

People's Democratic and Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel



Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

Students' Perceptions towards the Effectiveness of Oral Instruction in Developing the Speaking Skill

The Case of First Year Master Students of English at Mohammed
Seddik-Ben Yehia University, Jijel

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master Degree in
Language Sciences

Candidate:

Amina BOUZAOUT

Supervisor:

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Board of Examiners

Chairperson: Fouzia BENNACER.....University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Almighty.

This modest work is fondly dedicated to:

The cherished memory of my beloved little brother: Zaki.

The most ardent and passionate beings who always empower and inspire me with their never-ending encouragement and to whom I owe a great debt, my parents;

My dear sister and brother;

Those who always loved and supported me dearly:

My grandparents, my aunts, my uncles, and my cousins;

My best friend and all my close friends whom I shared with unforgettable memories;

Those who believed in me and kept supporting me throughout the course of this work;

All my teachers and colleagues.

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Abstract

The speaking skill became a crucial part of the language learning process since one of its major goals is gaining communicative efficiency. Thus, the foremost aim behind conducting this study is to explore students' perceptions in regards to the effectiveness of oral instruction in enhancing the speaking skill, and to determine the factors that hinder the students' participation in oral tasks. Accordingly, the dissertation in hand is based on the hypotheses that learners will report unsatisfactory attitudes and perceptions if they find insufficiency in the development of their speaking abilities and that the curriculum adopted in teaching this skill has some weaknesses and lacks efficiency. For the sake of testing these two hypotheses, a descriptive design was implemented in which a questionnaire has been administered to seventy (70) first year Master students of English at Mohammed Seddik-Ben Yehia University, but sixty two (62) students answered the questionnaire. The findings showed that students reported negative attitudes toward the curriculum currently in use in teaching oral expression module. To put it concisely, the research hypotheses were confirmed and the oral instruction curriculum lacks a variety of interactive tasks and communicative skills.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

Q: Question

OE: Oral Expression

SL: Second Language

TL: Target Language

% : Percentage

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General Introduction

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1. Background of the Study

The English language has become a major medium for communication across borders globally and it is, nowadays, considered as the medium of communication not only for business but also for academic purposes, Karahan (2007) described English language as "...leading foreign language enjoying a prestigious position in many countries... it is the most widely taught foreign language at all stages of educational system" (p. 1). Its importance as a global language stresses the role of ways and methods of teaching its skills.

Speaking is one of the four language skills that is given more emphasis in foreign language learning (FLL). It is considered to be the most difficult and complex skill that foreign language learners at the university need to master in order to succeed and to be able to communicate effectively in an English community. That is why various techniques and strategies are used to improve the process of learning this skill. In the same line, decision-makers have been trying to implement and to adopt the most appropriate programme or syllabus that enhances the speaking skill of the learners and makes them effective parts in English speaking societies. But despite the fact that these programmes have been changed and modified for better improvements, there is still little attention given to the investigation of learners' needs and interests and their attitudes towards the teaching-learning process, because the students' opinions and perceptions about their development in correspondence with the programme adopted is with no doubt beneficial. Therefore, this study intends to explore students' perceptions concerning how effective the oral instruction is in boosting their speaking abilities.

2. Statement of the Problem

Having good communication skills and adequate level of English fluency are of crucial importance if one wants to reach higher levels of success in the field of foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. Specifically, students who learn English put improving their speaking skill as an ultimate goal to be achieved in order for them to be effective members in an English speaking community. Unfortunately, there are some obstacles that ravel the process of improving this skill. From her experience as a learner of English for five years at the University of Mohammed Seddik-Ben Yehia, Jijel, the researcher noticed that English foreign language (EFL) learners encounter problems when it comes to speaking or expressing their ideas. To clarify, a great number of EFL learners at the same university lack communicative skills and interactional abilities and they always complain about lack of motivation and lack of time for practicing the target language. These problems are strongly interrelated with the curriculum adopted and the methods employed in teaching oral expression module since they are the starting point of the development process. Also, taking into consideration the view that people who cannot speak a foreign language cannot be considered effective language users, even if they can read it and understand it, presses the importance of developing a good level in the speaking skill. It also emphasises on the implementation of varied teaching techniques and methods to motivate learners and to create a relaxing atmosphere for learning. Coming to this point, the research in hand aims at exploring the students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of oral instruction and the factors that hinder their speaking skill development.

3. Aims of the Study

This piece of research is conducted for the purpose of identifying students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the effectiveness of oral instruction in developing their speaking skill during the English curriculum. This is to determine whether or not the students' speaking skill

has been improved as a result of receiving four years of oral instruction. This study also aims at identifying the factors that impede the enhancement of learners' speaking abilities.

4. Research Questions

Based on the former stated aims, this present research attempts to answer the following questions:

- How do students self-assess their speaking abilities as a result of receiving four years of oral instruction?
- What are the perceptions of Master One students towards the effectiveness of oral instruction in the development of the speaking skill in the whole English curriculum?
- What factors hinder the students' development of their speaking skill?

5. Hypotheses

The present dissertation tries to investigate whether the English curriculum instruction in oral classes contributes to the development of learners' speaking abilities. With this end in view, this piece of research puts forward the following hypotheses:

- The students' oral proficiency is not up to the mark due to the current oral expression curriculum that lacks communicative and motivational tasks.
- Learners will hold negative attitudes towards the English curriculum used in oral sessions if they find a deficiency in the development of their speaking skills.
- Students' perceptions of teaching are important tools for providing feedback for effective oral instruction.

6. Methodology

Every piece of research should be conducted through the use of a specific design and research instrument that are most suitable for the nature of the dissertation. In order to achieve the aims of the current study and to test the foregoing hypotheses, data will be collected through the use of a students' questionnaire. This questionnaire will be administered to a representative sample of seventy (70) first year Master students of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yehia, Jijel.

7. Structure of the Study

The present study is comprised of a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part is divided into two chapters; the practical part comprises one chapter.

The first chapter is devoted to the related literature of teaching the speaking skill highlighting the importance of speaking, its definition, and its main characteristics. It, then, explores the major teaching methods and how they regarded speaking, the roles of teachers as well as learners in the teaching-learning process, types of speaking, and finally factors hindering learners' development of speaking skill.

Chapter two presents a review of some theoretical issues on evaluating the effectiveness of oral instruction. It includes definition of effective language teaching, its components, and its characteristics. It also tackles the evaluation and importance of the effectiveness of language instruction as well as characteristics of a good oral expression teacher. Additionally, this chapter tackles not only the main tasks oral expression teachers use to develop learners' speaking abilities but also the importance of students' perceptions in evaluating the effectiveness of oral instruction.

The third chapter is the field work. It deals with data analysis obtained from the students' questionnaire and a discussion of the main results. The chapter ends with uncovering the limitations of the study and providing further suggestions and recommendations for future research concerning the field of this study.

Chapter One

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Introduction

Speaking has long been seen as a crucial part in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language (FL). The teaching of this skill aims at developing learners' abilities in producing oral messages and thus, enabling them to communicate effectively in real life situations and in appropriate contexts. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to tackle general issues about speaking; definition of speaking, different views of the major language teaching methods in what concerns speaking in addition to teacher's and learners' roles in teaching and learning this skill. It also deals with its importance and characteristics.

1.1. Definition of Speaking

Speaking is one of the basic skills that language learners should excel in learning a foreign language. It can be defined as a complex process of giving and receiving messages through the use of verbal expressions, but it also involves nonverbal symbols such as gestures and facial expressions.

According to the Oxford Dictionary of current English (2009, p. 414), speaking is "the action of conveying information or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in spoken languages". Additionally, Brown (2003, p.140) referred to the speaking skill as "an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information". That is to say, speaking is the ability to perform the linguistic knowledge in the actual communication by expressing oneself in words and making a speech. Hedge (2000) defined speaking as "a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed". This means that speaking is an important skill which reflects people's thoughts and personalities, that is why it deserves more attention in both first and second

language. Furthermore, UR (2000, p. 12) declared that of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referenced to as “speakers” of the language, as if speaking includes all other kinds of skills.

1.2. The Importance of Speaking

After being neglected and disregarded in the past years, the speaking skill is nowadays considered as much important as reading and writing. Learners become more interested in improving their speaking skill as well as enhancing their oral proficiency, and teachers, in class, start to focus on oral communicative tasks which give learners the chance to speak. The speaking skill is regarded as the skill that should be developed from early stages of learning a foreign language. Celce-Murica (2001, p.103) asserted that for most people “the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication”. In other words, the ability to speak a given language is seen as a criterion for knowing that language. Hedge (2000, p.161) stated that “learning to speak competently in English is a priority”. Many students think that having many words may help them to speak English; however, there are learners who have many words and different vocabulary in their linguistic package, but they face problems in putting them into use. Speaking is important because it is the skill by which people are frequently judged, and it is the medium of contacting in real life situations, “speaking fluently of course involves speaking easily and appropriately” (Collie & Slater, 1991). EFL learners need to be able to speak this language well; they expect to enhance the speaking skill more than the other skills because simply, speaking is language in use. In addition, mastering speaking helps learners to express themselves, their ideas, their emotions and problems, and this means making themselves heard and understood. Thus, they raise their chances for

further education and for finding employment since most of technology and businesses in recent decades are using English. According to Nunan (1991, p.39), “to most people, mastering the art of speaking is the single most important factor of learning a second or a foreign language and success is a measure item of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language”. Therefore, the speaking skill deserves more attention as much as the other skills and teaching it merits more effort and care.

1.3. Characteristics of Speaking

Speaking as a skill has many characteristics that should be taken into account in the process of learning English as a foreign language, these characteristics are represented in fluency, accuracy, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

To start with, fluency refers to the level of proficiency in communication. It is the ability to produce written and spoken sentences with ease, efficiency, without a breakdown of communication. That is to say, it is the ability to speak language easily and effortlessly without hesitation. Hughes (2002) defined fluency as the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate way without too much hesitation; otherwise the communication will break down because listeners will lose their interest. Therefore, teachers should focus on the oral fluency because it is the main characteristic of a speaker's performance. Learners also should be given some training to use their own language freely in order to express their personal ideas and thoughts. Furthermore, Brown (2002) defined fluency as the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and the use of interjections. That is, a speaker of any language can achieve fluency through the accurate use of language patterns at a normal speed.

Moreover, according to Richards (1992), accuracy refers to the ability of producing grammatically correct sentences. Students should not only know correct grammatical rules of the language, but also to speak and write accurately. Harmer (2001) pointed out that accuracy involves the correct use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. These are the main features which help teachers to assess the students' proficiency. This idea was supported by Hedge (2000, p.61) who stated that "the communicative approach somehow excuses teachers and learners from a consideration of how to develop high levels of accuracy in the use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary". Another definition of accuracy is provided by Byrne (1988) who considered accuracy as the use of correct forms which do not contain errors that may affect other features of language such as phonology, syntax, semantics or discourse.

Furthermore, grammar is considered to be a very important element for students to set correct sentences in a conversation. According to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (2001), the grammatical accuracy refers to the range and the appropriate use of the learner' grammatical structure that involves the length and the complexity of the utterances in addition to the ability to use the subordinating clauses (as cited in Hughes, 2002).

In addition to the previously mentioned characteristics, vocabulary is another criterion of obtaining a good speaking ability. Achieving accuracy in terms of vocabulary refers to the appropriate selection of words during speaking. Students often find difficulties when they try to express what they want to say, they lack the appropriate vocabulary, and they, sometimes, use words incorrectly like in the case of synonyms which do not carry the same meaning in all contexts. Students then, have to be able to use words and expressions accurately. According

to Harmer (2001), the knowledge of the word classes also allows speakers to perform well formed utterances.

Finally, English language has been long considered by either native speakers or non native speakers as a difficult language because of its pronunciation. Learners, then, who want to develop their speaking skill in English should practise pronunciation overall. They should be aware of the different sounds as well as their features and articulation; they have also to be aware of where the words should be stressed, when to use raising intonation and when to use a falling one. All these aspects give them information about how to speak English effectively and help to achieve the goal of a better understanding of spoken English. Redmond and Vrchota (2007, p.104) argued that “it is imperative that you use the correct word in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation. Pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood”. However, if the pronunciation is not correct, the speakers then will not be understood and therefore, accuracy will not be achieved.

