain of its total

correctness, we would likely never communicate productively at all" (p. 159). In line with this, Horwitz et al. (1986) maintained that "... a number of students believe nothing should be said in the foreign language until it can be said correctly" (p. 127). Consequently, learners' concern for perfection when speaking can result in their reluctance to initiate the talking in classroom.

1.3.3. Fear of Making Mistakes

Since second/foreign language learners are learning a new language, they are ineluctably prone to making mistakes. Brown (2007) stated that "anyone who learned a foreign language is acutely aware that second language learning actually necessitates the making of mistakes" (p. 159). In the same line of thought, Ur (1991) asserted that "...mistakes are a natural and useful part of language learning" (p. 243). Some learners, however, are loath to participate in a language classroom because of their perpetual fear of making mistakes that can make them seem incompetent in the eyes of their teachers or their peers.

Brown (2007) maintained that the mistakes of which learners are afraid can be viewed as threats to their ego; they can, indeed, pose internal and external threats. Internally, when performing something wrong, learners become critical of their own mistakes. Externally, learners perceive the others to be critical of their performance, judging them when they blunder in a second language.

1.3.4. Cultural Beliefs

Culture refers to a collection of values, attitudes, and beliefs that are commonly shared by a group of people; it can be manifested in their behaviour when they interact with each other or with other people (Abubaker, 2008). In fact, when culture is brought to classroom, it can potentially affect students' engagement in the process of L2 because their thoughts and behaviours are shaped by the culture within which they have been raised. In fact,

Saville-Troik (1978) asserted that “all of us in one way or another are the products of our culture, and many of our behaviours, values, and goals are culturally determined” (p. 3).

Because cultures considerably differ in terms of beliefs, values, and behaviours, learners' way of behaving in the classroom can be determined by their cultures. Brown (2007) stated that “culturally, the American society differs considerably from a number of other societies where it is improper to speak out in the classroom” (p. 167). That is, in some cultures speaking in the classroom and displaying one's ideas and thoughts are held positive behaviours. However, some other cultures encourage learners to behave quietly and attentively and if learners behave otherwise, it can be interpreted as a sign of showing off. Consequently, learners remain voiceless and many of their thoughts and feelings go unheard.

1.3.5. Lack of Self-Confidence

Keeley (2014) stated that “self-confidence refers to the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals, or perform tasks completely” (p. 10). In other words, self-confidence refers to an individual's belief in his/her ability to perform and realize goals. Self-confidence is often said to be an important affective variable in attaining success in L2. In this respect, Krashen (1982) claimed that “learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition” (p. 8 as cited in Keeley, 2014, p. 8).

However, not all learners can perform confidently in the L2 classrooms. That is, some learners are liable to suffer from the lack of self-confidence which can result in a poor performance. In this sense, keeley (2014) stated that learners' lack of confidence is often related to their over-use of the monitor in Krashen's monitor hypothesis. That is to say, less self-confident learners tend to excessively monitor the correctness of their speech during the course of a conversation to the detriment of their performance in terms of

fluency. He further asserted that learners with low self-confidence are subject to experience performance anxiety and set the scene for the negative effects of self-consciousness. As a result, learners tend to over-monitor their output at the expense of fluency that will eventually lead to a loss of train of thought and the unwillingness to continue interaction. In a similar vein, Tsui (1995) asserted that “students who lack confidence about themselves and their English necessarily suffer from communication apprehension” (p. 220). On the whole, learners’ lack of confidence inevitably hinders students’ good oral performance.

1.3.6. Lack of Preparation

Undeniably, learners’ participation in a language classroom is of utmost importance for it allows learners to enrich classroom talk. Students can raise the rate of their participation in the classroom through prior preparation before coming to class. However, students’ lack of preparation may result in students’ reluctance to speak because second/foreign language classrooms require some improvisation. In this regard, Daly (1991) asserted that “in the typical classroom, students might avoid talking because they are unprepared, uninterested, unwilling to disclose, alienated from the class, lacking confidence in their competence...” (p. 6 as cited in Messadh, 2006, p. 8). That is, students’ avoidance to talk in L2 classrooms can be the result of their lack of preparation.

1.3.7. Low English Proficiency

It is an indisputable fact that learners’ proficiency in the second/foreign language is a principal determinant for their either initiation or reluctance to speak in a language classroom. Certainly, low English proficiency can bring about reticence in students. Cummins (1996) stated that EFLs who lack proficiency with regard to their English are prone to judgments about their language ability as well as their significance as individuals (as cited in Pappamihel, 2002, p. 332).

1.3.8. Fear of Error Correction

Mosbah (2007) defined an oral error as a form that is unwanted or rejected by the teacher in a particular learning/teaching context (as cited in Coskun, 2010, p. 1). It is a fact widely recognized that teacher's provision of feedback is crucially important in a language classroom because it corrects what is falsely assumed or unknowingly responded to by students. Since EFL/ESL learners are susceptible to making errors in the classroom, teachers will unavoidably react to students' erroneous forms or utterances. In this vein, Hedge (2000) asserted that "in many foreign language situations, where there is little exposure to English or practice available in the community, error correction is an expected role of the teacher" (p. 288).

It is widely believed that teachers who correct students' errors gently will by no means encourage learners to speak and try out their hypotheses. By the same token, teachers who never-endingly keep correcting students' errors will most assuredly inhibit learners. Consequently, such type of teacher correction behaviour will but result in interrupting the natural flow of ideas, leading learners to feel apprehensive. In this respect, Harmer (2001) pointed out that "when students are in the middle of a speaking activity, over correction may inhibit them and take communicativeness out of the activity. On the other hand, helpful and gentle correction may get students out of difficult misunderstandings and hesitation" (P. 276 as cited in Ayashe, 2014, p. 221). In line with this, Ur (1991) acknowledged the fact that teacher's intervention to correct students' errors in work fluency will inevitably disturb and discourage more than help. He further asserted that "we should go for encouraging, tactful correction" (p. 248).

1.3.9. Peer Negative Evaluation

One often cited factor that contributes to students' reticence is negative evaluation of peers. Because learners are so sensitive to and concerned about their peers' evaluation,

they tend to remain silent in classroom. Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that “students may also be acutely sensitive to the evaluations -real or imagined- of their peers (p. 128). Furthermore, Rocca (2010) stated that one of the possible reasons that students do not participate in a language classroom is because of their personal fears of feeling inadequate in front of others.

1.3.10. Introversion

Brown (2007) defined introversion as “the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment apart from a reflection of this self from other people” (p. 167). Generally, introvert learners are predisposed to remain quiet and taciturn; they are not interested in their own thoughts and feelings and not in other people. McCroskey (1991) stated that people who are introverted have a tendency to be quieter and less willing to communicate. Very often, introvert learners are perceived negatively by their teachers. In this regard, Brown (2007) stated that “in a language classes, where oral participation is highly valued, it is easy to view active participants with favour and to assume that their visibility in the classroom is due to an extroversion factor” (p. 167). That is, owing to the importance of oral participation in language classrooms, teachers are often subject to favour students who actively participate in class, believing that their extraversion is conducive to their visibility.

1.3.11. Lack of Familiarity with the Topic

Undeniably, familiarity with topics in the classroom can help learners to speak, participate, and bring life to classroom. Conversely, students' lack of familiarity with topics can potentially render them reticent. Baker and Westrup (2003) asserted that “students find it difficult to have a conversation on a topic that they know little about” (p. 16). That is, topics about which learners have far too sketchy information can pose a real problem for them in the classroom.

1.3.12. Lack of Vocabulary and Poor Grammar

Good grasp of vocabulary and grammar can immeasurably help learners to speak in classroom. Baker and Westrup (2003) asserted that many students find it a challenging task to speak in a foreign language and this concern is mainly attributable to the learners' limited knowledge of vocabulary and their inability to use grammar correctly. Acknowledging the role of vocabulary, Milton (n.d.) asserted that "learners with small or poorly developed vocabularies could not be proficient nor as fluent in performing through the foreign language" (p. 74). Stated differently, learners whose stock of vocabulary is far too limited will find it extremely difficult to communicate fluidly in the target language.

Conclusion

This comparatively short section has exclusively been devoted to discussing the contributing factors to students' reticence in foreign/second language classrooms, citing researchers' beliefs and attitudes about these factors. Of great importance, these factors have been cited on the basis of the findings revealed by different research studies reviewed earlier.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis and Discussion

Section One: Research Methodology

Introduction

2.1. Research Methodology

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Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis and Discussion

Section One: Research Methodology

Introduction

The methodology section is exclusively devoted to expounding on such issues as the research paradigm, the setting, the sample of the study, data-gathering instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis as well as the limitations of the study. Importantly, the research methods used to carry out this investigation are delineated in what follows.

2. 1. The Research Methodology

2. 1. 1. Research Paradigm

This research work attempts to investigate the factors contributing to third year students' reticence in Speaking classes. To explore the topic, the researcher made use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data came from the questionnaire that was administered to third year License students. The qualitative data, on the other hand, came from the focus group discussions which were held with two groups of students from the existing sample that answered the questionnaire, and semi-structured interview which was conducted with 3 teachers of Speaking Classes.

Opting for quantitative and qualitative tools makes the current study a multi-method research, i.e. triangulation. The term triangulation in research was first used by Denzin (1978) to refer to the combination of complementary methods or data sources in an attempt to offset the weakness in each. Typically, data are collected concurrently and the researcher's interpretation involves and necessitates comparing the results to best answer the research questions (Cresswell and Plamo Clark, 2007; Morse, 1991 as cited in Amelink, Borrego, & Douglas, 2009, p. 58).

With specific reference to the current study at hand, methodological triangulation is fulfilled mainly to crosscheck the quantitative data from survey questionnaires with

qualitative data obtained from both interviews and focus group discussions. While the questionnaires surveyed core items relating to the topic of students' reticence from the students' perspective, the interview and focus groups sought either supporting or refuting the data yielded by student questionnaires and understanding in depth issues relating to the research problem, i.e. factors impeding students' active involvement in classroom talk.

The dominance of qualitative inclination in this research study over the quantitative is dictated by the descriptive nature of the topic. A prespecified set of items relative to students' reticence in EFL classes were submitted for evaluation to a relatively large group of informants. Indeed, the use of qualitative instruments departed from a set of prespecified research items and the data yielded were interpreted qualitatively.