1.4. Speaking in Major Language Teaching Methods

Though several researches have been made on how to teach English as a FL, speaking was one aspect that shifts and adjustments were made upon in each new method. Among the major language teaching methods are the following:

4.1. The Grammar Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method is a method that appeared as opposed to the classical method of Latin and Greek or what Cook (2003, p. 31) called “dead classical languages, Latin and Ancient Greek.” The Grammar-Translation Method is based on the mastery of grammar rules, memorization of lists of isolated items and translation of sentences and texts from and

to the target language (TL). In other words, "Grammar-Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.3). This traditional method gave no attention to speaking the FL which would be the biggest problem. Success of this method means mastering grammar, learning by heart vocabulary and knowing how to translate sentences and texts without taking into consideration the transmitted meanings. As a result, the great weakness of this method is the ignorance of how to use the FL for communicative purposes.

1.4.2. The Direct Method

Since the problems that had faced the Grammar-Translation Method and their impact on the learning of FL, a new method appeared. This method is called the Direct Method, it started to be widely known and practised in the twentieth century. Reformers argued that SL learning should be conducted like the first language (L1). Moreover, the second language (L2) should be learned without translation but by the direct use of that language, exactly, with the use of intensive oral interaction. Teaching and learning speaking is initiated with a systematic attention to pronunciation and the emphasis of natural speech and asking questions directed to the learners in order to make them speak. Known words could be used to teach new vocabulary. In addition to that, using mime, demonstration and pictures are also considered as important ways of teaching vocabulary (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp.9- 10).

1.4.3. The Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio-Lingual Method was influenced by behaviourism. It is based on the spoken language, and it stressed habit formation as a mode of learning. Hall and Austin (2004, p. 39)

said that “this method adopts what is called a “natural order” to second language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.” In other words, the audio-lingual method followed in acquiring the FL the same order in L1 acquisition which begins by listening, speaking, reading then writing. This method followed in learning speaking a bottom-up order; that is, it started with learning discourse before analyzing grammatical structures. In this method, the material is presented in the form of a dialogue and more effort is directed towards producing error-free utterances. However, language is not really acquired through the process of habit formation and errors could not be avoided.

1.4.4. The Audio-Visual Approach

The Audio-Visual Approach focuses on the importance of the visual side in addition to the audio one in teaching listening and speaking. Rivers (1981, p.175) claimed that “the Audio-Visual Approach puts many reasons to emphasise the importance of adding the visual element in teaching both listening and speaking”. These reasons are summarized in the following issues:

- The elimination of the interference of L1 by adding the picture to the voice. Learners will understand the FL by both the meaning gained from the image and the FL utterance.
- The elimination of the script because the spoken language will be understood by the use of the picture stimulus.
- The increase of learners' motivation. Modern learners find it interesting when well-drawn pictures are added.

1.4.5. The Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach, or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is firmly grounded into two main versions, a weak version and a strong version. Using English for communicative purposes and designing activities for the same purpose is the weak version. The strong version is based on the acquisition of the FL by its direct use. According to Howatt (1984), "if the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it' " (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.66). The main characteristics of CLT are summarized in the following points:

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
- The primary function of language is for interaction and communication.
- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
- The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 71).

1.5. Teacher's Role in Teaching Speaking

Within the EFL classroom, teachers have some important roles and responsibilities. Those roles may change from one activity to another according to student's levels. As the main focus is put on improving student's communicative competence, teachers' role becomes more motivating and inspirational. The ability of teachers to play different roles may enhance their effectiveness in the process of teaching. Therefore, teachers should take on the following roles which aim at facilitating students' progress.

1.5.1. Controller

Acting as a controller is the most common role in many educational contexts. Many teachers feel comfortable with this role and are used to it, because they see their job as transmitting knowledge from themselves to students. Teachers provide explanations, organize the activities, and prepare lectures. However, being a controller has some shortcomings on the learning process such as reducing the student's opportunities to talk because, when the class is acting as a group, the main focus is put on the teacher. Moreover, the over-reliance on transmission of knowledge affects the variety in activities and students' enjoyment of learning (Harmer, 2007, p.58).

1.5.2. Organiser

This role requires the teacher to organize students to do different activities. It involves grouping students, giving them information about the activity that they are going to do and how they are going to do it. Teachers have to play this role right to ensure full advantage from the activity; they give instructions and explain clearly how groups should be organized. Also, they need to engage student's interests and needs in the activity and ensure their participation. Otherwise, the activity may be wasted. The organizer should avoid confusion and give the instructions in a logical order to create a full understanding of the activity (Harmer, 2007, p.58). After finishing the activity, the teacher may organize feedback to check student's comprehension.

1.5.3. Assessor

According to Harmer (2007, pp. 59-60), this role is based mainly on offering feedback. Teachers assess the students' performance and provide correction and say whether or not they can pass to the next level. In such process, students should be aware of how and for what they

are being assessed, so that they know what points need more focus and concentration. Acting as assessors, teachers should be sensitive to the students' possible reactions when giving a bad grade which can be acceptable if it is given with support and encouragement.

1.5.4. Prompter

The lack of vocabulary makes students unable to speak and interact with each other or with their teacher. Here comes the role of the prompter who encourages students to proceed creatively and to rely on their own. In a role-play activity, for instance, the teacher may help his students by giving them some words or phrases in order to carry on with their performance when they forget the words that are supposed to be used (Harmer, 2007, p.60).

1.5.5. Resource

When the teacher assigns an activity, his students may need some information and ask their teacher questions about the activity. Here, the teacher acts as a resource; he gives them the information they need or he directs them to look for what serves the purpose of accomplishing that activity. In doing so, the teacher encourages the students to use the resource material for them. Teachers' role as a resource of information aims at making students able to achieve good spoken and written production by answering their questions. If the teacher does not know the right answer at that moment, he can bring it next time in order not to make students lose their confidence in him. In this sense, Harmer (2007) declared that "when we are acting as a resource we will want to be helpful and available, but at the same time we have to resist the urge of spoon-feed our students so that they become over-reliant on us" (p. 61).

1.6. Learners' Role in Learning Speaking

In order to achieve the objectives of teaching and learning, there should be a cooperative work between teachers and their students. Students should be responsible for their own learning by being active participants in their education. They learn better through action, so they should contribute to classroom discussions; they answer teacher's questions, ask questions and express their own ideas about a subject. Also, they should accomplish tasks and take tests. Furthermore, students should gather materials and look for information needed for assignments by taking the given instructions to where resources can be found, because they are responsible for making their own strategies of doing tasks. In addition, in a group work task, students are considered as monitors of motivation among the members of their group. (Bailey's Blog, 2009).

1.7. Factors Hindering Learners' Oral Fluency

Many students fail to speak a foreign language effectively while communicating with others. This failure is mainly because of some factors which impede the progress of their speaking skill. The majority of them do not like to speak in front of a large audience because of their fear of making errors and getting embarrassed. Teachers' task to develop students' speaking skill is definitely not easy as it may seem. They should take into consideration the factors that lead to speaking problems and difficulties. These factors are mainly psychological, pedagogical and socio-cultural.

1.7.1. Psychological Factors

There are a lot of psychological factors that affect the process of developing the speaking skill of FL learners, the most influential ones can be summarised in what follows:

1.7.1.1. Lack of Motivation

Motivation is a psychological state that pushes people to do what they want to do. It is very essential in learning a foreign language to ensure students' success. Students need to be motivated to achieve some defined goals. According to Harmer (2001, p.51), there is a distinction between two types:

Extrinsic motivation is caused by any number of outside factors, for example, the need to pass an exam, the hope of financial reward, or the possibility of future travel. Intrinsic motivation, by contrast, comes from within the individual. Thus, a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the process of learning itself or by a desire to make themselves feel better.

The intrinsic motivation is the most important though it can be affected by an extrinsic factor. Motivation influences the process of learning especially in enhancing speaking. Having students to speak might be difficult for teachers who cannot control the motivation of their students, yet they can create an impact and influence it in some ways. If teachers clearly explain the importance of speaking English today and how it can serve the future life, students will feel the need to develop their speaking skill. The students will have a strong desire to learn it and become fluent speakers. On the contrary, if learners are unaware of that importance, they will fail to reach fluency.

1.7.1.2. Lack of Self-esteem

EFL students are young learners who are yet to reach a high fluency and accuracy level. Therefore, speaking in a FL is still somewhat problematic for them, because they cannot develop their self-esteem. According to Brown (2007, p.154):

Self-esteem is probably the most pervasive aspect of human behaviour. It could easily be claimed that successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself and self-efficacy belief in your own capacity to successfully perform that activity.

Students who suffer from low self-esteem fail to interact effectively in the classroom. Teachers might be the main factor which leads to that behaviour, for they do not give feedback. Though students perform well, the absence of feedback from the teacher can kill their motivation to work harder in future performances.

1.7.2. Pedagogical Factors

Pedagogical factors are related to the classroom where teachers and students are involved in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers should be aware of the possible circumstances which students may encounter inside the classroom, and how their speaking skill can be affected. The main pedagogical factors which may have a negative influence on students are teacher's methods, crowded classes, and teaching materials and media.

1.7.2.1. Teacher's Methods

In the process of teaching and learning, teachers should know the way this process takes place. They are required to find the appropriate method which helps students improve their abilities. When students feel comfortable with a certain method, their success is much more likely to occur (Harmer, 2007). Teacher's method has a great role in raising the student's motivation; if students do not like the way they are being taught, they may soon get demotivated and lose their interest in learning. Some teachers blindly follow one way of teaching. For instance, they follow the textbook and they assign the same kind of activities.

This is what students find uncomfortable and they are not prepared for. They get bored to be taught in the same way all the time and feel that their role in the lesson is limited, since teachers take most of the talk and leave only small scope for students' participation. Therefore, teachers should provide maximum opportunity for students to speak the target language, and involve each student in every speaking activity. Also, students need to increase their speaking time. Moreover, teachers should avoid correcting learners' pronunciation mistakes very often in order not to distract them. More importantly, giving oral and written feedback is very useful to keep students' attention and motivation (Kayi, 2006).

To sum up, teachers and students are two parties who need to agree on the terms of a contract. Teachers should introduce their own methods according to what their students want and feel comfortable with.

1.7.2.2. Crowded Classes

Crowded classes are regarded as a problem that many teachers face in recent years, because classes are getting larger, especially EFL classrooms. Both teachers and students tend to encounter some difficulties in the process of teaching and learning. Overcrowding negatively affects classroom activities and instructional techniques; thus, students' success and competencies are affected as well.

Working in large classes, teachers concentrate more on managing and controlling students to create a relaxing and a friendly atmosphere for learners rather than working to achieve the lesson objectives. In such classes, there is an inadequate participation in the lesson from the part of students sitting at the back, because teachers' movements are restricted to the front of the class. Furthermore, due to the large number of students, teachers cannot pay attention to them all. This is why not all students will have the

chance to speak or participate, especially shy or weak ones who feel neglected and left behind (Frontiers Academy, 2014). Therefore, students will get fewer opportunities to talk and express themselves in the classroom. In addition, teachers cannot provide help to all students and cannot involve them in learning activities.

In few words, overcrowded classes are a serious problem which makes it hard for students to benefit from their learning. To manage such classes and to achieve the aims of their task, teachers should be aware of the negative effects of overcrowding and should have enough competence to deal with them.

1.7.2.3. Teaching Media and Materials

The teaching materials are the various tools used in teaching and learning. They are a source for students to improve their skills through different activities and tasks. According to Crystal and Davy (1979), when teachers focus on developing the communicative competence of their students, they should consider whether the materials they use reflect the features of spoken language. Stretches of spoken discourse are useful in demonstrating how different elements combine and work together to create a successful conversational exchange. However, many teachers rely on textbooks as the main material for assigning activities. Yet, the textbook can be regarded as a serious problem if it does not contain activities that develop the oral skill. Additionally, Crystal and Davy (1979) complained about the tendency of textbooks not to be real.