2. 1. 2. Setting

This research work explores the contributing factors to third year License students' reticence in EFL Speaking classes. It took place at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel.

2.1.3. Research Design

2. 1. 3. 1. *Sample of the study.* Since it is practically impossible to study the entire population, a sample from the existing third year population was chosen. Dornyei (2007) defined a sample as "the group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation" (p. 96). The sample of this study consisted of 55 third year students of English and 3 teachers of Speaking classes. The reason for selecting third year students to be under scrutiny is not unwarrantable. It is due to the fact that third year students have received a maximum level of instruction in English in comparison to other levels, i.e. first and second year. Therefore, they are expected to be well-versed in spoken English or, at the very least, to have developed a satisfactory level with regards to their speaking skill.

2. 1. 3. 2. *Data-gathering instrument.* In order to investigate this research work, the researcher made use of three research instruments, viz. a questionnaire, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interview.

2. 1. 3. 2. 1. *Questionnaire.* The questionnaire is one of the most widely used research instruments to collect data from a large population in a relatively short period of time. According to Nunan (1992) “a questionnaire is an instrument for the collection of data usually in written form consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subjects” (p. 231 as cited in Mebitil, 2011, p. 54).

The questionnaire seems, in fact, practical for this research work in the sense it is less time-consuming and easy to handle and analyse by fledgling researchers. More than that, questionnaire is characterised by its anonymity nature, which can potentially give the participants much more confidence, thereby leading them to give more honest answers.

As far as the structure of questionnaire is concerned, it consists of one section entitled “Factors Contributing to Students’ Reticence in Speaking Classes” comprising 25 questions that aim to explicitly and implicitly elicit the factors that render students reticent.

The questionnaire is built around 25 questions which fall into two types: close-ended and open questions. (Q 1, Q2, Q3, Q 4, Q 6, Q 7, Q 11, Q 12, Q 14, Q 16, Q18, Q19, and Q21) are closed questions. Open questions amounted to 12 questions (Q 5, Q 8, Q 9, Q 10, Q 13, Q 15, Q 17, Q 20, Q 22, Q 23, Q 24, and Q 25).

It is widely recognized that closed questions can yield responses that the researcher can quantify and analyse very easily, open questions were relatively frequent in this questionnaire, however. The frequency with which open questions appeared in the questionnaire was not unwarranted. Mindful of the difficulty to get the participants to say something about their reticence, the researcher inserted “Please justify” and “Others” in order to get the participants to say more. In this regard, Nunan (1992) stated that “while

responses to closed questions are easier to collate and analyse, one often obtains more useful information from open questions” (p. 143).

2. 1. 3. 2. 2. *Focus group discussions.* The current research work also made use of focus groups as another research instrument. According to Kitzinger (1995) “focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data” (p. 299). Importantly, focus groups are usually used to gain a deeper understanding of people’s opinions, perceptions, and beliefs regarding an issue.

The focus group discussions were held as follow-up to the questionnaire. From the existing sample that answered the questionnaire, a total of 12 students were chosen to conduct the focus group discussions in attempt to ascertain the truthfulness of the findings yielded by student questionnaires. In this respect, Bradley and Harwell (2009) stated that “focus groups can also be used to help explain results found through other data collection methods, such as surveys” (p. 82). The reason for opting for focus group discussions is not without its merit. It is due to the fact that focus group discussions save time, i.e. the researcher will not resort to asking each participant a question in turn; rather, participants are encouraged to speak and interact with each other. The focus group consists of seven (7) questions that are identical with some questions already surveyed in the questionnaire.

It is worth pointing out that all participants in the focus groups were female students. That is, the two groups were homogeneous. Indeed, the researcher wanted to have heterogeneous groups. However, and much to the researcher’s disappointment, only a handful of female students were most willing to participate in the focus group discussions. As a result, the researcher had no other choice but to conduct the focus groups with the volunteer female participants.

2. 1. 3. 2. 3. *Semi-structured interview.* The third research tool that was employed in this research work is semi-structured interview. As its name suggests, semi-structured

interview denotes the use of some predetermined set of questions. In this regard, Bell (1999) stated "where specific information is required, it is generally wise to establish some sort of structure..." (p. 139).

The semi-structured interview also seems practical for this research work, largely because it gives room for interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, and thereby allows the researcher to elicit and process data s/he would not get otherwise. According to Bradley and Harwell (2009) "semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic to understand thoroughly the answers provided" (p. 27).

The semi-structured interview was conducted with three teachers of Speaking classes; it consisted of fourteen questions and some additional prompts were added on the spot. The overarching aim of the semi-structured interview is to explore the factors influencing third year students' reticence from the perspective of teachers of Speaking classes and reveal the strategies teachers resort to in order to get reticent students to speak.

2. 1. 3. 2. 4. Data collection procedures. As a starting point, during the construction of the questionnaire, the researcher conducted a preliminary work with third year students; the aim of which was to get further insights from the students into the issue of reticence. The informal data that emerged from the preliminary work were invaluable in that they widened the scope of the questionnaire to include some questions that the researcher could not get otherwise.

Importantly, prior to administering the questionnaire, the researcher conducted a pilot study whose aim was to give the questionnaire a trial run and to glean information from the piloted participants about how they interpreted and responded to the questions. Consequently, the researcher was cautioned in advance about the ambiguity of some

questions which led to invalid responses on the part of the small-sized sample. Then, refinements to some questions were made accordingly.

Afterwards, the researcher administered the questionnaire to third year students. The researcher was present during the completion of the questionnaire to provide any necessary explanation to the participants to avoid any misunderstanding. Students filled out the questionnaires on the spot and handed them back immediately to the researcher.

Subsequent to answering the questionnaire, the researcher made a request for further collaboration from the participants to conduct focus group discussions with her. The researcher made it clear that participating in the focus groups is entirely voluntary, without coercion. Thankfully, a total of 12 students volunteered to participate in the focus group discussions, forming two independent groups. Afterwards, the researcher together with the volunteer participants agreed on time and location in order to hold the focus group discussions. Having met the participants, the researcher explained the nature of the study and informed the participants that group interview will be recorded for transcription purposes. They were ensured that the recording will be treated in the strictest confidence. Accordingly, participants did not object the recording.

Additionally, the researcher made use of a semi-structured interview which was conducted with three teachers of Speaking classes. The three teachers were informed of the researcher's intention to conduct the interview with them beforehand in order to take their consent and convene a meeting to hold the interview. After having met each teacher in turn, the researcher asked teachers' permission to record the interview. Thoughtfully, they readily consented. After implementing the focus groups and semi-structured interview, the researcher transcribed them verbatim for ease of presentation and analysis.

2. 1. 4. Data Analysis

Since the data were collated by means of questionnaire, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews, the researcher analysed the data quantitatively and qualitatively. In so far as the data obtained from the questionnaire are concerned, closed questions were analysed manually. That is, the researcher counted the frequency of items and reported them in simple tables under appropriate headings. However, the data generated by verbal questions such as open questions were grouped under thematic categories in accordance to their frequency and then reported in tables through numbers.

From a qualitative standpoint, the significant results from the focus group discussions were summarized. The results from teachers' semi-structured interview, on the other hand, were thematised and reported cursorily. Importantly, some supplementary and enlightening quotes from teachers' interview and students' focus groups were used when discussing the overall results. Of particular importance, some students' quotes in the focus groups are phrased coherently and cohesively by the researcher because some students' responses were fragment.

2. 1. 5. Limitations of the Study

When carrying out this research, the researcher was confronted by a number of constraints which will run as follows:

- One of the limitations of this study worthy of note was the harsh lack of some relevant resources which culminated in the use of second-hand references.
- The researcher attempted to use classroom observation and reflective journals; however, they were dropped. Concerning classroom observation, the researcher intended to attend some sessions in order to observe the non-participatory behaviour of students in Speaking classes. But, bearing in mind that it is extremely difficult to observe some factors that render students reticent, such as psychological

factors, the researcher decided not to do it. With respect to reflective journals, the researcher also intended to use journals where students write about their experience in each session for a given period of time. Nevertheless, mindful of the necessity to get this research work out within time requirements, the researcher opted for another research tool, focus group discussions.

- The researcher also intended to conduct the semi-structured interview with more than three (3) teachers to make the teacher participants' sample more representative; however, the response the researcher got from some teachers when requested to conduct the interview amounted to a sharp refusal.

Conclusion

This fairly short section has been devoted to the research methodology. It touched upon the research paradigm, the setting, the sample of the study, the research instruments, the data collection procedures, data analysis, and the limitations of the study. The subsequent section will primarily be concerned with the analysis of the results yielded by dint of student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teachers' semi-structured interview.

Section Two: Data Analysis

Introduction

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2.2.1.1. Section One: Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in Speaking Classes

2.2.2. Analysis of the Results Obtained by Focus Group Discussions

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2.2.3.2. Teachers' Teaching Experience

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2.2.3.5. Teachers' Feedback on Students' Speaking Errors

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Interaction

2.2.3.14. Teachers' Suggestions to Make a Speaking Class more Willing to

Communicate

Conclusion

Section Two: Data Analysis

Introduction

The major concern of this section is the analysis of the results yielded by the different research tools, notably student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teachers' semi-structured interview. It first opens up with the results obtained from student questionnaires, then presents the results of focus group discussions. Subsequently, it ends with the presentation of the results of teachers' semi-structured interview.

2.2.1. Analysis of Student Questionnaires

What will be presented and described below are the results generated by means of student questionnaires. Students' answers to closed questions are converted into percentages and presented in tables. However, their responses to open questions are thematised and inserted in tables representing them through numbers.

2.2.1.1. Section One: Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in Speaking Classes

Answers to Q 1 (Was it your choice to major in English?)

Table 1

Students' Choice to Major in English

Options	Percentage %
Yes	85%
No	15%
Total	100

The results from the above table indicate that a considerable percentage of participants (85%) acknowledged that majoring in English was entirely of their own volition. It can be said that lack of interest in the subject matter is not a problem in Speaking classes.

Answers to Q 2 (How good are you in English?)

Table 2

Students' Language Proficiency in English

Options	Percentage
Good	18%
Average	76%
Poor	5%
Total	100%

With respect to this question, students are queried to indicate their language proficiency where three options were provided. The overwhelming majority of them (76%) admitted to have an average level. Consequently, it can be said that students' language proficiency in English is mostly average.

Answers to Q 3 (How often do you speak English outside the classroom?)

Table 3

The Frequency of Students' Practice of English Outside the Classroom

Options	Percentage %
Frequently	13%
Sometimes	80%
Rarely	7%
Never	0%
Total	100%

Out of four options, the second option "sometimes" received the highest percentage of students' responses (80%). So, students seem not to practise English that much outside the confines of the classroom. Most of them opted for "sometimes" to be the frequency of their practice, mindless of the fact that language proficiency gains that they make outside the classroom can be of great benefit in classroom.

Answers to Q 4 (To what extent do you think the speaking skill is important?)

Table 4

Students' Perceptions of the Speaking Skill

Options	Percentage %
Very important	98%
Little important	2%
Little important	0%
Total	100%

This question is concerned with how students deem the speaking skill. As illustrated in the table above, a clear majority of participants (98%) endorsed the centrality of speaking skill. So, this means that students' view of the speaking skill is not problematic.

Answers to Q 5 (Do you enjoy attending Speaking classes?)

Table 5 (a)

Students' Enjoyment from Attending Speaking Classes

Options	Percentage %
Yes	76%
No	24%
Total	100%

Results from the above table show that the majority of participants (76%) stated that they get enjoyment from attending Speaking Classes. Still, 24% of them claimed that they take no pleasure in attending such classes.

In order to get further insights into the students' responses, they were asked to provide justifications on their choices. Students' justifications are thematised and presented through numbers in the following table.

Table 5 (b)

Students' Justifications for Enjoying/not Enjoying Speaking Classes

Enjoyment	Number	displeasure	Number
A chance for free expression	14	Discussing uninteresting topics	6
Practising language	4	Feeling under pressure to speak	4
Enriching vocabulary	6	Feeling bored	3
Enhancing the speaking skill	15		
Exchanging ideas and opinions	3		
Total	42	Total	13

The results from the above table suggest that most students take pleasure in attending Speaking classes, largely because students in such classes are presented with a range of speaking opportunities where they can freely express themselves. What is more is the fact that Speaking classes are regarded by students as a good opportunity to better their speaking skill.

Answer to Q 6 (How often do you participate in Speaking classes?)

Table 6

The Frequency of Students' Participation in Speaking Classes

Options	Percentage %
Frequently	27%
Sometimes	53%
Rarely	16%
Never	4%
Total	100%

Participants were provided with four response options on four-point scale. While more than half of the population (53%) opted for “sometimes” as being the frequency of their participation, only 27% of participants acknowledged that they “frequently” participate. It can be said that participation in Speaking classes is problematic for students.

Answers to Q 7 (How often do you receive corrective feedback on your speaking errors?)

Table 7

The Frequency of Teachers' Feedback on Students' Speaking Errors

Options	Percentage %
Always	11%
Sometimes	60%
Rarely	25%
Never	4%
Total	100%

Out of four options, “sometimes” received the highest percentage of students' responses (60%). Thus, it can safely be established that oral corrective feedback in target classes is not a source of students' inhibition.

Answers to Q 8 (Does your teacher's way of correcting your errors encourage you to speak?)

Table 8 (a)

Students' Perceptions of their Teachers' Way of Correcting Errors

Options	Percentage %
Yes	93%
No	7%
Total	100%

In response to this question, almost the whole population (93%) acknowledged that teachers' way of correcting errors is encouraging. Again, the way teachers treat students' errors does not seem a source of students' inhibition.

With the hope of getting students to say more, they were asked to supply justifications on their choices. The justifications yielded by students are presented under thematic units and displayed in the following table.

Table 8 (b)

Students' Justifications for their Teachers' Manner of Correcting Errors

Encouraging	Number	Discouraging	Number
Correcting errors kindly	26	Feeling shy when corrected	2
Dropping hints for students to detect the mistakes	13	Losing train of thought when interrupted	1
Showing interest in the students' improvement	3		
Total	42	Total	3
No response	9	No response	1

Based on the results from the above table, students seemed satisfied with the manner in which their teachers treat their spoken errors, mainly because their teachers correct their errors tactfully. Also, it is partly due to the fact that teachers seem to drop some hints for students when making mistakes in an attempt to push them into detecting their erroneous spoken utterances and correct them on their own.

Answers to Q 9 (In Speaking classes, do you prefer to sit at...?)

Table 9 (a)

Students' Preferences for the Sitting Arrangement

Options	Percentage %
The front rows	18%
The middle rows	27%
The back rows	45%
Any where	9%
Total	100%

The results from the above table show that about half of the (45%) participants prefer to sit at the back rows, while 27% of them opted for the middle rows. This can be indicative of the fact that the seating arrangement can induce students' unwillingness to speak.

With the aim of having the participants to say more, they were asked to provide justifications. Of a particular importance, because students' justifications for middle and back rows were almost identical, they are fused together. Their justifications are thematised and presented in the following table.

Table 9 (b)

Students' Justifications for Sitting at the Middle and Back Rows

Students' justifications for sitting at the middle and back rows	Number
Sitting at the middle row to avoid speaking	10
Sitting at the back row to be invisible by the teacher	20
Sitting at the back row is not anxiety-provoking	5
Total	35
No response	5

The results from the above table indicate that students opted for sitting at the middle and back rows, mainly because they want to avoid speaking and, more importantly, to be inconspicuous. As such, teachers' attention can be taken away from such students to centre it upon those students sitting at the front rows. Such justifications seem to prove that sitting "at the front rows" is a potentially risky business that might generate inhibition for students, which, in turn, can trigger their reticence in Speaking classes.

Answers to Q 10 (Do you feel comfortable to speak English in...?)

Table 10 (a)

Class Size and its Impact on Students' Willingness/Unwillingness to Speak

Options	Percentage %
Small classes	89%
Large classes	10%
Total	100%

The results from the above table show that the vast majority of students (89%) admitted that they prefer to speak in small classes. It seems that large-sized classes are, indeed, intimidating for students.

With the aim of eliciting further insights from students, they were asked to supply justifications on their choices. Students' justifications are thematised and presented in the following table.

Table 10 (b)

Students' Justifications for their Preference/Dispreference for Speaking in Small/Large Classes

Small classes	Number	Large classes	Number
Getting the chance to speak	5	Feeling self-confident	2
Feeling more confident	12	Throwing the pressure to the whole class	2
Feeling less anxious	6		
Feeling less shy	16		
Total	39	Total	4
No response	10	No response	2

Based on the results from the table above, students appeared to favour speaking in small rather than large classes, mainly because of their shy nature and lack of self-confidence.

Answer to Q 11 (When do you feel less willing to speak?)

Table 11

Timing of the Session and its Impact on Students' Unwillingness to Speak

Options	Percentage %
In the morning	25%
In the afternoon	38%
In the evening	36%
Total	100%

According to the results from the above table, students feel less willing to talk in “the afternoon” and in “the evening” that represented 38% and 36% respectively. It can be said that afternoon and evening hours impinge on students' willingness to speak in classroom.

Answer to Q 12 (In what kind of task do you feel comfortable to speak?)

Table 12

The Kind of Task in which Students Feel Comfortable to Speak

Options	Percentage %
Individually	29
In pairs	31
In groups	40
Total	100%

According to the results obtained from the above table, 40% of participants feel more comfortable to speak in group works. Another group of participants (31%), however, stated that they feel comfortable to speak when they are put in pairs. It seems that pair and group works are effective in alleviating students' unease to perform orally in Speaking classes.

Answer to Q 13 (Does your teacher's high level of competence weaken your willingness to speak?)

Table 13 (a)

The Impact of Teacher's Level of Competence on Students' Unwillingness to Speak

Options	Percentage %
Yes	53%
No	47%
Total	100%

The results from the above table show that students' responses on this question yielded inconclusive results. While more than half of the participants (53%) admitted that teacher's competence can render them speechless, about half of the participants (47%) were opposed to the idea that teacher's high competence can trigger their unwillingness to speak. On average, it can be said that teachers' level of competence is intimidating to students.

In an attempt to elicit further insights, participants were asked to provide justifications. Their justifications are thematised and presented in the following table.

Table 13 (b)

Students' Justifications for the Level of Teachers' Competence on their Unwillingness/Willingness to Speak

Yes	Number	No	Number
Feelings less confident	6	A motivational factor to enhance the speaking skill	10
Feelings of unworthiness	2	A push forward to make more efforts	5
Fearing to be laughed at	3	Getting inspired	2
Inability to cope with competent teachers	7		
Tendency to make mistakes	3		
Total	21	Total	17
No response	8	No response	9

The results from the above table indicate that teachers' level of competence trigger students' unwillingness to speak, largely because students cannot cope with competent teachers and feel less confidence in themselves. Nevertheless, students who did not subscribe to the belief that teachers' competence is a potentially provoking factor to students' unwillingness to speak gave valuable justifications. One important belief that was held by these students is that teachers' level of competence is a motivational factor that pushes them into improving their overall communicative abilities. On the whole, it can be said that teachers' level of competence is a relatively reticence-influencing factor.

Answers to Q14 (How do you find speaking topics?)

Table 14

Students' Perceptions of Speaking Topics

Options	Percentage %
Difficult	11%
Interesting	85%
Boring	4%
Total	100%

Out of three options, the second option received the highest percentage of students' responses in that 85% of participants found speaking topics interesting. One obvious conclusion that can be drawn from students' answers to this question is that the topics introduced in Speaking classes are stimulating, thereby cannot be at the root of students' reticence.

Answers to Q 15 (Do the opinions other students might have of you when you speak discourage your willingness to participate?)

Table 15 (a)

Students' Concern about Perceived Peers' Negative Evaluation

Options	Percentage %
Yes	55%
No	45%
Total	100%

The results from the above table show that more than half of the population (55%) reported that they are concerned about how their peers' might perceive them when speaking. One safe conclusion that can be drawn in this regard is that perceived and implicit peer evaluation is somehow daunting to the target students.

With the hope of getting further insights from students, they were requested to supply justifications. Students' justifications are thematised and presented in the table below.