People in textbooks, it seems, are not allowed to tell long and unfunny jokes, to get irritable or to lose their temper, to gossip (especially about other people), to speak with their mouths full, to talk nonsense, or swear (even mildly). They do not get all mixed up while they are speaking, forget what they wanted to say, hesitate,

make grammatical mistakes, argue erratically or illogically, use words vaguely, get interrupted, talk at the same time, switch speech styles, manipulate the rules of the language to suit themselves, or fail to understand. In a word, they are not real (p.3).

Yet, unauthentic materials which do not reflect these features of spoken language are used in language teaching. According to Burns and Joyce (1997), unauthentic materials create a false impression of speech presenting them with 'unrealistic models of spoken interactions' (p.87). They claimed that:

If the overall aim of language programs is to prepare students to use spoken language effectively in social situations, then teachers need to present students with authentic spoken texts in the classroom. This may include the use of recordings and transcripts of authentic discourse. Teachers need to know how authentic texts differ from scripted and semi-scripted texts and how to use this knowledge to assist second language learners to develop speaking skills (p.85).

Authentic materials are an important part of language teaching. Hence, teachers should use various materials in the classroom such as recordings, which are more accessible nowadays and it is easy to find desirable samples online. They should know how to include them in their teaching in order to help students improve their oral skills and prepare them to communicate effectively in real life situations.

1.7.3. Socio-cultural Factors

Socio-cultural factors have a great effect on learning a foreign language. Student's positive attitudes towards the foreign language itself, its speakers, its culture, and the social

value of learning can determine the degree of success in speaking that language. According to Rathod (2012):

Language attitudes in the learner, the peer group, the school, the neighbourhood, and society at large can have an enormous effect on the second language learning process, both positive and negative. It is vital that teachers and students examine and understand these attitudes. In particular, they need to understand that learning a second language does not mean giving up one's first language or dialect. Rather, it involves adding a new language or dialect to one's repertoire.

For instance, the use of English in the speech community where learners live will positively enhance their speaking proficiency; they will have many chances to use it in their interactions in daily life. However, when English is regarded as a foreign language which is used only in schools, which is the case in Algeria, learners will feel uncomfortable if they speak it outside the classroom because people will see them as strange and awkward.

Conclusion

As a productive skill, speaking is considered to be a crucial element that helps to evaluate learners' proficiency in the target language. It should be one of the basic parts in curriculum designs of second or foreign language teaching, in addition to other skills. Learning to speak entails learners' engagement in communicative situations so that they will activate their speaking capacity. So, the development of oral skill requires teachers to help students in making active use of the language that is correct in its grammar and pronunciation. That is to say, fluency and accuracy are two essential aspects to be developed in the teaching learning experience.

Chapter Two

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Introduction

Although the field of teaching English as a foreign language has known major changes for the sake of improvement during the last decades, it still suffers from some shortcomings that negatively affect the process of teaching and impede its effectiveness. Relatively, this chapter is devoted to explore the definition of effective language instruction, its components, and some of its characteristics. It also deals with evaluating the effectiveness of oral instruction, the importance of its evaluation, and the importance of effective oral language teaching. Additionally, it includes characteristics of oral instruction, tasks for developing oral language instruction, and students' perceptions in determining its effectiveness.

2.1. Effective Language Instruction

The main goal of instruction and the continuous development of ways of teaching is to contribute in the enhancement of students' abilities with an adequate level that will enable them to be effective parts in society. But, before thinking about promoting teaching, it is necessary to have a clear idea of what is meant by effective instruction.

2.1.1. Definition

Giving a clear definition of effective teaching is considered to be a problematic issue. Mainly, effective teaching can be defined as a way that leads to high achievement by students in valued outcomes. Teaching effectiveness is also variously referred to as teacher effectiveness, instructional effectiveness, teaching efficiency, or teacher performance. Anderson (2004, p.24) admitted that "effective teachers are goal-achieving people who want to reach goals set by themselves, educational authorities, or school administrators". In other words, effective teachers are those who work hard to achieve the already set objective either by themselves, the authorities in the field, or the school administrators. In addition, Stronge

(2007) stated that research findings portrayed effective teachers as well-trained professionals who can appropriately manage the classroom and know how to plan, teach, and monitor students' progress. Relatively, from educational professionals' perspective, effective teachers are those who enhance students' learning through the improvement of several factors, such as: students' motivation, persistence, creativity, knowledge applicability, and global competency (Byrd & Rasberry, 2011).

The role of the teacher in an effective instruction is of utmost importance and it has become more important in the planning process. Additionally, for the goal of effective teaching to be achieved, there are some aspects that teachers should focus on. According to Edge (1998), good teaching skills are necessary to be present in an EFL teacher as well as good knowledge about the English language system, how it works, and how it is learned and used. Also, teachers must have a good level of English proficiency. These aspects proved to be challenging especially for non-native English speakers who teach EFL classes. This is because of the multiple roles the teachers need to take on; those of language teacher, language analyst, and language user.

2.1.2. Components of Effective Language Instruction

Teaching is defined as the formal transmission of knowledge by a teacher that is being addressed to students. Instruction is a nebulous concept which refers to providing knowledge in an organised manner. Thus, the characteristics of effective language instruction are divided into four groupings: planning instruction, managing instruction, delivering instruction and evaluating instruction (what are the components of effective instruction, 2006).

2.1.2.1. Planning Instruction

If all learners in a classroom are said to have equal instructional abilities, and if the objectives defined in teaching are clearly stated as well as being the same for all students, then, planning teaching will be easier and effective. Nevertheless, students are not the same, this, in turn, leads to identify different objectives for different learners. This explains the significant importance of planning and stating the objectives beforehand. To plan refers to the stage of making decisions concerning both the content and the methodology of teaching. To put it in another way, what matters more in planning is 'what' and 'how' (what are the components of effective instruction, 2006).

2.1.2.2. Managing Instruction

One of the crucial roles of the teacher is to create the circumstances under which learning takes place. In order to make sure that the class will reach success, the teacher should be skilful enough in managing the classroom. Factors that have to do with creating a successful classroom are teachers' perceptions, personality characteristics, intentions, and their relationship with their students. Nonetheless, teachers are in need of other strategies and abilities. Classroom management is the term that covers all these skills. This may include:

- *Activities*: It includes designing appropriate activities, directing and guiding learners to do the activities, setting the time, and assuring the end of the activities.
- *Grouping and Seating*: It includes choosing the right format of the way students sit (be it singles, pairs, groups...), the organization of seating, etc.
- *Authority*: It includes attracting students' attention, deciding upon students' roles in the classroom, and giving instructions to learners.

- *Critical moments*: It is about how to begin and to end the lesson, and to be flexible with unplanned and unwelcomed events.
- *Tools and techniques*: It is about the implementation of various media and materials. It also entails the appropriate use of gestures as a way of explaining and demonstrating meaning as it includes degrading the complexity of language as well as adequate use of silence overlaps.
- *Working with people*: It talks about dividing equal and appropriate attention between learners and the importance of being a good listener. Also, it deals with ways eliciting answers from the part of students (*"components of effective instruction"*, 2006).

2.1.2.3. Delivering Instruction

Delivering instruction is what the teacher transmits to the learners in class. It deals with the delivery of teaching contents that are related to already set objectives through the use of various methods and techniques of teaching. In delivering instruction, the teacher should be aware of his learners' needs and domains of interests so as to engage them in the learning process. The teacher also has to be flexible to any changes that might occur during the presentation of the lesson (what are the components of effective instruction, 2006).

2.1.2.4. Evaluating Instruction

Brian (1997) regarded evaluation as a senior project that reflects work done over an extended period of time rather than in response to a particular prompt. He referred to "senior project" as a term that is used to identify a particular type of cumulating event in which students draw upon the skills they have developed over time. This means that evaluation, in

education, is used to measure the outcomes of a specific program, method, or technique that is implemented to serve already set objectives.

Evaluating instruction is the process of measuring students' achievements and collecting feedback for teaching improvement. It should take into consideration students' levels and rate of progress. This evaluation can be used for the sake of knowing students' strengths and weaknesses or for simply ranking the students and organizing them. It is a very important aspect in the improvement of language teaching (what are the components of effective instruction, 2006).

2.1.3. Characteristics of Effective language Instruction

The process of language teaching comprises several characteristics that play an important role in this very process and that help in making it effective, the main ones are stated below:

2.1.3.1. Classroom Climate and Motivation

It is widely acknowledged that the classroom climate and environment play a very important role in the teaching-learning experience. Consequently, engaging students in learning depends on teachers' ways of encouraging and motivating them to reach higher levels of language proficiency. Also, creating a relaxing atmosphere, having passion for work, and encouraging students to talk freely without the fear of making mistakes will motivate them to participate in classroom activities. Anderson (2004, p.49) stated that "to facilitate the task of classroom teaching, teachers need to create a psychological environment that is perceived *positively* and *similarly* by students. A positive classroom climate is necessary in order to bring out the best in students". In other words, teachers bear the responsibility of intriguing students' interests and activating their desire for learning in order for them to be active and engaged in the learning process. As a result, this will increase students' level of motivation.

2.1.3.2. Knowledge and Experience

Teacher's knowledge is somehow a complex issue that involves understanding key concepts, such as: the process of teaching and learning, the concept of knowledge, as well as the way teachers' knowledge is put into use in the classroom (Guerriero, 2015). She went further saying that expert teachers in the field are characterized with several features that include extensive pedagogical content knowledge, strategies for better problem-solving, better adaptation for different types of learners, better decision making, better organization of classroom events, and a sense of sensibility to context. Additionally, teachers' are considered to be knowledgeable if they master the material they are going to teach.

2.1.3.3. Flexibility

Flexibility requires that the teachers modify their course plan or lesson plan to serve the students' needs. A good teacher should be engaging, interested in what their teaching is about, responsive to the class' input, capable to teach material clearly, and capable to challenge his students. To put it differently, being flexible as a teacher is a very important criterion which demands an ability to respond to different students' abilities, needs, and interests (Fallin, 2011).

Based on the fact that no two students are alike, the teacher is need of flexibility in teaching styles and methods. According to Fralin (2011), not all the learners learn at the same pace or in the same way. Moreover, to develop flexibility in a teacher, he should know how to manage a single student first, then, how to manage a whole group.

2.2. Evaluating the Effective of Language Instruction

Since the goal of educational institutions is to nourish and support the progress of their students' level, language instruction should be highly effective to produce individuals who have developed the ability to communicate effectively in society. Moreover, to know students' level of development evaluation is needed. It refers to a series of activities that are designed to measure the effectiveness of an instructional system, a section, or a component thereof. In her definition of evaluation, Thorpe (1988) stated that "the collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspect of a programme of education or training, as part of a recognised process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes it may have".

2.2.1. Sources of Evaluation

In evaluating instruction, there are a lot of ways that are employed to measure how effective this instruction is and how it is considered helpful in raising the level of teaching and enhancing it.

2.2.1.1. Classroom Observations

The most commonly used way of determining whether a system of any sort is working is to observe the system in action. This is just as true in relation to educational systems such as courses, curricula and educational packages as it is of other systems, and it can generally be carried out through classroom observations which are considered as a source of evaluating instruction. Such observations can be direct and immediate, carried out at the time, or can be indirect and delayed, involving the recording of a session on videotape for subsequent analysis. It can either be carried out by the people who are actually teaching the course or curriculum, or by independent observers especially brought in for the purpose. Whatever means are employed, such observations can provide invaluable feedback on whether or not

the course, curriculum or package is working in the way its designers intended, and also in identifying areas where some improvement and reinforcement might be made (Robert et al., 2014). To put it differently, classroom observation means to enter the classroom and to examine the way the teacher presents his lesson. It is a technique highly employed in giving feedback to teachers because of their effective nature. According to Robert et al. (2014), for classroom observations to be successful, they should be formative rather than summative.

2.2.1.2. Peer Evaluation

Peer observation and evaluation are considered the driving force of the learning of the teacher and schools' sense of cooperation. It is mainly efficient as a formative process, ongoing assessment rather than being restricted by a period of time, where the teacher under scrutiny has total control over the data of their observation (Robert et al. 2014). Goldberg et al. (2000) surveyed a number of teachers and administrators represented by 88. The results revealed that the majority of respondents find peer reviews significant and useful for healing the weaknesses of their way of teaching. The observation is also possible to have positive effects because it results in improving their teaching.

2.2.1.3. Teachers' Self-reports

Self-reports are considered to be as important ways to measure teachers' performance. According to Goe, Bell, and Little (2008), these ways of measuring teachers' performance prompt teachers to report on what they are doing inside their classes and they can take the form of surveys, instructional logs, and interviews. This measurement vary in accordance with the focus, the level of details teachers want to gather, and the purpose behind using the scores. However, using self-reports raise the problem of reliability and validity. Moreover,

the aforementioned tools are known for their lack of objectivity. That is to say, they are subjective by nature due to the fact that they are affected by social factors (Goe et al., 2008).

2.2.1.4. Students' Perceptions and Feedback

Obtaining feedback from students regarding their experiences with and their opinions of an instructional system is one of the most common approaches to evaluation. The information can be sought through a variety of channels, including questionnaires, formal interviews and informal discussions, and can be obtained using either an illuminative or a scientific approach or a combination of the two.

Furthermore, giving feedback to students is widely acknowledged as a key strategy in learning and teaching, but as a matter of fact, students' perceptions about this feedback given by teachers should be highly considered. Teachers should know how and when students perceive the feedback given by their teachers as useful. According to Rowe and Wood (2008), despite the importance of feedback, it has been neglected in research especially in what concerns students' previous experiences in the teaching-learning process. Students' perceptions and opinions about an accomplished task or a program are of crucial importance for the sake of developing and improving instruction.

As Birenbaum (2007) noted, information gained from the part of students not only assists higher education institutions, but also the investigation of students' preferences about instruction and assessment is of great value for understanding a variety of other factors that drive the learning process and its outcomes. Some studies, for example, relate students' learning and testing preferences to differences in performance (Phillips, 1999). Also, teacher evaluations have been found to be influenced by students' preferences (Birenbaum, 2007).

2.2.2. The Importance of Evaluating the Effectiveness of Language Instruction

Evaluating whether or not language instruction is effective is of note importance because of many reasons. Most considerably, it is claimed that evaluation is a method of reflecting on ways used in teaching followed by the process of decision making for the sake of improving these ways of teaching. The significance of evaluation is summarized in what follows:

- *Reflecting in the teaching process:* For learners evaluation is to bring about change, teachers should reflect on their objectives and perceptions of the course. That is, the role of evaluation comes to enhance one's teaching and to make necessary changes on the way of learning, the content, etc.
 - Reflecting on Goals: The teacher, first, should measure whether students' achieved the already defined objectives and to what extent.
 - Noting Strengths and Weaknesses: It is, then, useful to know students strong points and weak points in order to work on them.
 - Targeting Areas to Work on The teacher's aim, at the end, is to opt for one area or two to work on them so that students will develop.
- *Emphasizing students' learning:* Once evaluating students, the focus should not be on enhancing the effectiveness of evaluation, but should be put on the learners who will benefit from the changes. It is worth stating that feedback should be given a short time after to obtain effective results (using students' evaluation to improve teaching, 1997).

2.3. Effective Oral Language Instruction

In order for the foreign language instruction to be effective especially the oral one, these aspects and characteristic should be taken into consideration.

2.3.1. Characteristics of a Good Oral Expression Teacher

According to Miller (1987, pp. 36-38), students are eager to improve their speaking skill. They attend oral expression courses in order to reach this aim. They try to benefit from these courses by working hard to perform well in the different tasks assigned by the teacher. However, some students think that the focus on the activities may not be enough and cannot reflect the effectiveness of their teacher. For them, teachers should be competent and flexible; meaning they should have some specific qualities which enable the learners to learn successfully. For instance, an effective teacher:

- Has enthusiasm for his teaching. Who the teacher is in the classroom and how he acts are important factors in effective teaching. The passion for this teaching creates a passion for learning in students. This influences the way the students react towards the target language and, therefore, their success in learning it.
- Is encouraging and patient. He demonstrates patience with his students even when they make continued incorrect speaking. He should not give up on them as he should always encourage their repeated attempts so that they do not lose self-confidence.
- Treats students equally, regardless of their sex, race, cultural background, or learning level. He should give them the same opportunities to speak and express themselves in class. He should make sure that all students are equally included in the tasks.

- Challenges his students. Talking to students in the target language both in and out of class is a challenge for students. It will prepare them to think and speak in the target language. Also, it helps them keep their motivation and encouragement.
- Makes himself available after class. He can take some minutes to answer students' questions and correct what they have done on their own. He encourages them to do extra work in the areas in which they have interest.

To sum up, Oral Expression classes are important for students to enhance their speaking skill. For teachers, these characteristics, among others, can determine their competence and their effectiveness in the process of teaching.

2.3.2. Tasks for Developing the Speaking Skill by a Good Oral Expression Teacher

There are a lot of types of activities that the teacher can implement to promote the speaking skill in learners in EFL oral classroom settings. These activities, as well, serve the purpose of aiding the teacher in boosting his students' speaking skill proficiency and in identifying their strengths and weaknesses during the teaching/learning process. The most outstanding types of such speaking activities can be characterized in: discussions, presentations, dialogues, role-plays, and conversations.

2.3.2.1. Discussions

Discussions, or debates, are considered to be one of the most widely used activities to test the speaking skill in an oral class. Typically, the students are introduced to a topic through a reading or listening passage or a videotape, then they are asked to get into pairs or groups in order to discuss a related topic for the sake of coming up with a solution or a response (Lazaraton, 2001). This type of activity, most appropriate for intermediate and advanced learners, requires extensive preparation on the part of the students, calls for interaction in

groups and makes use of at least the following language functions: describing, explaining, giving and asking for information, persuading, arguing, agreeing and disagreeing (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996).

The major advantages of discussions can be summarized in four points as (Derradji, 2005) stated. To begin with, the learners can be involved in interpreting utterances and responding appropriately on the spot. Also, the students initiate their own language and put it to communicative use without having to repeat pre-rehearsed stretches. Moreover, the learners will have the opportunity to exchange various opinions and broaden their knowledge in the course of give and take of information. Another advantage is that there is a scope for further communicative use of a debate session as when a group leader is required during a report-back session to recapitulate the main arguments, or when a taped discussion is played back in a different class for listening commentary. Additionally, these advantages can be an indicator of how well the students improved their speaking abilities during the sessions and how well they are putting them into use. Furthermore, they can be used as factors to assess learners' progress and to pinpoint their strengths and weakness from both, the part of teacher and the part of the students themselves.

2.3.2.2. Presentations

Presentations, also known as "speeches" or "oral reports" are prepared and more writing-like than conversational. However, it is more beneficial and effective for the students to speak from their own notes rather than a script to develop their reflective ability in speaking. Giving them enough time to prepare their talks, students benefit more from doing oral presentations; they may also need a chance to rehearse their presentations. This could often be done by getting them to present to each other in pairs or small groups first before they make their speech in front of the entire class (Harmer, 2007). Presentations could be

designed at all levels of proficiency. If research is required, presentations may be more appropriate for intermediate and advanced levels. The learners at beginning levels could make oral reports using realia, posters, displays or other support materials (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). Concerning topics of presentations, they vary depending on the level of the students and the focus of the class. However, giving the learners some room to determine the content of their talks is said to be more interesting (Lazaraton, 2001).

Lazaraton (2001) explained that videotaping of speeches gives a chance to all evaluators (the speaker, peers and the teacher) to do a more in-depth critique. The students themselves could come up with their own evaluation guidelines, use teacher-made criteria or they can combine the two. The students are usually surprised to see how they appear and sound on the tape and could often come up with their own ideas about how to improve their performances. If the presentations are audio-taped or videotaped, some language analysis activities could be used to encourage the learners to become aware of their individual problems with pronunciation, grammar and fluency. Teacher's evaluation of speeches could benefit from the availability of videotapes since they allow a more sustained attention to both the overall speech and the details of performance than real-time evaluation does.

2.3.2.3. Dialogues

Unlike monologues (such as presentations), it is of the essence of dialogues that the participants expect each other to respond, ask, or answer questions. Brown (2001) explained that dialogues involve two or more speakers and could be subdivided into exchanges that promote social relationships, interpersonal, interactional, or transactional types of speaking with exchanges for the purpose of conveying factual information. In interpersonal or transactional dialogues, participants may have a good deal of shared

knowledge or background information. Therefore, the familiarity of the interlocutors will produce dialogues with more assumptions, implications and other meanings hidden between the lines. In dialogues between participants who are unfamiliar with each other, references and meanings have to be made more explicit to ensure effective comprehension. When such references are not explicit, misunderstandings may easily occur.

Dialogue practice also provides a useful change of focus away from teacher-led classroom interaction. Dialogues can be performed, as it is often the case, between two or more students or between the teacher and a student. Thornbury (2005) also explained that the dialogue which is performed by the teacher and a selected student is a useful way of demonstrating to the rest of the class how subsequent student-student pair work is to be performed. For example, the teacher can ask a volunteer student to read aloud one of the roles of a dialogue that he provides, while the teacher takes the other role. The teacher could also set up a situation, take one role himself, and with a volunteer student, improvise a dialogue before the rest of the class does in pairs. This is a useful way that can be used to assess students' speaking development and their level of fluency. Practising dialogues is an effective way of providing conditions for the assimilation of newly encountered language features as well as detecting students' weaknesses in some other features. Equivalence should be established, however, between security and challenge.

2.3.2.4. Role-plays

One way of varying tasks used for improving and assessing the speaking skill is that of role plays in which a number of contexts is provided to the students. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996, p.85), role plays provide a context or a situation in which students are tempted to play distinct roles and are asked to speak through these roles. The aim behind such dramatic technique is that the students simulate a real-life situation or encounter. Although an

inarticulate student who does not play his part appropriately may destroy the framework of the role play, such drama techniques enjoy numerous advantages that make them worth implementing.

In addition to that, Forrest (1992; as cited in O'Malley and Pierce, 1996) encouraged teachers to use role-playing in the classroom because they are authentic and involving language use in interactive contexts. They provide a format for using elements of real-life conversation such as repetitions, interruptions, hesitations, distractions, changes of topic, facial expressions and gestures. Harmer (2007) added that role plays are fun, and thus motivating for the learners. They also allow hesitant students to be more forthright in their opinions and behaviours, without having to take responsibility for what they say the way they do when they are speaking for themselves. Furthermore, they give the learners a chance to practise a wider range of registers than are available in the classroom; for example, situations involving interactions with total strangers. Thus, students are taught and can be assessed at the same time.

2.3.2.5. Conversations

Thornbury (2005, p.105) referred to conversation, also known as "chat", as "casual talk" that is primarily interpersonal. The development of conversational skills in L1 acquisition, as Thornbury (2005) noted, has been found to precede the development of language itself because language learning evolves out of learning how to carry on with conversations. In other words, conversation is an essential means through which learning occurs. Another reason why conversation is valuable lies in the fact that many SL/FL learners feel that their most urgent need is to develop conversational competence, and they regularly choose conversation as their principal objective when answering needs analysis surveys. Thornbury (2005, p.106) also argued that "genuine conversational interactions

cannot be the outcome of planned lesson agendas; they have to emerge, and so, by definition, cannot be planned". One way that the teacher could handle such teaching situation, he suggested, is to organise conversation classes around a set of themes.

Thornbury (2005) mentioned that a pre-planned lesson content could take the form of teaching useful conversational formulas and routines, such as how to open and close conversations, how to interrupt, change the subject and ask for clarification. The focus may also be on the teaching of communication strategies, such as paraphrasing and the use of hesitation markers and gestures. This content can be used as criteria to test the students' speaking skill during a conversation.