Table 15 (b)

Students' Justifications for their Perceived Peers' Negative Evaluation

Yes	Number	No	Number
Fearing to appear less competent	15	Openness to criticism	15
Fearing to be laughed at	10	Feeling confidence	3
Fearing to question one's information	5	Finding classmates not judgmental	2
Total	30	Total	20
No response	0	No response	5

Based on students' justifications in the above table, students' concern about their peers' perceived evaluation stem from their fear of appearing less competent and being laughed at. Nonetheless, some students appeared to be unaffected by their peers evaluation. Most students who fall into this category seem to be open to criticism that comes from their classroom partners. These students might have a good reason to welcome peers' evaluation, especially if the evaluation comes in the form of constructive feedback that can be helpful to students in particular learning situation. On the whole, peer negative evaluation seems somehow a problem about which learners are concerned in Speaking classes.

Answers to Q 16 (Does your teacher give you enough time to formulate your answers before you speak?)

Table 16

Teachers' Allocation of Sufficient Time for Students before Speaking

Options	Percentage %
Yes	85%
No	15%
Total	100%

According to the results from the above table, a great percentage of participants (85%) acknowledged the fact that their teachers give them enough time to formulate their answers before being called on to speak. It seems that wait-time is not a problem in target classes.

Answers to Q 17 (Do you think giving you enough time to respond to your teacher's questions is important because it helps you to ...?)

Table 17 (a)

Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Wait-Time

Options	Percentage %
Process the question	67%
Rehearse what to say	27%
Increase the length of answers	5%
Total	100%

This question was asked to elicit students' beliefs about the effects of wait-time. More than half of the participants (67%) stated that giving them enough time helps them to process the questions. Another group of participants representing (27%) believed that giving them enough time before prompting them to speak can be helpful in the sense that they can rehearse what they will say.

Participants were asked to provide any other possible beneficial effects of wait-time; however, only a handful of students added some other effects which will be presented in the table below.

Table 17 (b)

Students' Other Proposed Effects of Wait-Time

Students' proposed effects	Number
Organising ideas	2
Soothing anxiety	1
Giving better answers	1
Total	4
No response	51

The results from the above table illustrate students' perceived effects of wait-time from their own perspective. According to students, giving them enough time before speaking is helpful in organising their jumbled ideas, easing their anxiety, and increasing the likelihood of giving better answers. In the interest of participation, teachers are advised to provide students with wait-time.

Answer to Q 18 (Does your teacher pay equal attention to all students?)

Table 18

Teachers' Treatment of Students in Speaking Classes

Options	Percentage %
Yes	71%
No	29%
Total	100%

In response to this question, the vast majority of participants (71%) acknowledged that their teachers treat them equally. A safe conclusion that can be drawn in this respect is that teachers' turn allocation behaviour in Speaking classes is not problematic.

Answers to Q 19 (How do you view students' silence in classroom?)

Table 19

Students' Views of Silence in Classroom

Options	Percentage %
Positive behaviour	9%
Negative behaviour	91%
Total	100%

As it is shown in the table, silence was regarded as a negative behaviour by almost the whole population (91%). It seems that silence is not valued as in Asian context.

Answers to Q 20 (In Speaking classes, do you think you should...?)

Table 20 (a)

Students' Stances on their Role in Speaking Classes

Options	Percentage %
Speak and interact with the teacher and classmates	69%
Listen respectfully and attentively rather than talk	30%
Total	100%

As it is shown in above table, a significant portion of the population (69%) reported that they should speak and interact in classroom. It seems that students are aware of the importance of assuming active roles in Speaking classes.

With the aim of eliciting more responses from the participants, they were asked to provide justifications on their choices. Students' justifications are thematised and presented in the following table.

Table 20 (b)

Students' Justifications for Adopting Active/Passive Roles in Speaking Classes

Speak and interact		Number	Listen attentively		Number
Seeking speaking enhancement		16	Feeling shy		4
Making the lecture more interesting		4	Feeling obliged to talk		1
Gaining self-confidence		3	Feeling less competent than the teacher		2
Feeling a sense of self-worth		3			
Total		26	Total		7
No response		12	No response		10

The results from the above table indicate that students regarded speaking in class of immeasurable importance, believing, as reiterated by students many times, that Speaking classes are their opportunity to improve their speaking skill. This question in conjunction with the forgoing one reveal that reticence is not really a cultural-specific factor as it is related to shyness, level of competence, lack of self-confidence, etc. On many occasions, students hinted to such factors as influencing factors that trigger their unwillingness to speak in class.

Answers to Q 21 (Does it often happen that your teacher gives you the opportunity to speak and the class falls into silence?)

Table 21

Students' Experience of Reticence in Speaking Classes

Options	Percentage %
Yes	80%
No	20%
Total	100%

The results from the above table show that a substantial portion of population (80%) acknowledged that they fall into silence when their teachers give them the opportunity to speak. This, in fact, proves that students experience reticence in Speaking classes.

Answers to Q 22 (When feeling reluctant to speak, is it because...)

Table 22

Factors Affecting Students' Reticence in Speaking Classes

Options	Percentage %
Poor grammar	15%
Lack of vocabulary items	33%
Anxiety	44%
Fear of making mistakes	25%
Shyness	40%
Topic unfamiliarity	30%
Lack of preparation	29%
Pursuit of perfection	7%

Responses to this question show that the factors that influence students' reticence are mainly anxiety, shyness, lack of vocabulary items, topic unfamiliarity, lack of preparation, and fear of making mistakes that represented (44%), (40%), (33%), (30%), (29%), and

(25%) respectively. In fact, while the previous questions revealed that students' reticence is not due to cultural factors, this question reveals that reticence is due to affective and linguistic factors.

It is worth pointing out that students were asked to supply other factors that might render them reticent. What students further proposed will be displayed in the following table.

Table 22 (b)

Other Factors Provided By Students

Factors influencing students' reticence	Number
Lack of self-confidence	1
Peer evaluation	1
Total	2
No response	53

A careful reading of the different answers and justifications supplied by students on some of the previous questions reveal that students were giving broad hints about their being less self-confident and concerned about their peers' evaluation. Once again, two students spelt out lack of self-confidence and negative expectations of their peers' evaluation as two important reticence-affecting factors.

Answer to Q 23 (What do you think of students who distinguish themselves by talking more in classroom?)

Table 23

Students' Attitudes towards Talkative Students in the Classroom

Students' views on talkative students	Number
Talkative students are seeking language practice	12
Talkative students are self-confident	5
Talkative students are more courageous	3
Talkative students want to voice their opinions	2
Talkative students are attention seekers	12
Total	34
No response	21

In fact, students' responses showed mixed feelings about classmates who show high levels of participation. While most students appeared to hold positive attitudes towards other classmates who are distinguished by talking in class, perceiving them as language practice seekers, another significant number of students believed that talkative students want to be the centre of attention. One possible conclusion that can be drawn in this regard is that some students might behave in a reticent way out of fear of appearing attention-seekers.

Answers to Q 24 (To get reticent students to take part in oral interaction, your teacher usually...?)

Table 24

Strategies Teachers Use to Induce Reticent Students to Take Part in Oral Interaction

Options	Percentage %
Specifies a student to speak	27%
Waits till a student initiates	44%
Calls on students from the list	40%

The results from the table above show that teachers wait students until they initiate speaking (44%) and call from the list (40%). These results might indicate that teachers' teaching practices are positive and negative. They are positive in the sense that waiting students to speak of their own accord helps students feel less stressed, thereby getting more students to speak. They are negative, however, in the sense that calling from the list can be inhibiting for students, thereby subjecting them to experiencing embarrassment.

Answers to Q 25 (What do you think your teacher should do to make students participate and talk more in the classroom?)

Table 25

Students' Suggestions for Teachers to Stimulate Participation in the Classroom

Students' suggestions	Number
Bringing interesting topics	15
Allowing students to self-choose topics	3
Preparing topics in advance	2
Giving even allocation of turns	2
Motivating students	8
Adding extra values	3
Total	33
No response	22

The results from the above table show that bringing interesting topics and infusing students with motivation have been reiterated by students as two important ways to boost their willingness to speak.

Table 26

A Summary of the Contributing Factors to Students' Reticence in Speaking Classes

factors contributing to students' reticence in Speaking classes	Percentage%
Class size	89%
Timing of the session	74%
Peer tacit evaluation	55%
Teacher's level of competence	53%
Anxiety	44%
Shyness	40%
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	33%
Topic unfamiliarity	30%
Lack of preparation	29%
Fear of making mistakes	25%

The above table displays a synthesis of the most reticence-engendering factors. Based on the overall results of the questionnaire, students' reticence is largely attributed to the following: physical factors (large-sized classes), linguistic factors (lack of vocabulary and fear of making mistakes), time factors (timing of the sessions), affective factors (anxiety, shyness, and lack of self-confidence), teacher- related factors (level of competence), and student-related factors (lack of preparation), peer-related factors (tacit peer evaluation).

2.2.2. Analysis of the Results Obtained by Focus Group Discussions

The focus group discussions were conducted with twelve (12) third year students from the sample that answered the questionnaire. The volunteer participants were divided into two subgroups; each group consisted of six (6) students.

The results yielded by focus group discussions revealed similar and different patterns. Nevertheless, regardless of the slight disagreement between students with respect to some questions, they all appeared to have convergent opinions on most of the issues brought forward in the focus group discussions. Importantly, students' responses showed that they experience reticence and their reticence is mainly attributable to such factors as uninteresting topics, lack of preparation, lack of vocabulary knowledge, timing of the session, topic unfamiliarity, shyness, and anxiety.

Participants of the focus group discussions highlighted some important suggestions in order to boost their willingness to speak. They desperately called for bringing interesting topics, giving them the chance to self-choose topics, preparing topics in advance, refraining from unfamiliar topics, and, above all, motivating students. The latter has been reiterated by students, believing that they can be spurred into participation by teachers' motivating and encouraging nature.

It can safely be established that the results yielded by focus group discussions lend support to what has been revealed by students' questionnaire. Most important of all, students experience reticence and their reticence is occasioned by such factors as the nature of the topic, limited repertoire of vocabulary, lack of preparation, anxiety, etc.