2.3.3. The Importance of Students' Perceptions in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Oral Instruction

Although students' perceptions in evaluating teaching efficacy can play a very important role in the enhancement of this latter, there appears to be a negligence in what concerns the adoption of this method. According to Brown (2015), even though teachers' and students' personal beliefs regarding teaching may not be corroborated by experimental or scientific evidence, there seems to be a powerful relationship between previous experience and the development of notions relative to teaching and learning. To put it differently, even if students' and teachers' evaluation of instruction may not be taken seriously, it can be stated that there exists a relationship between both evaluations that helps in improving the teaching-learning experience. Additionally, despite the fact that teachers' beliefs that structures may be extremely resistant to change, Richardson (1996) argued that change can indeed occur. This case, a good kind of change that improves the teaching-learning process.

Furthermore, it is important in improving teaching, student learning, and student achievement to develop a firm understanding of students' beliefs and perceptions. Williams and Burden (1997) claimed that "learners' perceptions and interpretations . . . have been found to have the greatest influence on achievement" (p. 98). Not surprisingly, they maintain that in some cases students' perceptions of teacher behaviours do not correspond with teachers' intentions (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Conclusion

Students' perceptions in evaluating the effectiveness of oral instruction are of utmost importance in the improvement of SL/FL teaching. Identifying these perceptions should be taken into consideration for the sake of adapting teaching programmes to go hand in hand with learners' needs and interests.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Data Analysis

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Introduction

Unlike the previous chapters which entail a review of the literature about teaching the speaking skill and evaluating the effectiveness of instruction, this present chapter is devoted to the practical part. More specifically, it deals with methodology. It starts with a restatement of the research questions. Then, it explains the research tool used in this study and presents description of the population, analysis, and interpretation of the results.

3.1. General Design of the Study

It is of note importance to restate the research questions of this research that mainly aims at answering the following questions:

- How do the students self-assess their speaking abilities as a result of receiving four years of oral instruction?
- What are the perceptions of Master One students towards the effectiveness of oral instruction in the development of the speaking skill in the whole English curriculum?
- What factors hinder the students' development of their speaking skill?

For the sake of answering the aforementioned questions, the researcher opted for one research tool to be used: a questionnaire which was administered to EFL learners.

3.2. Students' Questionnaire

3.2.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire which is a quantitative research tool used to collect data in a form of statistical numbers is used because it is the most appropriate tool for gathering data from a large sample, and it is easy to be administered. Moreover, it is a suitable tool for finding out what people think of a certain phenomenon. The questions employed to gather data in this

questionnaire are of two types: closed (or closed-ended) and open-ended. With regard to closed questions, the respondents are enquired to opt for 'yes' or 'no' answers, on the one hand, or they are asked to pick up the right choice amongst others that best suits their opinions. Open-ended questions do not restrict the informants with any choice. They are asked to let the respondents free in expressing their opinions (Dornyei, 2003).

The questionnaire is made up of 30 questions (Qs) presented in four sections: general information, teaching the speaking skill, assessing the speaking skill, and EFL learners. Particularly, the first section, which entails three (3) questions, is concerned with learners' opinions about their level in English. Then, the second section, which is entitled teaching the speaking skill, is composed of ten (10) questions. It seeks to gather information about the students' opinions of how the speaking skill is taught and what the techniques that the teachers use are. Additionally, it aims at finding out learners' views about the good qualities that a good oral expression teacher should possess. Also, students were probed about their points of view about the usefulness of the techniques used in teaching speaking. Then, the third section in turn encompasses thirteen (13) questions. It revolves around assessing the students' speaking skill. Primarily, students were asked about the difficulties encountered while speaking and about the important aspects of speaking that should be focused upon. To add, they were enquired about the kind of test they prefer to take in oral expression course. The last section is made up of four (4) questions. It seeks to delve more deeply into the topic of the research by revealing students' perceptions of the effectiveness of oral instruction in the English curriculum.

3.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered on the 28th of May to seventy (70) first year Master EFL students at Mohammed Seddik- Ben Yehia University, Jijel. The reason behind selecting this exact number of students is because it represents half of the population of first year

Master students. The respondents were given some time to answer, and then they handed the questionnaire to the researcher on the spot. While answering, the researcher explained to the participants that they should take into consideration that the questions in the questionnaire deal with the whole four years of oral instruction they received. Expectedly, out of 70 students, only 62 students returned it back full with answers; the rest returned it empty.

3.2.3. Description of the Population

The major aim behind selecting first year English Master Students and not the other levels is due to the fact that they have spent more years studying English at University than the others. Furthermore, being first year master students means that they have finished the whole curriculum of the oral expression course. In addition, since it is a study that examines students' past experiences in the aforementioned course and its outcomes adding the fact that these learners are taught to be future teachers, the selected population is most suitable to reflect upon their views about how effective the oral instruction in the whole curriculum in developing the speaking skill.

3.2.4. Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Q1: How many years have you been studying English?

Table 3.1

Years Spent Learning English

Numbers of Years	Participants	Percentage (%)
11	53	85
12	9	15
Total	62	100

In the very first question students are asked about the number of years they have spent learning English. It aims at discovering how experienced the students are in learning English in general. The results can be grouped into two classes. Table 3.1. shows that the vast majority of the informants (85%) spent 11 years and the rest spent 12 years studying English.

Q2: How do you consider your level in English in general?

Table 3.2

Students' Level in English

Options	Participants	%
a. Very good	5	9
b. Good	25	40
c. Average	29	47
d. Less than average	3	4
e. Weak	00	00
Total	62	100

The second question deals with students' views about their level in English. It chiefly aims at knowing students' current level in English after having received 11 to 12 years of instruction. As it can be noticed from the table above, about half of the respondents (47%) opted for "average", less than half (40%) considered themselves as having good level, only 9% said that they are very good. Expectedly, a very low percentage chose "less than average" as their answer.

Q3: Why do you learn English?

Table 3.3

Reasons for Learning English

Options	Participants	%
a. To get a university degree	8	13
b. To improve your English communication	25	40
c. Because English is a lingua franca	10	16
d. A+B	13	21
e. A+C	6	10
Total	62	100

This question seeks to know why students want to learn English. The aim behind asking this question is to find out the number of learners opting for “to improve your English communication”. Based on the students’ replies, 40% of the students said that they want to improve their communication in English. This implies their desire to reach a level of proficiency that enables them to communicate effectively. For 13%, getting a university degree was their choice. Others (16%) stated that because English is a lingua franca, they want to learn it. In addition, thirteen students (21%) claimed that they learn English for both getting a diploma and enhancing their communication in that foreign language. The remaining students opted for two reasons (a+c). Hence, it can be said that more than half of the informants 61% (40%+21%) pointed that their goals behind opting for learning English at university are either communication purposes alone or associated with another reason.

Section Two: Teaching the Speaking Skill

Q4: What skills do you want to enhance more?

Table 3.4

Students' Most Favourable Skill

Options	Participants	%
a. Listening	4	7
b. Speaking	40	64
c. Reading	00	00
d. Writing	4	7
e. A+B	8	13
f. B+D	6	9
Total	62	100

The targeted learners were demanded to mention the skill that they want to enhance more. It aims to discover the number of learners they would like speaking to be their choice compared with the other skills. From the observation of the table above, 40 students (64%) preferred speaking, equal percentages (7%) admitted that listening and writing to be their favourite skill. Surprisingly, no one opted for reading. One may say it is due to its passive nature and lack of motivation when it comes to this skill. Yet, a limited number of them 22% (13%+9%) stated that they favour two skills at the time. Accordingly, an overwhelming majority of learners chose "speaking" alone or associated with another choice. This is maybe because they prefer to express their thoughts through words.

Students were not only asked to tick for a choice but also to provide a justification. Therefore, their justifications will be listed in what follows:

- Those who selected "speaking skill" 64% provided the following as their reasons:
 - Communication purposes and social interaction.
 - Improving students' level in speaking.

- Expressing one's thoughts and beliefs.
- Mastering speaking leads to mastering other skills.
- Reaching native-like pronunciation.
- Those who ticked for "writing skill" 7% argued that:
 - Mastering the writing skill leads to building the ability to express their thoughts in writing without difficulties.
 - Mastering the writing skill helps in scoring better in other modules.
- Learners who chose "the listening skill" 7% justified their answers with the following argument:
 - Developing the listening skill is very important in understanding speakers of the English language community, especially native speakers.
- The participants who opted for combining two skills together "speaking and listening" 13% argued with the following:
 - The best way to gain fluency and to develop students' language ability is through speaking and listening integrated together.
- The remaining learners 7% who opted for "listening and writing" justified their answer with:
 - Having good writing and listening skills will benefit the learners in their educational career because "writing" is presented in every module and in the exams as well, and "listening" is a must when taking notes or when taking listening tests.

Q5: How often do you have the chance to speak in the classroom?

Table 3.5

Frequency of Students' Participation in the Classroom

Options	Participants	%
a. Always	9	14.5
b. Often	18	29
c. Sometimes	35	56.5
d. Rarely	00	00
e. Never	00	00
Total	62	100

As far question five is concerned, it particularly aims at revealing how often students participate in classroom to know if they are active participants or not. A significant number of participants (56.5 %) ticked for “sometimes”, followed by 29% who, in turn, opted for “often”, and no one opted for “rarely” and “never”. Surprisingly, only 14.5% ticked for “always”. As it can be noticed from the table, most of them did not show a strong will to be active learners, nor they have the will to leave their print in the learning experience. From the above mentioned results, a possible explanation may be that of the students are not motivated enough to participate in class due to the traditional methods employed.

Q6: Which skill is given more importance by the oral expression teacher(s)?

Table 3.6

The Most Focused upon Skill by the Teacher

Options	Participants	%
a. Listening	7	11
b. Speaking	55	89
Total	62	100

This question at hand was addressed to ask the students about the most emphasized upon skill by the teacher in oral sessions. The results obtained show that the overwhelming majority of students (89%) claimed that speaking is the most accentuated upon skill from the part of the teachers, while only 11% chose listening.

Q7: Do you think that the time allocated to oral expression course is sufficient?

Table 3.7

Students' Views about Sufficiency of the Time Allocated to Oral Expression Course

Options	Participants	%
Yes	6	10
No	56	90
Total	62	100

This question was administered to reveal students' stances on whether the time allocated to oral expression course is enough or not. Interestingly, more than three quarters of learners (90%) answered "yes" while the others 10% responded "no". This means that the overwhelming majority of the learners thought that the time allocated for oral expression module is not sufficient. It is worth mentioning that the learners were asked to justify their choices. First and foremost, light should be cast on those who said "no" because, expectedly, they represent the vast majority of the respondents. Also, it should be stated that seven students did not give their explanations.

- Those who said "no", their justifications are shown below:
 - Sometimes discussions get more interesting but, unfortunately, one hour and a half is not at all enough to give the opportunity for all the students to express themselves or even to hear one another.

- Oral expression course allocated time is not enough to cover all aspects that the learners need to develop and the skills they should master.
- For the sake of preparing the students to communicate in real life situations, more time for practice is needed.
- For those who ticked “yes” as their choice, their justification is stated in what follows:
 - The time specified for oral expression course is sufficient if the teacher knows how to divide tasks and control the learners.

Q8: what are the kinds of activities that are often designed by the teacher?

Table 3.8

Kinds of Activities Designed by the Teacher

Options	Participants	%
a. Listening activities	6	10
b. Speaking activities	29	47
c. Both	27	43
Total	62	100

The above question was addressed to students in order to find out the kind of activities mostly focused upon by teachers. Nearly half of the respondents stated that speaking activities are highly utilized by teachers; however, some others represented by 10% said that listening activities are much emphasized. Additionally, the remaining 43% claimed that there has been a variation between the two kinds of activities. One can explain the different answers given by students to the fact that students belong to different groups and have been received different instructions.

Q9: What are the most presented activities in oral sessions?