2. 2. 3. Analysis of the Results Yielded by Teachers' Semi-Structured Interview

Having described the results obtained by dint of questionnaire and focus group discussions, the subsequent portion of this section will be concerned with the analysis of the results obtained by means of semi-structured interview. The interview was conducted with three teachers of Speaking classes; it will be presented under thematic units. For reasons of confidentiality, the three teacher participants will hereafter be referred to as teacher A, teacher B, and teacher C.

2.2.3.1. Teachers' Choice for Teaching Speaking Classes

All the three interviewed teachers stated that they chose to teach this module out of their free will.

2.2.3.2. Teachers' Teaching Experience

It can be said that all the teachers are experienced in teaching this module. Teacher A and teacher B have five (5) years experience. However, teacher C has the most experience in that s/he has been teaching this module for eight (8) years.

2.2.3.3. Teachers' Estimation of Students' Speaking Skill

All teachers reported that students' speaking skill varies, believing that it is really difficult to establish that all students have good/poor speaking ability. They stated that there are some very good students who are really competent in terms of their oral performance, average students whose language is yet to develop and, there are poor students who can barely speak English. This, in fact, concurs with what has been revealed by students' responses in questionnaire in that participants appeared to fall into different kinds, i.e. good, average, and poor with the majority of them being average sort of students.

2.2.3.4. Teachers' Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Students' Participation

In evaluating students' participation, teachers gave varying responses. While teacher B stated that his/her students participate, teacher A and teacher C appeared to be bitterly disappointed at their students' non-participation. Teachers' responses to this question corroborate the results from student questionnaires in that a fairly significant portion of the population reported that they participate only "sometimes".

2.2.3.5. Teachers' Feedback on Students' Speaking Errors

Students learning a foreign/second language are subject to making mistakes. The interviewed teachers appeared to be intensely aware of the detriment of addressing

feedback extensively. The three teachers held similar opinions on how frequently they give feedback in that all of them reported that they give feedback "sometimes". Nevertheless, one of the teachers stated that s/he usually tends to intervene if a student's error blocks the message s/he wants to get across. The results of student questionnaires agree with what has been reported by teachers in that the majority of students acknowledged the fact that they receive feedback "sometimes" from their teachers. One can assert with confidence that the issue of feedback is not problematic in Speaking classes.

2.2.3.6. Teachers' Way of Treating Students' Errors

Treating students' errors tactfully is, in fact, deemed as equally important as addressing feedback with moderation. This was revealed by teachers' responses to this question. The interviewed teachers underlined the importance of reacting to students' errors gently in order not to intimidate them. In the interest of disinhibition, teachers appeared to refrain from overt error correction that can potentially be a major deterrent to students' willingness to speak. Generally, the way whereby teachers correct students' errors was recast. The results from teachers' interview, without the slightest doubt, tie in closely with what has been reported in student questionnaires in that almost the whole population deemed teachers' manner of correcting their errors as encouraging and tactful.

Although teacher A appeared acutely conscious of the danger of overt error correction, s/he reported that some students need to be overtly corrected, mainly because such students have poor speaking skill and, as such, cannot detect the errors on their own. Still, error correction in target classes is unproblematic.

2.2.3.7. The Nature of Topics Introduced in Speaking Classes

The nature of the topic can, in fact, determine the extent to which students involve in classroom discussions. The interviewed teachers appeared to be well aware of the importance of introducing familiar and interesting topics, regarding topic interest and topic

familiarity as two important interaction-generating factors. Teachers reported that they introduce debatable topics emanated from society in order to boost students' willingness to speak. Teachers' responses to this question are in agreement with the results yielded by student questionnaires in that the majority of students deemed topics introduced in Speaking classes interesting. So, it can confidently be stated that speaking topics have no bearing on students' reticence in Speaking classes.

Although they appeared satisfied with topics introduced in Speaking classes, students wished their teachers to give them the chance to self-select topics and that was apparent in their responses to the last question in the questionnaire and their suggestions in the focus group discussions. However, teachers reported that they do not always give students freedom to decide on the topics out of fear of bringing uninteresting topics that can render the whole class unwilling to talk. Teacher C, for example, was not a fervent supporter of giving students the opportunity to decide on the topics because, according to her/him, students can think of nothing but pollution and friendship as good topics for classroom presentations.

2. 2.3.8. Teachers' Treatment of Students in Speaking Classes

Ensuring even participation is one of the teaching practices that is highly recommended in classrooms. In this regard, the three interviewed teachers reported that they by no means attempt to give equal attention to all students. Nevertheless, teacher A and C stated that some students are predisposed to silence and no matter how hard they try to get such students to speak, teachers get nowhere. As such, teachers find themselves always dealing with the same students who are more willing to talk. One, but one teacher (teacher B) stressed the importance of never allowing talkative students to dominate classroom talk, believing that generating interaction from only talkative students makes reticent students much more reticent.

It is fair to say that teachers cannot be in any way held responsible for inducing students' reticence since they appeared to underline the importance of giving fair chances for every student to speak, i.e. teachers' turn allocation behaviour is unproblematic in Speaking classes. This, in fact, matches up with what has been revealed by student questionnaires in that a significant portion of the population reported that their teachers treat them equally in class.

2.2.3.9. Pair and Group Works in Speaking Classes

The three interviewed teachers reported that they assign pair and group works to students. While teacher B and C stated that assigning one over another is largely dependent on the nature of the task, teacher A appeared to be all in favour of group works. This teacher reported that s/he finds her/his students less shy and less anxious when they are asked to perform orally in groups. In line with what this teacher believed, the results from student questionnaires revealed that about half of the population feels comfortable to speak in group works. Generally, shy and anxious students in classroom might fail to adopt the role of competent communicators who can speak individually and toward whom everyone's eye is turned. Via group works, however, these students may manage to speak and express themselves even under whole public display.

On the whole, it can be said that group works are effective in alleviating students' shyness and anxiety, thereby helps students to actively participate.

2.2.3.10. Students' Experience of Reticence in Speaking Classes

Students appeared to experience reticence in Speaking classes. The three teachers bitterly complained about their student' reticence, reporting that they find their students unwilling to talk in many occasions. Teachers responses to this question agree with students' responses in the questionnaire in that the majority of students acknowledged the fact that they fall into silence when their teachers give them the opportunity to talk.

2.2.3.11. Teachers' Perceptions of the Contributing Factors to Students' Reticence in Speaking Classes

Teachers ascribed students' reticence to a host of variables. According to teachers, students' reticence is attributed to such factors as introversion, lack of self-confidence, anxiety, lack of vocabulary items, poor grammar, timing of the session, demotivation, previous learning experience, etc.

The results obtained by student questionnaires and focus group discussions support what has been revealed by teachers in that reticence is engendered by a multitude of factors.

2.2.3.12. Teachers' Allocation of Sufficient Time for Students before Speaking

All the three interviewed teachers reported that they only "sometimes" give time to students before inviting them to speak about a given topic. The three interviewed teachers justified their answers by the fact that the nature of some topics determine whether the teacher should give time to students or not. Although they acknowledged its potential role in helping students to process the questions and organize their ideas, teachers seemed to prefer spontaneity to giving students enough time before they speak, believing that students would not go far with such a habit.

While the results from student questionnaires revealed that students regarded wait-time as effective because it helps them to process the questions, rehearse what to say, organize their ideas, ease their anxiety and increase the possibility of giving better answers, teachers' beliefs appeared to differ markedly. On the whole, it can be stated that wait-time is not problematic since teachers give students enough time to think about topics when it is necessary.

2.2.3.13. Strategies Teachers Use to Induce Reticent Students to Take Part in Oral Interaction

Teachers appeared to use certain strategies to get reticent students to speak and take part in oral interaction. Teacher A and B reported that they usually restate the question for it can be an ill-asked question to make it clearer for students. These two teachers also reported that they resort to calling from the list as one way to draw reticent students into Speaking. They believed that calling from the list can be more an inhibition than a solution, but it was one of the possible ways to put learners in responsive roles. However, one of the teachers stated that s/he rarely calls from the list; consequently, s/he finds no other way but to do most of the talking her/himself. These findings replicate students' answers in the questionnaire in that participants reported that their teachers call from the list.

2.2.3.14. Teachers' Suggestions to Make a Speaking Class more Willing to Communicate

Teachers generated valuable suggestions with regard to this question. They proposed encouraging multi-interaction, bringing debatable topics, relying on referential questions, refraining from unfamiliar topics, and giving equal attention to all students.

Conclusion

This section was mainly concerned with the analysis of the results generated by means of student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teachers' semi-structured interview. The results yielded by the three research tools revealed that students experience reticence and their reticence is attributable to linguistic, affective, physical factors, as it is also related to timing of the session, teacher's qualification. The subsequent section will be concerned with the discussion of the overall results.

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Section Three: Data Discussion

Introduction

While the second section of this chapter was mainly devoted to analysing the results obtained by student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teachers' semi-structured interview, this section takes its primary concern data discussion, highlighting the overall results yielded by the three research tools. Essentially, the results of the current research work will be discussed in relation to the research questions put forward in this study. The research methods used to carry out this enquiry sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Do third year students experience reticence in Speaking classes?
2. To what extent do third year students experience reticence in Speaking classes?
3. What are the factors that trigger students' reticence in Speaking classes?
4. What strategies do teachers of Speaking classes use to induce reticent students to actively take part in oral interaction?

2.3.1. Students' Experience of Reticence in EFL Speaking Classes

The findings of this study revealed that third year license students experience reticence in Speaking classes. Students' responses in the questionnaire and focus group discussions disclosed that students fall silent when their teachers offer them speaking opportunities. The results of the semi-structured interview further evidenced the students' experience of reticence in that the three interviewed teachers reported that many were the occasions where they find their students silent and unwilling to talk.

2.3.2. The Level of Students' Reticence in EFL Speaking Classes

The results of this enquiry showed that the reticence level among third year students is relatively high. This was revealed by students' answers in the questionnaire in that more

than half of the population appeared to participate “sometimes”. Additionally, a significant portion of the population appeared to prefer to sit at middle and back rows, justifying their choices by their attempt to be invisible and unwilling to speak. Students’ responses in the focus groups confirmed the results of the questionnaire in that all participants acknowledged the fact that they do not participate much in Speaking classes.

The results of the interview were no different. While teacher B was fairly satisfied with his/her students’ participation, teacher A and C appeared to be a little more than disappointed by their students’ non-participation.