Table 3.9

The Most Presented Activities in Oral Sessions

Options	Participants	%
a. Role plays	6	9
b. Discussions	37	60
c. Reports	00	00
d. Dialogues	2	3
e. Others	6	9
f. A+B	11	18
Total	62	100

In (Q9), students were inquired into the most commonly used activities. This option “b” (discussions) was highly chosen with a percentage of 60%. Other options namely ‘a’ (role plays) and “d” (dialogues) were not highly considered (9% and 3%, respectively). Option ‘c’ (reports) received null responses. Eleven other students (18%) did not restrict themselves to one choice, but rather they ticked “a+b”. Hence, the vast majority (78%) (60%+18%) pointed out that their teachers use discussions, be it alone or coupled with other choices. Importantly, six other students opted for other activities. Nevertheless, only two of them provided examples (games and presentations). One can conclude that teachers do not really vary the activities they employ in the classroom maybe due to the lack of time devoted to oral sessions they resort to just focusing on one kind of activities and neglecting others.

Q10: Do you think that these activities enhance the speaking skill?

Table 3.10

Students' Opinions about the Positive Effect of Activities on the Speaking Skill

Options	Participants	%
a. Very much	12	19
b. Much	33	54
c. Little	17	27
d. Not at all	00	00
Total	62	100

In so far this question is concerned, its main aim is to discover students' stances about the effectiveness of activities used in classroom on their speaking skill. More than half of the respondents (54%) opted for "much", more than a quarter (27%) opted for "little", the rest (19%) claimed that these activities affects very much their speaking skill. No one (0%) agreed that these activities have no positive effects on the speaking skill. One can draw the conclusion that the foregoing activities have the potential of influencing the student speaking skill in a positive way.

Q11: Do you prefer:

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

Table 3.11

Students' Preferences of Kinds of Grouping

Options	Participants	%
a. Group work	40	65
b. Individual work	8	13
b. Pair work	14	22
Total	62	100

According to (Q11), students were probed into the kinds of grouping they prefer. The results reveal that the majority show that they are for group work. Fourteen students (22%) opted for "pair work". One can say that the results can be referred to students' awareness of the advantages of working with other peer(s) on the speaking skill. This goes hand in hand with Vygotskian theory (Vygotsky, 1978). However, eight students (13%) mentioned that they prefer to work individually. This may be because of psychological factors (see chapter one). The students, concerning this question, were demanded to justify their answers. However, four of them did not provide any explanation

- Those who claimed that "group work" 65% is their preference argue that:
 - Group work gives opportunities for the learners, together, to collect as much data as possible about the topic or the task at hand
 - Group work enables students to exchange their ideas and to learn from each other's mistakes.
 - Interaction between peers in a group is important in enhancing their speaking skill.
 - Students' motivation will be boosted when working in groups; more freedom will be achieved and more self-confidence will be built.
- Justifications of those who are in favour of "pair work" 22% are mentioned below:
 - Pair work enables the students to be more focused on getting the work done. In contrast to group work, the students may get confused on what to do.
 - Pair work gives the opportunity for the learners to exchange ideas more accurately especially if the other partner is a friend.
- The rest of the participants selected "individual work" as their preference. Their justifications behind this choice are the following:

- Working individually gives the chance to students to work freely with what they consider important without getting confused by others.
- Working individually offers the opportunity to learners to rely on themselves and to accomplish the task at hand independently.

Q12: How do you consider the role of the teacher in oral expression module?

Table 3.12

Students' Opinions of Oral Expression Teacher's Role

Options	Participants	%
a. Controller	26	42
b. Assessor	8	14
c. Organizer	15	25
d. Prompter	00	00
e. Resource	3	4
f. A+B	2	3
g. C+D	3	4
h. B+C	4	7
Total	62	100

In (Q 12), students' were asked about their views of the role of oral expression teacher. A considerable number of students 42% ticked the first choice "controller", a quarter of them chose "organizer", only few students selected an "assessor" and a "resource" (14% and 4%, respectively). The others 14% are very dispersed, giving two choices.

Q13: Who does most of the talk in oral expression sessions?

Table 3.13

Frequency of Student/ Teacher Dominance in the Classroom

Options	Participants	%
a. Teacher	25	40
b. Student	37	60
Total	62	100

In this question, students were asked about who talks the most in oral expression sessions. From the results shown above, thirty seven students (60%) stated that most of the talk is done by the students themselves while twenty five of them (40%) admitted that it is the teacher who does most of the talk in oral session classes.

Section Three: Assessing the Speaking Skill

Q14: Do you think speaking in English is easy?

Table 3.14

Students' Attitudes towards Speaking in English

Options	Participants	%
Yes	25	40
No	37	60
Total	62	100

This question was addressed to know students' perceptions about speaking in English. The results obtained in the table above show that more than half of the students (60%) stated that speaking in English is not easy. The rest of the respondents (40%) claimed that to them, speaking is easy. This may possibly be because of lack of self-confidence and vocabulary and fear of making mistakes.

Q15: If your previous answer is 'yes', is it because:

- a. The teacher is comfortable to talk with?
- b. The classroom environment is relaxing?
- c. The activities are varied and motivating?

Table 3.15

Factors leading to Easiness in Speaking English

Options	Participants	%
A	6	24
B	9	36
C	4	16
A+B	4	16
A+C	2	8
Total	25	100

This question is a follow-up to question one in the sense that students whose responses were “yes” in the latter were required to answer the former. Therefore, this question mainly seeks to find out their attitudes towards some factors that ease the process of speaking in English. As it can be shown in the table, nine students (36%) opted for “the teacher is comfortable to talk with”, six students (24%) chose “the classroom environment is relaxing”, and four students (16%) opted for “the activities are varied and motivating”. Also, a percentage of 24% of students ticked for two choices “the teacher is comfortable to talk with and the classroom environment is relaxing” or “the classroom environment is relaxing and the activities are varied and motivating”.

Q16: Do you encounter difficulties when speaking in oral tasks?

Table 3.16

Difficulties Encountering Students in Oral Tasks

Options	Participants	%
Yes	43	69
No	19	31
Total	62	100

The question at hand was asked for a better understanding of whether learners face any difficulties when speaking in oral tasks or not. It is apparent from the above table that more than half of the number of learners (69%) ensured that they do encounter difficulties concerning this matter while the rest of them (31%) claimed that they do not face troubles whenever they speak in oral tasks.

Q17: If your previous answer is 'yes', is it because of:

- a. Fear of making grammatical mistakes?
- b. Fear of making pronunciation mistakes?
- c. Lack of self confidence?
- d. Fear of teacher's negative feedback?

Table 3.17

Reasons behind Finding Difficulty while Speaking in Oral Tasks

Options	Participants	%
A	6	14
B	4	9
C	6	14
D	5	12
A+B	7	16.5
A+C	4	9
B+C	7	16.5
C+D	4	9
Total	43	100

Question four above is a follow-up to question three. This means that only students who answered with “yes” in the former question were asked to answer the latter. Thus, this question aims at discovering the factors that pose a problem for students when it comes to speaking in oral activities. From the table, it can be noticed that an equal percentage of 14% was distributed between “fear of making grammatical mistakes” and “lack of self confidence”. Relatively, some of the respondents (12%) opted for “fear of teacher’s negative feedback” while others (9%) opted for “fear of making pronunciation mistakes”. The rest of the students (51%) selected two choices as their answer. An equal percentage of 16.5% ticked for “fear of making pronunciation mistakes” with another choice. Similarly, 18% of the students chose “lack of self-confidence” associated with another option.

Q18: According to you, what are the aspects that you find difficulties in?

Table 3.18

Aspects that Pose Difficulties for Students

Options	Participants	%
a. Vocabulary	29	47
b. Grammar	12	20
c. Pronunciation	7	11
d. Others	7	11
e. A+C	7	11
Total	62	100

The targeted learners were asked to choose which aspect does pose difficulty for them. According to the results obtained in the table above, twenty nine students (47%) said that “vocabulary” is the most difficult aspect for them while twelve students stated that the difficulty appears to be in “grammar”. Additionally, only seven students (11%) admitted that “pronunciation” is the aspect that causes trouble for them. Notably, 14% of the students, opted for other choices. Half of them ticked for “vocabulary and pronunciation” together while the other half mentioned other aspects.

Q19: According to you, which of the following deserves more attention?

Table 3.19

Students' Attitudes towards Aspects that should be focused upon

Options	Participants	%
a. Fluency	17	28
b. Accuracy	7	11
c. Both	38	61
Total	62	100

The question at hand was designed to ask students about their attitudes towards the aspects that deserve to have more attention. The results obtained are shown in table 3.19. More than half of the respondents believed that both aspects “fluency and accuracy” should deserve equal attention while a percentage of 28% of students claimed that “fluency” is the aspect that more focus should be drawn upon. Relatively, only seven students (11%) opted for “accuracy” as their choice.

Q20: Do you think you are able to express your ideas fluently in English?

Table 3.20

Students' Opinions about their Fluency in English

Options	Participants	%
Yes	20	32
No	42	68
Total	62	100

As far as this question is regarded, the students were probed about their stances in what concerns their fluency in English. Surprisingly, more than half of the students (68%) held negative attitudes in regard to their level of fluency. In other words, they do not consider themselves as fluent speakers of English. Moreover, only a percentage of 32% of students considered themselves as fluent speakers.

Q21: Which type of tests do you prefer to have in oral expression exam?

Table 3.21

Students' Preferences about Kinds of Tests they should Undertake

Options	Participants	%
a. A listening test	7	11
b. A speaking test	55	89
Total	62	100

This question at hand aims at getting a clearer view about the participants' perceptions about whether they prefer to have a listening or a speaking test concerning oral expression module. The vast majority of the participants (89%) agreed on the view that a speaking test is far more better than a listening test while the remaining respondents stated the opposite; a listening test is their preference. A possible explanation for these results is that the students have poor listening abilities; they encounter difficulties when trying to grasp what the speakers in the audio or the video want to say. Justification was required in this question whatever the answer was.

- In regards with the students whose answer was “a speaking test” 89%, their justifications are as follows:
 - Speaking tests are better because they help the students in learning how to express themselves more effectively, hence; developing their speaking ability.
 - Speaking tests give the chance for learners to self-assess themselves and to see which level they have reached in fluency.
 - Speaking tests are more beneficial in scoring somehow acceptable marks because listening tests are boring and not motivating.
- Those who claimed their answer to be “a listening test” 11% argue that:
 - Speaking tests are intimidating and some learners feel uncomfortable with speaking and interacting with the teacher or with peers.
 - Listening tests help the students to boost their fluency and to understand other speakers of English.

Q22: How would you evaluate the speaking tests used by your teacher(s)?

Table 3.22

Students' Evaluation of the Speaking Tests Employed by Teachers

Options	Participants	%
a. Easy	13	21
b. Average	38	61
c. Difficult	11	18
d. Very difficult	00	00
Total	62	100

In regard to this question, the students were asked about their evaluation of the speaking tests designed by the teacher and how they consider them to be. The results obtained in the table above reveal that more than half of the informants (61%) scale the speaking tests as “average” while a percentage of 21% of students scale them as “easy”. The remaining students ticked for “difficult” as their choice.

Q23: What techniques does your teacher use when testing your speaking skill?

Table 3.23

Techniques Used by Teachers to Test Students' Speaking Skill

Options	Participants	%
a. Role plays	00	00
b. Improvisation	13	21
c. Presentations	32	52
d. Story re-telling	6	10
e. Others	4	6
f. A+C	7	11
Total	62	100

Concerning this question, students were demanded to mention the various techniques employed by the teacher while testing their speaking skill. This question seems to have divided the participants into different categories. As it is distributed in the table above, nearly half of the students (52%) ticked for “presentations” while 21% selected “improvisation”. Only 10% of them selected “story-retelling”. Remarkably, a percentage of 6% of them suggested other techniques (a prevalent example was “discussions”). However, the remaining students (11%) combined two choices together. Unexpectedly, none of the students ticked “role plays” as a way of testing the speaking skill. This may imply that teachers do not use role plays in testing speaking even though they do implement role plays in the process of teaching and learning. It means, there is a mismatch between testing and learning.

Q24: Are the marks obtained in your speaking tests:

- a. Bad? b. Average? c. Good?

Table 3.24

Students' Opinions about Speaking Tests' Degree of Difficulty

Options	Participants	%
a. Good	16	26
b. Average	34	55
c. Bad	12	19
Total	62	100

This question at hand was designed to get general insights about how good or bad the students consider their marks. Results illustrated in the table above reveal that “average” gained the highest percentage (55%) amongst learners while “bad” gained the lowest (19%). The rest of students (26%) opted for “good” as their choice.

Q25: Do the marks you get really reflect your level?

Table 3.25

Students' Self-satisfaction about their Marks

Options	Participants	%
a. Strongly agree	7	11
b. Agree	30	49
c. Disagree	22	36
d. Strongly disagree	3	4
Total	62	100

As far as question (12) is concerned, the question was intended to reveal students' opinions about their satisfaction in regard to the marks obtained once they are tested. As shown in the table above, the largest number of students (49%) agreed that the marks they get reflect their level while 36% disagreed with the first group. Additionally, 11% of them strongly agreed with the previously mentioned statement. Only three students (4%) opted for "strongly disagreed". One can state that the results are contradictory. About 60% answered positively (agree) whereas 40% answered negatively (disagree).

Q26: Does the feedback that you receive in your performance in different speaking tests enable you to do better in subsequent tests?

Table 3.26

Effect of Teachers' Feedback on Students' enhancement in Subsequent Tests

Options	Participants	%
Yes	37	60
No	25	40
Total	62	100

In regard to this question, the respondents were asked about their views about whether or not the feedback they receive enhance their performance in the subsequent tests. Interestingly, more than half of the learners (60%) claimed that the feedback their teachers give them during the teaching-learning process was beneficial for them in order to do better in the subsequent tests. However, less than half of the learners (40%) stated that the feedback was not beneficial for them to get more scores.

Section Four: EFL Learners

Q27: How do you judge your speaking ability as a result of the whole English Curriculum in oral expression?

Table 3.27

Students' Self-Assessment of their Speaking Ability during the Whole Programme

Options	Participants	%
a. Good	15	24
b. Average	34	55
c. Bad	13	21
Total	62	100

This question at hand mainly aims at probing into the informants' opinions about how they judge their speaking ability as a result of four years of oral instruction. From the observation of the table above, one can state that more than half of the students (34=55%) opted for "average" as their respective choice whereas 24% of the students ticked for "good". Relatively, the remaining students (13=21%) considered their speaking ability as "bad". In this question, students were asked to provide their justifications. It is worth stating that seven students did not give their explanation.

- Those who selected "good" 24% as an answer provided the following:
 - Having enough fluency that can serve the purpose of expressing oneself without fear of making mistakes.

- Acquiring many new words and vocabulary helped to improve the overall level of students in English.
- Developing the speaking skill of students through the use of some techniques that boosted learning over time.
- For those who opted for “average” 55% their justifications are the following:
 - The speaking skill of the students was not at the desired level and the curriculum role in enhancing this skill did not meet their expectations.
 - Lack of the required vocabulary sometimes causes some obstacles when students try to express themselves and their ideas clearly.
 - Lack of self-confidence when speaking with others as well as fear of making mistakes make it hard for the learners to get their message across. Consequently, these two factors hinder the process of developing the speaking ability among students.
- As far as the remaining students are concerned (21%), they argue selecting “bad” as their response as follows:
 - A difficulty when trying to express themselves is still strongly present and mistakes are still made repeatedly.
 - Teachers generally control the class and they do not focus on developing the speaking ability among their students because they still lack in aspects of vocabulary and pronunciation.

- Giving feedback to the students is scarcely employed and its usefulness is still somehow neglected.

Q28: Do you think that your speaking skill has been improved as a result of the whole English curriculum regarding oral course?

Table 3.28

Students Attitudes towards their Speaking Skill

Options	Participants	%
Yes	23	38
No	39	62
Total	62	100

This question specifically aims at discovering students' attitudes regarding the development of their speaking abilities as a result of receiving four years of oral instruction. Surprisingly, more than half of the participants (62%) hold negative attitudes towards the improvement of their speaking skill whereas less than the half (38%) responded positively. This may be because they are not satisfied with the methods used in teaching concerning this module or that they are not motivated enough to learn and take part in the teaching-learning experience.

Q29: Do you have any suggestions to improve the oral course currently in-use at the department of English, the university of Jijel?

First and foremost, the number of students that, unexpectedly, furnished the research with their answers to this question was 59 students. According to learners' answers, there has been

a variety in some suggestions and propositions to improve the currently in-use oral course curriculum in the department of English at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia.

Among these suggestions is what follows:

- Time allocated for oral expression module should be extended because the designed time for this session (one hour and a half twice a week) is not at all sufficient if the stakeholders want to improve the students' speaking ability.
- Teachers should encourage their students to interact with each other through the implementation of group and pair work in order for their speaking ability to be enhanced.
- Another suggestion in the same respect as the previous one was that teachers should motivate their students to use social networks to chat and to communicate with natives.
- In order for the speaking skill to be thoroughly developed and improved, there should be a radical modification in the distribution of students in classes in the sense that small classes should be a principle in organizing learners at the beginning of the year. Because large classes impede the learning process and attention will not be divided equally on the learners.
- Another proposition of students is represented in the implementation of varied materials and media in class for boosting students' speaking abilities. This will yield positive results because the use of authentic materials and the variation in teaching techniques motivates the learners to work harder on their speaking skills. Also, an exposure to both accents, American and British, will help because each learner has his own preferences.

- The last justification is a combination between two, extending the time allocated for the oral course and varying the techniques used for teaching in class.

Q30: Do you like to add further comments or suggestions?

In regards to this last question, twenty nine students (47%) took the time to add some comments and suggestions. They run as follows:

- Establishing reinforcement and training sessions exclusively to boost students' speaking skill will certainly benefit.
- The stakeholders should organize from time to time conferences in English language and give students the chance to participate and be in touch with more knowledgeable others in the field. This will positively reflect on the learners and their levels.
- Some training should be organized specifically for teachers on how to teach and how to manage oral expression sessions adequately so as for them to be always up-to-date to new techniques and methods concerning this domain.
- The implementation of games in oral classes will motivate learners, especially shy and anxious ones, to be active and to take part in the learning process without forgetting to mention that integrating some techniques together intrigues learners to work on developing their abilities without feeling that they are pressured.

3.2.5. Discussion of the Results

Concerning the previously mentioned results, one can extract several conclusions from them. These conclusions are based on making correlation between the participants' answers in the four sections that the questionnaire is made up of. In regard to the first section of the questionnaire, its main goal is to have an idea about the general information of the learners' aim behind studying English at the university, and how they view their overall level in this

language. Results showed that more than half of the students (61%) study English for the sake of improving their level of communication in English or for getting a university degree.

The second section of the questionnaire is devoted to “teaching the speaking skill”. Results indicated that more than half of the students (64%) have a strong desire to be successful in the speaking skill. Mainly, this is because they want to express their ideas, thoughts, and beliefs through words and to be able to communicate and interact with others fluently. Also, they believe that mastering the speaking skill leads to mastering other skills. Additionally, concerning learners' participation in class, results showed that there is a shy percentage of students who always participate while more than half of them (56%) prefer to take part in classroom participation in some times only. In other words, there is reluctance from the part of the students to be active learners and leave their prints in the session. One may say that this is because of lack of motivation and encouragement and also because of other psychological factors. In regards to the time allocated for oral expression session, the overwhelming majority of students (90%) responded negatively by stating that there is not enough time for all the students to express themselves and share their ideas with the rest of the class and for developing all aspects that these students need to develop. Moreover, more time is needed for practice speaking in order to attain an adequate level of fluency.

Furthermore, the previously mentioned results revealed that the frequently used activities in oral classes are considered to be “discussions” with a percentage of 60%. This may cause boredom among the learners if only one technique is dominating the process of teaching speaking. As a result, students will gradually lose interest in the subject matter if they are always taught in the same way. In what concerns the way tasks should be tackled inside the class, the majority of learners admitted that they prefer to work in groups or in pairs and this is for several reasons. One of them is because group work motivates the students to do more

work willingly as well as it helps them to interact with their peers and learn from each others' mistakes. Another reason is that more freedom is found in accomplishing tasks with each other rather than doing the work alone. In addition to that, students, when are asked about the role of the teacher in oral session, the highest percentage of them (42%) reported that the teacher almost all the time holds only one role which is that of a "controller" inside the class. One is inclined to deduce that students, in this way, will feel restrained and taken control over which may cause for them to be bored and less motivated to take part in the learning experience. Also, this will reduce their chances to express themselves and develop and practice their speaking skill.

The third section of this questionnaire is devoted to "self-assessing the speaking skill". More than half of the students (60%) believed that speaking in English is not easy. Consequently, the majority of them stated that they find difficulties when they try to speak in oral tasks. The most encountered difficulties are those of fear of making mistakes either in grammar or in pronunciation and those of lacking self confidence and fear of the teachers' negative feedback. Relatively, results showed that the most aspects students face trouble in once they try to speak are those of vocabulary 47% and grammar 20%. Only 32% of students stated that they can express themselves in fluent English whereas the rest (68%) said that they cannot. This means that there is still a deficiency that hinders students' development of their speaking abilities. Furthermore, in relation to learners' preference of kind of tests they want to undertake, the majority admitted that they prefer speaking tests because they help them in expressing themselves effectively. The obtained results demonstrated that this preference is due to the chance that this kind of tests gives to the students to self-assess themselves in general and to see which level of fluency they have reached. When probed about which techniques are most used to assess their speaking skill in class, learners admitted that

presentations are overly used for that matter with a percentage of 52%. Surprisingly, role plays have scored 00% which means that there is a mismatch between what is taught and what is tested taking into consideration that this former is only used in teaching speaking only and not in both (teaching and assessing).

Concerning the last section of the questionnaire, it deals with students' attitudes towards the development and the improvement of their speaking skill in relation to the effectiveness of instruction during a period of four years of studying English in oral course. According to the obtained results, more than half of the students (62%) hold unsatisfactory attitudes regarding their speaking skill as a result of the oral instruction received. Relatively, students were asked to propose some suggestions to improve this course and as a close result to improve the speaking skill of the students. Indeed, students took the time to give what they think beneficial for improving the OE sessions. First, the majority of students reported that there should be an extension of the time allocated to oral course because the currently time in use is not sufficient for the purpose of making a fruitful outcome. Another suggestion was that of the use of varied and authentic materials and different techniques in oral classes to teach speaking as well as the awareness of the importance of motivating the students to work and to interact in groups from the part of the teachers. Moreover, the use of social networks should be integrated in order to develop speaking abilities of the students and to give them more chances to practice English in real life situations. Other important suggestions were concerned with the avoidance of large classes and with the distribution of students into small numbers in regards to oral classes. This is considered important so as more attention will be given to these students and more focus will be put to satisfy their needs and interests.

Moreover, nearly half of the learners (47%) gave further comments concerning other ways on how to boost the speaking abilities of the students. First, some reinforcement and training

sessions should be exclusively established to boost students' speaking skill. Second, conferences in English should be organized from time to time in order to keep the students in touch with their teachers and the language with the condition of giving them the chance to participate. Another recommendation was that of implementing games in the teaching process with other techniques to engage shy and anxious students and to make them active participants. Finally, a suggestion was proposed about an organization of some trainings that concern teachers and that will help them in being up-to-date with the latest techniques in teaching and managing oral classes.