Students in this study appeared to be oblivious of the fact that there is far too limited exposure to English outside the borders of the classroom. The goal of prompting them to speak is to make the context as close to a second language context as possible in order to give students maximum exposure to the English language. Nonetheless, the overall results from student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teachers’ semi-structured interview revealed that students pass up the chance to speak in Speaking classes.

2.3.3. Factors Contributing to Students’ Reticence in Speaking Classes

What factors trigger students’ reticence in Speaking classes is, in fact, a central question to this study; it is regarded the prime rationale for carrying out this research work. The three research tools revealed that third year students experience and their reticence is engendered by a multitude of factors. Thus, it is worthwhile to give a synthesis of the most frequently cited reticence-generating factors based on the results from student questionnaires, focus groups, and teachers’ semi-structured interview. These factors are grouped under umbrella categories, i.e. affective factors, linguistic factors, physical factors, etc.

2.3.3.1. Affective Factors

Affective factors that appeared to occasion students' reticence encompass anxiety, shyness, and lack of self-confidence.

2.3.3.1. Anxiety. As pointed out in the literature, anxiety is one of the psychological factors that hinders students' oral performance. The results of the current inquiry revealed that anxiety is one of the factors that renders students reticent. Of all the options students were provided with in the questionnaire, anxiety appeared to take the lion's share. Students' responses in the focus groups were indicative of experiencing anxiety. One student in the first focus group stated:

When I feel anxious, I prefer to remain silent rather than subjecting myself to embarrassment.

Similar to students, teachers also regarded anxiety as a leading factor to students' reticence. Teacher B, as an instance in point, commented:

Students are subject to anxiety because speaking in front of the whole class is not an easy game to play.

2.3.3.2. Shyness. Students' reticence in Speaking classes is attributed to shyness.

Based on student questionnaires, shyness was ranked the second important factor among the other factors students were provided with in the questionnaire. More than that, students gave broad hints to shyness as one of their attributes on many occasions. In fact, students' responses in the two focus groups showed similar patterns in that students considered themselves as shy and their shyness militates against their' willingness to involve in interactive discourse.

2.3.3.3. Lack of self-confidence. As suggested in the literature, lack of self-confidence is one of the factors that triggers students' reticence in classroom. Lack of self-confidence

was inserted by one student over and above the options they were provided with in the questionnaire. Similar to shyness, a careful reading of students' justifications on some questions in the questionnaire reveals that students are not confident enough to speak in Speaking classes. Lack of confidence was also regarded by teachers as reticence-influencing factor.

2.3.3.2. Linguistic Factors

This category includes lack of vocabulary knowledge and fear of making mistakes.

2.3.3.2.1. *Lack of vocabulary knowledge.* Lack of vocabulary items is one of the factors that appeared to influence students' reticence. The results of the questionnaire revealed that the lack of vocabulary items has a bearing on students' reticence. The results of the focus groups are in agreement with that of the questionnaire. All participants in the focus groups believed that their vocabulary repertoire is not that rich and, in some cases, they feel short of the needed vocabulary to express themselves. One student in the first focus group reported:

My vocabulary is limited. Consequently, I sometimes find myself unable to express a given idea using appropriate words.

Similar to their students, teachers reported that their students sometimes do not manage to express themselves well because they fail to use the needed vocabulary that best fits a particular communicative situation. These findings are in line with Negari and Nobavizadeh's (2012) study which revealed that EFL Iranian learners' vocabulary knowledge had a significant relationship with their reticence.

2.3.3.2.2. *Fear of making mistakes.* The results of the questionnaire indicate that fear of making mistakes is one factor that triggers students' reticence. Students' responses in the focus groups supported, albeit partially, the results from student questionnaire. While participants of the first focus group acknowledged that fear of making mistakes prevents them from speaking, all participants of the second focus group stated that they never get afraid of making mistakes. One student in the first focus group stated:

My big problem is that I always tend to drop the 's' of the third person singular and that really gets me down.

2.3.3.3. Topic Factors

This class refers to the nature of the topic.

2.3.3.3.1. *Lack of familiarity with the topic.* The results from student questionnaires revealed that topic unfamiliarity is one of the contributory factors to students' reticence. Students' responses in the two focus groups showed similar patterns. In both groups, students reiterated the fact that topic unfamiliarity inevitably prevents them from speaking. One student in the second focus group stated:

I usually remain silent when discussing a topic I know nothing about.

Despite the fact that the three interviewed teachers reported that they attempt to introduce topics relative to students' life, students, particularly of the first focus group, appeared to consider some of the topics suggested by their teacher as unfamiliar. This can be explained by the fact that it is really difficult to attend to all students' needs; consequently, topics that can be perceived as familiar to some students can be perceived as unfamiliar by others.

2.3.3.4. Time Factors

This grouping encompasses the timing of the session.

2.3.3.4.1. *Timing of the session.*

Timing of the session appears to affect student' reticence. The results from the questionnaire revealed that students feel less willing to talk in the afternoon and in the evening. The results of the focus groups tally with that of the questionnaire in that all participants in both groups stated that they feel active in the morning and marked the hours from 12:30 and on as time were they behave much more unwillingly to speak, justifying that by tiredness and hunger. One of the teachers also regarded timing of the session as a factor that influences students' reticence.

Timing of the session might appear an insignificant factor; however, students may very well have legitimate reasons to feel unwilling to speak, especially in the evening where students grow tired, hungry and bored with a heavy study load.

2.3.3.5. Physical Factors

This category refers to class size.

2.3.3.5.1. *Large-sized classes.* Large-sized classes appears to be reticence-provoking factor in this study. The questionnaire revealed that the majority of participants (89%) stated that they prefer to speak in small classes and gave such various justifications as feeling less anxious, feeling less shy, feeling more confident in small classes. Thus, it can safely be established that the size of the class is a determinant to either students' willingness or unwillingness to speak.

2.3.3.6. Out-of-Class Factors

This grouping solely refers to the frequency of students' English practice outside the classroom.

2.3.3.6.1. Lack of English practice outside the classroom. Lack of practice, an out-of-class factor, is found to be one of the influencing factors, albeit indirectly, to students' uncommunicativeness. This is shown through students' responses in the questionnaire and in the focus groups. The great majority of participants (80%) stated that they "sometimes" practice English outside the classroom and that was further supported by the results of the focus groups. As such, it is fair to say that the frequency of students' practice of English outside the classroom is not really satisfactory.

It is worth pointing out that out-of-class exposure to the target language can immeasurably assist students to make gains in the spoken language. Nevertheless, students in this study appeared to be oblivious of the fact that Algeria is an acquisition-poor environment. That is, students are short of target language exposure. In this respect, Brown (2007) stated "few if any people achieve fluency in foreign language within the confines of the classroom (p. 1).

Therefore, practicing English outside the classroom serves as a way to integrate English into the students' lives, which can contribute to their language growth.

2.3.3.7. Peer-Related Factors

This category mainly refers to students' perceived peer evaluation.

2.3.3.7.1. Fear of peer negative evaluation. Tacit and perceived negative peer evaluation is found to be one of the factors that occasion students' reticence. More than half of the population (55%) acknowledged that they get afraid of their classmates negative evaluations. That was supported by students' various justifications. Results from the focus group discussions, however, revealed inconclusive results. Participants of the first focus group stated that they get afraid of being negatively evaluated by their classmates. One student in the first focus group stated:

I often feel afraid to be perceived as incapable of expressing myself, especially by students who outperform me orally.

Reluctant students want their peers to get a positive impression of them. For such students, presenting themselves in a given communicative situation negatively will call forth negative evaluations from their peers. Thus, they believe that it is not worth the risk. However, participants of the second focus group reported that how other classmates might perceive them is the least of their worries.

2.3.3.8. Student-Related Factors

This category mainly refers to students' unpreparedness to speak before coming to class.

2.3.3.8.1. Lack of preparation. Lack of preparation is held one contributory factor to students' reticence in the current study. The results from the questionnaire revealed that students' reticence is attributed to lack of preparation. Students' responses in the focus groups showed mixed feelings. While the majority of participants in the two focus groups regarded speaking without preparation as a reticence-provoking factor in Speaking classes, only a few of them regarded speaking without prior preparation as a preferable task. In the first group, out of six students who were for preparing topics, one student stated:

It is better for us to train ourselves to speak spontaneously.

Similarly, participants of the second focus group vacillated between for and against, believing that preparation is largely dependent on the nature of the topic. Those students who were averse to the idea of prior preparation appeared to be acutely aware of the importance of spontaneous performance as the leading way to develop one's proficiency in the language.

These results might be suggestive for oral instructors that some topics necessitate preparation, and, in some cases, even more able students whose language ability is

excellent might experience reticence in situations where they feel that their improvised performance might not match up to the teachers' and peers' expectations.

2.3.3.9. Students' Wrong Mindsets

This heading mainly refers to students' previous learning experience and its impact on students' predisposition to behave passively.

2.3.3.9.1. *Previous learning experience.* One of the teachers attributed students' reticence to the fact that students come from secondary school to university with a faulty set of beliefs, believing that university is not so much a change. Based on their prior learning experience, students still relish the prospect of having knowledge spoon-fed to them. They still cling on to the belief that teachers' job is to impart knowledge to them, while they act primarily as mere recipient or note-takers. Teacher C asserted with an overwhelming sense of disappointment the following statement:

Education is gradually becoming a charity.

To put it short, in the era of autonomous learning, it is crucially important for students to realize that the educational staff responsible primarily for bringing about learning experiences at university are students themselves. This finding agrees with Meihua and Xuehua's (2013) study which revealed that Mainland Chinese students' reticence is mainly accounted for by learners' previous learning experience.

2.3.3.10. Teacher-Related Factors

This category mainly refers to teachers' level competence.

2.3.3.10.1. *Teachers' level of competence.* Teachers' high level of competence appears to be one of the contributory factors that has the potential of rendering students reticent. The results from the questionnaire revealed that more than half of the population (53%) believed that perceiving their teachers with an elevated state, i.e. competent can discourage

students from speaking. Students' justifications in response to this question revealed that students feel anxious, less self-confident, and unable to cope with competent teachers.

2.3.4. Strategies Teachers Use to Induce Reticent Students to Actively Take Part in Oral Interaction

The prevalence of reticence in Speaking classes drove teachers to adopt some strategies to get reticent students to speak. Of great significance, the three teachers of Speaking classes are experienced in teaching this module and such experience bodes well for them. That is, experience can potentially help teachers to deftly adopt some emergency strategies to deal with students' predisposition to silence in a given communicative situation.

The results from student questionnaires and focus groups are consistent with each other in that students reported that their teachers usually wait students to speak of their own accord, and if they do not, teachers call from the list. That was further supported by teachers' answers in the interview who stated that they wait students to take the initiative and if no one volunteers, they call from the list.

One of the strategies teachers appeared to use worthy of note is that they rephrase the question in order to make it clearer for the students. Teacher A and teacher B stated respectively:

I usually restate my question, for it can be an ill-asked question.
I rephrase the question to make it much clearer for students.

The last strategy whereby teachers attempt to get students to speak is, in fact, quite commendable because an ambiguously asked question or instruction targeted to students on the part of teachers can render students reluctant to speak. By making questions clearer, teachers might find their students more willing to involve in classroom talk. Nevertheless, calling from the list is not really effective. Calling upon students from the list to speak can

do more harm than help, mainly because students might feel more apprehensive and may never be able to summon up their courage to speak.

2.3.5. The Potential of Pair and Group Works in Boosting Students' Willingness to Speak

Pair and group works appear to alleviate students' reticence. The results from student questionnaires revealed that students feel much more comfortable to speak in pair and group works. The results from the semi-structured interview support students' responses in the questionnaire. One of the interviewed teachers stated that s/he resorted to assigning pair and group works to get all students to speak in classroom, believing that such method has really worked with her/him. Teacher A stated:

I resorted to assigning pair and group works to oblige everybody to speak. Such a strategy has really worked with me because I found students more willing to talk in groups, less shy, and less anxious.

The findings of this research work with regard to the potential of pair and group works support the conclusions of Brown (2000) who pointed out "in countless observations of classes, I have seen the magic of small groups. Quite suddenly, reticent students become vocal participants in the process" (p. 178).

2.3.6. Teachers' and Students' Suggestions to Make a Speaking Class more Communicative

Students put forward valuable suggestions. Their responses in the questionnaire and focus groups revealed that students kept on reiterating the fact of bringing interesting topics that reflect their life, believing that such interesting topics most assuredly help them involve in classroom interaction. In this regard, Ur (1991) stated "a good topic is one to which learners can relate using ideas from their own experience and knowledge (p. 123).

Students were also calling for giving them the opportunity to prepare topics in advance, and adopting good teaching skills in order for teachers to be adept at getting the most

reluctant students to speak. The latter was overstressed by students in the second focus group; one student in the second focus group stated:

A good teacher can change the life of a student.

Students were also calling for chances to decide on the topics, believing that they feel much more comfortable with self-selected topics that are of a particular interest to them.

Similarly, teachers highlighted the importance of introducing interesting topics, encouraging multi interaction, relying on referential questions, even allocation of turns, etc. However, teacher C made a clarion call for changing the whole educational system, believing that it did not live up to its promise.

2.3.7. Less Problematic Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in Speaking Classes

In what follows we present a consensus derived from this research work about some factors that are less likely to trigger reticence. In so doing by virtue of this study, these factors are to be excluded from the list of reticence-provoking inventory since they have been tested and shown up negative. At least, the factors in question are not of great significance to the target research context.

2.3.7.1. Students' Interest in the Subject Matter

The majority of Students (85%) appeared to study English of their own accord. So results from this study show that reticence cannot be accounted for by students' lack of interest in the subject matter.

2.3.7.2. Speaking Topics

The findings of the current enquiry disclosed that reticence is not engendered by lack of interesting topics since the majority of students acknowledged the fact that they find topics

introduced in Speaking classes interesting and teachers appeared to introduce topics that are relative to students' world.

2.3.7.3. Teachers' Equal Attention to Students

Teachers' turn allocation behaviour is not held problematic in Speaking classes. The majority of students reported that their teachers give them equal attention. Similarly, teachers reported that chances to contribute to classroom talk are fairly evenly distributed. Teachers appeared aware of the importance of treating students equally; however, they reported that even they do all that is humanely possible to get all students involved, some learners are much given to remaining silent and no amount of encouragement would get such learners to speak. Nevertheless, of all the interviewed teachers, no one overstressed the importance of equal treatment of students more and with greater conviction than teacher B. S/he stated:

The teacher has to be smart as to never allow only excellent students to monopolise classroom talk so that s/he encourages reticent students to come out of their shells.

2.3.7.4. Wait-Time

Wait-time appears to be unproblematic in Speaking classes. The majority of Students reported that their teachers give them enough time before inviting them to speak. Similarly, teachers reported that they give students time to generate some ideas if a given topic necessitates that. Still, teachers seemed to favour spontaneity to be cultivated in students.

2.3.7.5. Teachers' Feedback

The frequency of teachers' feedback is not problematic in Speaking classes. The results from student questionnaires revealed that teachers correct students' speaking errors "sometimes" and that was further supported by the results of the semi-structured interview.

Of a particular importance, teacher B reported that s/he tends to intervene if a student's error blocks his/her message. This, in fact, accords with what Thornbury (2005) stated "Sometimes, however, learner's message is simply unintelligible, and some kind of more obtrusive intervention is necessary to repair the breakdown" (p. 92).

In fact, Teachers appeared to be starkly aware of the danger of incessant error correction because too much error correction on the part of teachers can potentially lead students to grow frustrated and ultimately give up the efforts to speak.

2.3.7.6. Teachers' Way of Error Correction

The way students' errors are corrected is not problematic in Speaking classes. The results of the questionnaire showed that students' responses are mostly positive. A clear majority of students (93%) felt satisfied with the way their errors are treated; that was evident through the different justifications they provided. The results of the interview are in favour of that of the questionnaire in the sense that teachers appeared to correct students' errors indirectly with the best intention in the world not to inhibit them. Teacher B, as a case in point, reported:

I usually use recast, a way of correcting errors where the teacher drives students to notice his or her mistake and repair it on his or her own because it works a lot with shy students.

As such, it can be stated that fear of teachers' error correction is not a problem. This, in fact, accords with the findings of Savaci (2013) who reported that Turkish students' reluctance is not due to fear of error correction.

2.3.7.7. Cultural Beliefs

The current investigation revealed that culture has no bearing on students' reticence in Speaking classes. The results from student questionnaires showed that the majority of students deemed silence in classroom as a negative behaviour, believing that they should

talk and interact in oral classes. More than that, a significant number of participants perceived talkative students in classroom as good students whose aim is to develop their oral ability.

This, in fact, contradicts with the findings of Liu's (2005) study which revealed that one among the many factors that triggered Chinese students' reticence in EFL oral classrooms was Chinese culture, which values modesty. While one student in Liu's (2005) study stated "if you are too active, you will be thought of as one who likes showing off" (p. 288). One student in the current study from the second focus group stated:

Speaking in the classroom has nothing to do with showing off; we are seeking knowledge.

Conclusion

This section has been devoted to discussing and highlighting the main findings generated by means of student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teachers' semi-structured interview. The overall findings that grew out of this research are discussed in relation to the research questions suggested in the rationale. Importantly, despite the fact that students attached great importance to the speaking skill and the role of speaking in Speaking classes, it appears strange enough that students are reticent and their reticence is, in fact, accounted for by many factors. Essentially, the findings of this study revealed that third year students' reticence in Speaking classes is attributed to such factors as shyness, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, topic unfamiliarity, fear of peer negative evaluation, and there are other variables over and above these cited factors. In a nutshell, the findings of this research work replicate much of what earlier studies have reported. Still, in spite of high correspondence, some beliefs appeared to be in stark contrast to what has previously been reported.

Recommendations

In the light of the present research findings, it is advised to take the following recommendations into consideration by both teachers and students to obviate the problem of reticence in Speaking classes.

- **Matching Speaking Classes Schedule with Time Preferences of Students**

The findings of this research suggest that time-of-the day instruction impacts students' willingness to learn in general and oral involvement in particular. Students in this study marked afternoon and evening hours as time where their willingness to speak is decreased. These findings speak in favour of matching Speaking classes schedule with the time preferences of students. For example, teaching Speaking classes at hours that do not run over meal time to help students be active and attentive.

- **Striking a Balance between Teachers' and Students' Selection of Speaking Topics**

Students in the present study stressed the importance of giving them the chance to decide on the topics for classroom discussions. In order to strike a balance between teachers' and students' choice on speaking topics, teachers of Speaking classes are encouraged to do a needs analysis questionnaire at the beginning of the term to investigate what topics are most appealing to students. Based on the most agreed-upon topics that emanate from the questionnaire, teachers can base the choice of their topics on topics of their own.

- **Increasing English Practice Opportunities Outside the Classroom**

It is of immeasurable importance to induce opportunities for students to speak English outside the classroom. This can be achieved through establishing English clubs whose aim

is to seek functional English practice. As such, the language gains learners make in these clubs can be linked to classroom learning.

- **Extending Vocabulary Repertoire**

It behoves students to do much listening and reading in order to help them enlarge their vocabulary repertoire and overcome their vocabulary inadequacies. By doing a lot of reading and listening, students are highly likely to come upon a wide variety of contextual-appropriate words and expressions that can help them express themselves in many alternative ways. Importantly, these two language skills, if well exploited by students, can be two sources through which students can extend their stock of vocabulary.

- **Refraining from Calling Students from the List**

The randomness of questioning can, in fact, generate great anxiety in students, especially for those of low ability level. Therefore, teachers are encouraged not to inhibit students by calling from the list. Instead, teachers should always strive to build a supportive learning environment that can offer the optimum conditions where students' spontaneity thrives.

- **Helping shy, Anxious, and Less-Self Confident Students to Overcome their Fears**

Teachers are encouraged to help students who are shy, anxious, and less-self confident to come out of themselves by providing constant encouragement, unsparing praise for any humble initiation on the part of these students. As such, students can be spurred into participation.