3.2.6. Limitations of the Study

Throughout the course of conducting this piece of research, several limitations were encountered which made it a difficult task for the researcher to accomplish the required work appropriately. One significant limitation to the researcher is time constraint. Since the official starting of the research was not at the beginning of the year, the lack of time was the biggest problem. If time allowed, the researcher would enlarge the data gathering tools from only one questionnaire to the students to a questionnaire and an interview with teachers in order for them to be included as another sample of the research. Also, a larger population of students would have certainly been involved in the research in hand to have more reliable and representative results. To add, another limitation that faced the researcher was the lack of resources needed for the topic under study. In addition to that, questionnaires have some limitations as research tools for gathering information. The first one is that the respondents may not be sincere and do not always demonstrate their real attitudes. The second one is about handing back the questionnaires; some students returned them back empty and some others did not answer some questions especially open-ended ones.

Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with gathering data about EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of oral instruction in developing their speaking skill regarding the whole curriculum. It was clearly noticed from its analysis that the majority of learners hold negative opinions about the improvement of their speaking during a period of four years of oral instruction.

Furthermore, students showed great interest in enhancing their speaking skill for communication purposes that is why teachers should play the role of facilitators and prompters to motivate their learners. Also, the results revealed that a variety of teaching techniques should be implemented and its importance in boosting students' speaking skill should be stressed.

By the end of this chapter, some suggestions and recommendations were proposed from the part of the students on the light of further developing the speaking skill.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

1. Recommendations for Teachers and Learners

The results previously mentioned in this study call for the following recommendations:

- Teachers should inform their students about the significant role of the speaking skill in the field of EFL and they should encourage them to speak even though they lack the level of proficiency that permits them to do so. Learners, on the other hand, should treat the speaking skill importantly and should see it as one of the primary goals and, thus, pay more attention to its practice outside the class in real life situations.
- Teachers have to raise their students' awareness of the importance and the great role speaking plays in expressing one's ideas and thoughts. Hence, students should not let other factors such as psychological ones interfere between them and reaching a very good level of fluency.
- Teachers are not only required to teach the academic subject matters, but they should also teach students necessary communicative and interactive skills they need to cooperate with other peers in a group work and encourage them to be active participants in the teaching-learning experience.
- Teachers should be trained to get further expertise in managing new teaching techniques and in facilitating the tasks given to the students to reach the required level of fluency in speaking because teachers are guides for the learners.
- Stakeholders (teachers, policy makers and administrators) should take into consideration learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation and use of teaching methods and techniques. Their perceptions should be used as a feedback that will help in the enhancement of the teaching-learning experience.

- EFL learners should make an effort in practicing the language outside the class to foster their speaking abilities.
- Teachers should vary the use of teaching techniques and ways of transferring the information, like: using speaking games in order for more motivation to take place in oral classes.

2. Suggestions

- To make the study more representative in investigating students' attitudes, the number of students participating in the study should be raised. Similarly, to make the findings of the study representative to the Algerian EFL learners, another study should be conducted where learners should belong to different Algerian Universities.
- It is recommended to conduct another study with different levels at the university; not only with Master one students, to see if there is a correlation between students' attitudes concerning the effectiveness of oral instruction.
- Further research may include other skills as variables of the study. This is mainly to see if the instruction in general concerning other skills has the same effect oral instruction has on learners' speaking skill. Also, to see if students' attitudes will be the same or not.

General conclusion

It is undoubtedly clear that the speaking skill plays a crucial role in nowadays communications and exchanges of information in all domains. For this reason, improving the speaking skill of foreign and second language learners has become a pressing matter. Though, this task is considered to be a very challenging one which requires considerable effort and practice from learners' part to reach an acceptable level in speaking, as it also requires employing a variety of strategies and methods from the part of teachers to facilitate its instruction which is considered to be one of the pillars of success in this skill. Moreover, in the process of developing students' skills and abilities, their perceptions about the adopted methods and programme are of crucial importance though their importance is neglected by teachers or even policy makers. Hence, the pivotal focus of this study is to explore Master students' perceptions and attitudes towards the effectiveness of oral instruction in developing their speaking skill. Consequently, this current piece of research puts the forward hypotheses that students' oral proficiency is not up to the mark due to the currently oral expression curriculum in use that lacks communicative and motivational tasks, and that learners would hold negative views towards the English curriculum employed in oral sessions if they find a deficiency in their speaking skill's development. Furthermore, the students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of oral instruction are of note importance in the process of improving their level of proficiency.

The present research work is subdivided into three foremost chapters, two of which are devoted to the literature review. The first chapter sheds light on teaching the speaking skill whereby defining this skill and clarifying its importance and how it is viewed in major teaching methods were essential. The second chapter deals with assessing the speaking skill in which types, purposes, and principles of assessment were included in addition to the various

tasks used in assessing the students' speaking skill. Whereas, the last chapter, which represents the practical part, comprises the research design of the study, data analysis, and discussion of the results.

For the sake of testing the above mentioned hypotheses, a questionnaire has been used to gather data. Questionnaires have been administered to a sample of seventy (70) first year Master students of English at Mohammed Seddik- Ben Yehia University, Jijel. Sixty two students (62) answered the questionnaire while eight (8) of them handed it back empty.

According to the findings of this study, it can be demonstrated that Algerian EFL students generally hold unfavourable attitudes regarding the effectiveness of oral instruction in improving their speaking abilities. In addition, the answers have led to the identification of the factors that influence students' participation in oral tasks. More than half of the students admitted that they face troubles whenever they participate. Among the most encountered difficulties are those related to fear of making grammatical, vocabulary, or pronunciation mistakes in addition to those related to lack of self-confidence and fear of teacher's negative feedback. These factors, in some way, make the students feel unenthusiastic to use the English language which impedes the improvement of their speaking skill. Furthermore, results revealed that a considerable number of students cannot express their ideas in fluent English which means that there is still a deficiency in learners' speaking skill development.

At the end, it can be stated that the English curriculum currently employed in oral instruction is not up to the mark. Thus, the results from students' questionnaire confirm the previously mentioned hypotheses.

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Appendix

Students' Perceptions Questionnaire

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a research work that aims at gathering information about Master one students' perceptions as a source of evaluating the effectiveness of oral instruction in developing the speaking skill. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. Please, read the questions very carefully and then put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box and complete with full statements where necessary. Your answers will be of great help for the completion of this work.

Thank you very much in advance.

Section One: General Information

1. How many years have you been studying English?

2. How do you consider your level in English in general?

a. Very good

b. Good

c. Average

d. Less than average

e. Weak

3. Why do you learn English?

a. To get a university degree

b. To improve your English communication

c. Because English is a lingua franca

Section Two: Teaching the Speaking Skill

4. Which of the following skills do you want to enhance more?

a. Listening

b. Speaking

c. Reading

d. Writing

Please, explain why.....

.....

5. How often do you have the chance to speak in the classroom?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Sometimes

d. Rarely

e. Never

6. Which skill is given more importance by the oral expression teacher?

a. Listening

b. Speaking

7. Do you think that the time allocated to oral expression course is sufficient?

a. Yes

b. No

Please, explain.....

.....

8. What are the kinds of activities that are often designed by the teacher?

- a. Listening activities
- b. Speaking activities
- c. Both

9. What are the most presented activities in oral sessions?

- a. Role-plays
- b. Discussions
- c. Reports
- d. Dialogues
- e. Others

10. Do you think that these activities enhance your speaking skill?

- a. Very much
- b. Much
- c. Little
- d. Not at all

11. Do you prefer:

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

Please, explain.....
.....

12. How do you consider the role of the teacher in oral expression module?

- a. Controller
- b. Assessor
- c. Organiser
- d. Prompter
- e. Resource

13. Who does most of the talk in oral expression session?

- a. Teacher
- b. Students

Section Three: Assessing the Speaking Skill

14. Do you think speaking in English is easy?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. If your previous answer is 'yes', it is because:

- a. The teacher is comfortable to talk with?
- b. The classroom environment is relaxing?
- c. The activities are varied and motivating?

16. Do you encounter difficulties when speaking in oral tasks?

- a. Yes
- b. No

17. If your previous answer is 'yes', is it because of:

- a. Fear of making grammatical mistakes?

b. Fear of making pronunciation mistakes?

c. Lack of self confidence?

d. Fear of teacher's negative feedback?

18. According to you, what are the aspects you find difficulties in?

a. Vocabulary

b. Grammar

c. Pronunciation

d. Others

19. According to you, which of the following deserves more attention?

a. Fluency

b. Accuracy

c. Both

20. Do you think you are able to express your ideas fluently in English?

a. Yes

b. No

21. Which type of tests do you prefer to have in oral expression exam?

a. A listening test

b. A speaking test

In each one, please justify.....

.....

22. How would you evaluate the speaking tests used by your teacher(s)?

a. Easy b. Average c. Difficult d. Very difficult

23. What techniques does your teacher use when testing your speaking skill?

a. Role-plays b. Improvisation

c. Presentations d. Story re-telling

e. Others

24. Are the marks obtained in your speaking tests:

a. Good? b. Average ? c. Bad?

25. Do the marks you get really reflect your level?

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree

d. Strongly disagree

26. Does the feedback that you receive in your performance in different speaking tests enable you to do better in subsequent tests?

a. Yes b. No

Section four: EFL Learners

27. How do you judge your speaking ability as a result of the whole English curriculum in oral expression?

a. Good

b. Average

c. Bad

Please, explain.....

Résumé

Acquérir des compétences de la parole prend une place considérable dans le parcours de l'apprentissage de la langue, sachant que, cette dernière sa visée est surtout de communiquer et pour cela notre premier but de la réalisation de cette recherche, c'est de découvrir la capacité de l'assimilation des étudiants et en même temps le degré de l'effet de cet entraînement oral dans l'amélioration des compétences langagières, ajoutant à cela, les facteurs qui influent sur les efforts fournis par les étudiants dans les travaux oraux. Dans cette perspective, ce mémoire de recherche s'appuie sur l'idée que les étudiants vont montrer des attitudes non satisfaisantes, s'ils n'ont pas constaté des améliorations dans leurs compétences à s'exprimer et que la méthode suivie dans l'enseignement présente quelques obstacles et des lacunes, dans le but de l'étude de ces deux hypothèses, une approche descriptive a été suivie, donc un certain nombre de questions a été posé à soixante-dix (70) étudiants de première année master de langue anglaise, de l'université Mohammed Seddik-Ben Yehia, Jijel, auxquelles soixante-deux(62) étudiants ont répondu , ces résultats ont montré alors que les étudiants considèrent la méthode suivie actuellement dans l'enseignement est une mesure d'expression orale négative. Finalement, l'hypothèse de cette recherche a confirmé que la méthode suivie dans l'enseignement oral, lui manque différentes activités interactives et des compétences communicatives.

ملخص

اكتساب مهارة الكلام بطلاقة قد أصبح جزءا مهما في مسار تعلم اللغة بما أن أحد أهم أهداف هذه الأخيرة هو التواصل ، ومنه، فإن الهدف الأول من إنجاز هذا البحث هو استكشاف مدى فهم الطلبة وبالتالي، مدى فاعلية التدريب الشفهي في تحسين القدرات الكلامية بالإضافة إلى العوامل التي تؤثر على مشاركة الطلبة خاصة في الأعمال الشفهية. في هذا السياق، تقوم هذه المذكرة على فرضية أن الطلبة سيبدون مواقف غير راضية إن لم يجدوا تطورا في قدراتهم على التعبير، وأن المنهج المتبع في تدريس هذا المقياس يعاني بعض العوائق ونقاط الضعف، إضافة إلى هذا، آراء الطلاب فيما يتعلق بتقييم فاعلية التدريس الشفهي تعتبر وسيلة مهمة في تطوير مستوى التعليم. بهدف دراسة هذه الفرضيات، اتبع الباحث طريقة وصفية، قدمت مجموعة أسئلة لسبعين (70) طالبا في السنة الأولى ماستر لغة انجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحي -جيجل- أجاب عليها اثنان وستون (62) طالبا. أبانت النتائج أن الطلبة يعتبرون المنهج المتبع حاليا في تدريس مقياس التعبير الشفهي غير كافي و أن نجاعة هذا المقياس محدودة. في الختام، يمكن القول أن فرضية البحث قد تأكدت وأن المنهج المتبع في التدريس الشفهي تنقصه مختلف النشاطات التفاعلية والمهارات التواصلية.