General Conclusion

Gaining proficiency in a foreign/second (F/S) language is more complicated than is often assumed. In point of fact, speaking a F/S language calls into play mastery over many facets of the language such as grammar, lexis, pronunciation, and culture. Many EFL/ESL students fail to achieve oral proficiency despite being exposed to a fair amount of foreign/second language instruction. In classroom, students with an insufficient command of the language are apt to be reticent when communicative situations arise. The reasons to shun speaking in L2 classrooms are not clear-cut if one takes into account the various linguistic, individual, situational, affective, cultural, and many other factors that can impinge upon students' unwillingness to speak. What the factors that trigger third year License students' reticence in EFL Speaking classes is, indeed, the prime concern of this investigation.

The present research work comprises two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the review of the related literature; it comprised three sections. The first section discussed interaction in second language classroom, then the second section reviewed the different definitions of reticence and studies carried out on this phenomenon in F/S oral classrooms. Subsequently, the third section cited some of the prominent factors that have consistently been proven by research to occasion students' reticence. The second chapter, on the other hand, is devoted to the field of investigation; it consisted of three sections. The first section described the research methodology used to carry out this enquiry. Subsequently, the second section presented and analysed the results obtained by means of student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teachers' semi-structured interview. The third section, afterwards, highlighted the overall results from the three research tools and discussed them in relation to the research questions put forward in the rationale.

More important than aught else, the findings of this research work revealed that third year License students are reticent. This, in fact, brings to say that the hypothesis has been supported. Students' reticence is accounted for by a multitude of variables such as anxiety, shyness, lack of self-confidence, perceived peer negative evaluation, fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary items, teachers' level of competence, large-sized classes, lack of preparation, and unfamiliarity with the topic. On closer inspection, the current results are in line with past research findings.

Of particular interest, students' reticence in Speaking classes is not ascribed to students' lack of interest in the subject matter, speaking topics, teachers' turn allocation behaviour, wait-time, teachers' feedback, teachers' error treatment, and students' native culture. These items have been tested and they appeared to be non-reticence influencing factors in Speaking classes. In the light of the research findings, some recommendations are put forward for teachers and students in order to obviate the problem of reticence in Speaking classes.

As a final thought, the conclusions of this research work serve to remind us of the persistence of reticence in EFL Speaking classes at the University of Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia, Jijel as it has been the case in many EFL/ESL contexts elsewhere.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a research work that aims to investigate the factors contributing to EFL students' reticence in Speaking classes. Your assistance to answer the questions below will be of great importance to accomplish this research purpose. It is noteworthy that your answers will strictly be confidential in that they will only be used for the purpose of research.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration

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

Section One: Factors Contributing to Students' Reticence in Speaking Classes

1. Was it your choice to major in English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. How good are you in English?

Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐

3. How often do you speak English outside the classroom?

Frequently ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐

4. To what extent do you think the speaking skill is important?

Very important ☐ Little important ☐ Not important ☐

5. Do you enjoy attending Speaking classes?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please, explain why

.....
.....

6. How often do you participate in Speaking classes?

Frequently ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐

7. How often do you receive corrective feedback on your speaking errors?

Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐

8. Does your teacher's way of correcting your errors encourage you to speak?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Justify your answer, please

.....
.....

9. In Speaking classes, do you prefer to sit at ...?

a. The front rows ☐

b. The middle rows ☐

c. The back rows ☐

d. Anywhere ☐

Justify your answer, please

.....
.....

10. Do you feel comfortable to speak English in...?

a. Small classes ☐

b. Large classes ☐

Justify your answer, please

.....
.....

11. When do you feel less willing to speak?

a. In the morning ☐

b. In the afternoon ☐

c. In the evening ☐

12. In what kind of task do you feel comfortable to speak in Speaking classes?

a. Individually ☐

b. In pair work ☐

c. In group work ☐

13. Does your teacher's high level of competence weaken your willingness to speak?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please, explain why

.....
.....

14. How do you find speaking topics?

a. Difficult ☐

b. Interesting ☐

c. Boring ☐

15. Do the opinions other students might have of you when you speak discourage your

willingness to participate?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please, justify your answer

.....
.....

16. Does your teacher give you enough time to formulate your answers before you speak?

Yes ☐ No ☐

17. Do you think giving you enough time to respond to your teacher's questions is important because it helps you to...?

a. Process the questions ☐

b. Rehearse what to say ☐

c. Increase the length of answers ☐

Other(s), please specify

.....
.....

18. Does your teacher pay equal attention to all students?

Yes ☐ No ☐

19. How do you view students' silence in classroom?

a. Positive behaviour ☐

b. Negative behaviour ☐

20. In Speaking classes, do you think you should...?

a. Speak and interact with your teacher and your classmates ☐

b. Listen attentively and respectfully rather than talk ☐

Please, explain why

.....
.....

21. Does it often happen that your teacher gives you the opportunity to speak and the class just falls into silence?

Yes ☐ No ☐

22. When feeling reluctant to speak, is it because ...?

a. Poor grammar ☐

b. The lack of vocabulary items ☐

c. Anxiety ☐

d. Fear of making mistakes ☐

e. Shyness ☐

f. Topic unfamiliarity ☐

g. Lack of preparation ☐

h. Pursuit of perfection ☐

Other (s), please specify

.....
.....

23. What do you think of students who distinguish themselves by talking more in the classroom?

.....
.....

24. To get reticent students to take part in oral interaction, your teacher usually...?

a. Specifies a student to speak ☐

b. S/he waits until a student initiates speaking ☐

c. S/he calls on students from the list ☐

Other (s), please specify

.....
.....

25. What do you think your teacher should do to make students participate and talk more in the classroom?

.....

.....

.....

Thank You

Appendix B

Focus Group Discussions

This group interview is a part of a research work that aims to investigate the contributing factors to third year students' reticence in EFL Speaking classes. Your unsparing assistance to conduct this group discussion with me is of such importance to enrich the findings of this research work.

1. Do you enjoy attending Speaking classes?
2. How often do you participate in Speaking classes?
3. How often do you practise English outside the classroom?
4. Does it often happen that you fall silent in Speaking classes?
5. What are the factors contributing to your reticence in Speaking classes?
6. What does usually your teacher do to induce reticent student to take part in oral interaction?
7. What do you think your teacher should do to make you actively participate and talk in Speaking classes?
 - Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your help

Appendix C

Teachers' Semi-Structured Interview

This semi-structured interview is a part of a research work that aims to investigate the factors contributing to third year students' reticence in EFL Speaking classes. Your willingness to conduct the interview with me is greatly appreciated to accomplish this research purpose.

1. Did you choose to teach this module or was it assigned to you by the administration?
2. How long have you been teaching Speaking classes?
3. How do you estimate your students' speaking skill?
4. Are your students adopting active speech roles in Speaking classes?
5. How often do you give feedback to your students on their speaking errors?
6. How do you try to give oral corrective feedback?
7. What kinds of topics do you try to introduce in Speaking classes?
8. Do you assign pair and group works to your students?
9. Do you try to pay equal attention in Speaking classes?
10. When asking students to speak on the spot, do you give them some time to think about what they will say?
11. Does it often happen that you give the opportunity for students to speak and you just find the whole class silent?
12. What do you think the factors are behind students' reticence in Speaking classes?
13. What do you usually do in order to draw reticent students into taking part in oral interaction?
14. What should be done in your view to make a speaking class more willing to communicate?

Thank You

Résumé

Etant donnée le statut internationale de la langue anglaise, il devient un peu plus qu'une exigence pour les apprenants de la langue anglaise comme une langue étrangère de parfaire leur compétence de communication. Remarquablement, les apprenants de la langue anglaise sont confrontés à une multitude de problèmes dans leur processus d'apprentissage la langue étrangère, en particulier concernant la compétence orale. La recherche en cours vise à révéler les facteurs qui s'influencent la réticence des étudiants de troisième année anglais dans l'expression oral. Elle est basée sur l'hypothèse que les étudiants de troisième année éprouvent des difficultés à l'investissement de production orale dans l'expression orale. Pour atteindre l'objectif de cette recherche, les données ont été recueillies au moyenne de questionnaire, un group des discussions, et une interview semi structuré. Le questionnaire a été soumis à 55 étudiants de troisième année anglais à l'université de Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. Egalement, un group des discussions a été mené avec 12 étudiants de L'échantillon qui a répondu au questionnaire. L'interview, cependant, a été fait avec 3 enseignants de l'expression orale. L'analyse des résultats montre que les étudiants de troisième année éprouvent la réticence, c'est-a-dire l'hypothèse a été confirmé. Notamment, l'anxiété, la timidité, le manque de bagage linguistique, le manque de confiance en soi, le volume de la classe, et le calendrier des cours sont distingués comme les facteurs les plus importants qui engendrent la réticence des étudiants dans l'expression orale.

ملخص

نظرا للمكانة التي تحظى بها اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية فقد بات أكثر من ضرورة على طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية صقل مهارتهم الشفوية، و من الملاحظ أن طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية يواجهون عدة مشاكل أثناء مرحلة تعلمهم لهذه اللغة الأجنبية خاصة فيما يخص كفاءة الأداء الشفوي. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على العوامل التي تؤدي إلى عزوف طلبة السنة الثالثة إنجليزية عن الكلام في حصص التعبير الشفوي و قد اعتمد هذا البحث على فرضية تنص على أن طلبة السنة الثالثة يواجهون عدة مشاكل في استثمار الأداء الشفوي ضمن حصص التعبير الشفوي. لتحقيق هدف الدراسة تم الاعتماد على ثلاثة وسائل: الاستبيان، مجموعة من المناقشات وكذلك المقابلات، فيما يتعلق بالاستبيان تم توزيعه على خمسة و خمسين طالبا يدرسون سنة ثالثة إنجليزية بجامعة محمد صديق بن يحيى، جيجل كما تم إجراء مجموعة نقاشات مع اثني عشرة طالبا تم اختيارهم من عينة الإستبيان، أما فيما يخص المقابلات فقد تم إجراؤها مع ثلاثة أساتذة مختصين في تدريس حصص التعبير الشفوي. بعد تحليل النتائج المحصل عليها تم إثبات صحة الفرضية التي تتمحور حولها الدراسة وقد خلص هذا البحث إلى أن التوتر، الخجل، قلة الثقة بالنفس، ضعف الرصيد اللغوي، العدد الهائل للطلبة في القاعة، و توقيت الحصص الغير مناسب من أهم العوامل التي تؤدي إلى عزوف الطلبة عن الكلام في حصص التعبير الشفوي.