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Department of English Language



**Implementing drama techniques to improve EFL learners' speaking skills
and oral production: An investigation on the effects of role-play activities
on first year EFL students at Jijel University**

Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Master Degree in
Language Sciences Studies

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Academic Year: 2016/ 2017

Declaration:

We hereby declare that this thesis is our original work, which we have created by ourselves.

All the literature we used is properly quoted and is listed in Bibliography.

we declare that we worked on our final master's dissertation using only cited literary sources, other information and sources in agreement with the disciplinary regulations for the Faculty of Letters and Languages at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia in Jijel and with the regulations and laws of research of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Algeria.

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Houria Bitel

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Imene Berdi

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Jijel,

Dedications

In the name of god, the most Gracious, the Most compassionate, All the Praise
is due to God alone, the Sustainer of the entire world.

This modest work is dedicated to:

To the memory of my dear brother Rachid

To my sympathetic father and thoughtful mother whose love always
strengthens my will

To my dear brothers and sisters

To my beautiful nephews and nieces

To my dear friends Imene and Rafika

All my friends whom I shared the university life with its lights and shadows

All of my teachers

Those who sincerely supported me with their prayers, kindness, and efforts

To all of you I gladly dedicate this work and these words

Thank you

Houria

In the name of god, the most Gracious, the Most compassionate, All the Praise
is due to God alone, the Sustainer of the entire world.

This modest work is dedicated to:

My mother and my father whose support and advice always accompanied and
inspired me to persevere with the hard moments

My dear grand-mother and grand-father

My sisters "**Khadidja**", "**Amel**", "**Douaa**" and my brother "**Housseem**"

My maternal aunts "**Meriem**", "**Leila**" and "**Malika**" whom always with me.

My paternal aunts "**Nour Ihouda**", "**Razika**" and "**Fatima**".

My maternal uncles "**Mohamed**", "**Djamel**", "**Brahim**", "**Samir**" without
forgetting my dear uncle "**Saleh**" may Allah have mercy on him.

My beautiful cousins "**Adem**", "**Amine**", "**Maissa**" and "**Amina**"

My dear friends "**Houria**", "**Rafika**", "**Aicha**", "**Mouhdja**", "**Nora**",
"**Hassina**", "**Hadjer**", "**Feriel**"

All my friends whom I shared the university life with its lights and shadows

All of my teachers

Those who sincerely supported me with their prayers, kindness, and efforts

To all of you I gladly dedicate this work and these words

Thank you

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Abstract:

Speaking is an essential skill that EFL/ ESL learners should master. Learners face many problems in their process of learning speaking such as fear of using the target language for communicative purposes and lack of motivation. With regard to those problems, role-play is a teaching/ learning activity which is suggested to overcome those problems. The present study investigated the effect of role-play as a classroom activity on first year EFL learners at Jijel University. This study attempted to determine whether or not using role-playing activities in language classrooms might enhance the speaking abilities of EFL learners. The research includes a students' questionnaire which was delivered to first year EFL students and a classroom observation I oral expression class. The findings of this study showed that EFL learners speaking abilities increase and develop by using Role- playing as a teaching technique.

List of abbreviations

CLTA: Communicative Language Teaching Approach

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

TL: Target Language

FL : Foreign Language

Etc: Et Cetera

i.e.: That is to Say

%: Percentage

N : Number

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General introduction

1. Background of the study:

Learning a foreign language is a difficult task for EFL students because of many factors; amongst these is the different teaching methodologies used by EFL teachers in their classrooms. Therefore, teaching methodologies affect either positively, or negatively EFL learners in their learning process.

Learners of English differ in their purpose of learning the target language. While some learners focus on acquiring writing skills; others, on the other hand, learn English in order to develop and improve their speaking skills. It is worth noting that the mastery of English as a foreign language entails only the mastery of grammar rules; however, the process also requires learning how to speak, how to use the target language, and how to interact with the native speakers.

Since speaking is one of the important EFL skills that EFL learners need to master, success in developing speaking, in EFL, relies on the mastery of accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary use. In addition, EFL teachers should give priority, when teaching speaking skills in EFL classes, to developing learners' EFL speaking abilities so as to reach proficiency. Also, they are supposed to make their classes lively and more active by including some important activities and interesting strategies so that the teaching process should not be seen stale and routine.

Interaction with others becomes stressed as a way of making the teaching process more lively and active. The use of different techniques in EFL speaking class can contribute to revive the learners 'motivation and interest to use the target language ;and thus, their speaking skills will be improved.

2. Statement of the problem:

The objective of many EFL teachers is to equip their learners with the basic skills that are necessary for them to communicate both orally and in written form when using the target language.

At the beginning of our study, we involved ourselves into interaction with first year EFL learners at Jijel University using English as a means of communication. This interaction showed that they lack communicative skills. This might be due to the teaching methodologies used by EFL teachers, in which the emphasis is put on improving EFL writing skills rather than speaking skills.

In addition, a short discussion with them about the nature of the methodologies used by their teachers in oral expression class showed that EFL classes lack some motivating techniques and activities; such as, role-playing which can make EFL learners more active and talkative in class.

3. The literature review:

Speaking is the most important skill that EFL learners have to learn, and major reason that lead them to learn foreign languages. Accordingly, EFL teachers should adapt and implement useful techniques and strategies to help EFL learners better develop their speaking abilities. In this regard, many studies and researches have conducted for the overall objective of discovering suitable learning strategies, or ESL/ EFL activities that help EFL learners master their speaking skill.

Huebner (1960) believed that “language is essentially speech, and speech is basically communication by sounds.” According to him, speaking is a skill used by someone in daily life communication whether at school or outside.

Nunan (1993) stated that the importance of speaking skill is obviously noticed regarding the role of human as social being who depend himself more on speaking rather than writing when interacting with others.

Breen (1984) stressed on the practice of interacting with others as a way of making teachers’ teaching style lively; it prevents teaching from being stale and routine. When trying new techniques, they are not necessarily entertaining new principles. Most of them shared a common theme of emphasizing verbal tasks that focused on meaning rather than language structure.

Al-Senaidi (2009) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of using role play to improve the oral fluency of Grade Four Learners' by using a series of role-plays giving situations a day before and video recorded to re-examine their performance. At the end of his research, he noticed that learners' fluency improved over the course of the four role plays. Also, learners 'produced more chunks of language as they moved through the role plays' (p.69).

Qing (2011) experimented role- play in the intermediate level and noticed that role play could increase students' intercultural awareness and develop overall communicative competence (p. 36). Accordingly, he concluded that "Adopting another's cultural role creates freedom for experimentation while it also creates a significant learning situation for the participants and for the audience" (p. 38). Furthermore, he added "Content based role-plays give students the unique opportunity to explore another culture in detail from a variety of perspectives. Speakers of English should be able to express themselves properly and understand the grammatical discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic factors for any given situation based on a higher level of communicative competence" (p. 38).

Van Ments (1983) provided some support and explanation on the benefits that accumulate from using role-play activities by stating that perceptions are formed when ones' brain codes and groups information. Comparisons and decisions can be made as people examine the way others behave in different situations.

He further stated that roles act as shorthand ways of recognizing, identifying, and labelling a set of appearances and behaviours. People form assumptions based on appearance, behaviour, and characteristic of a particular person. They predict what they will do in a given situation.

Seaton, Dell' Angelo, Spencer, & Youngblood (2007) suggested the use of role- plays to help in the development of self-awareness, self- regulation, and self-monitoring. Within the same context, a study based on the use of role- playing games in EFL classes was conducted by Merilainen (2012) in which he described the self- reported social and mental development of role- players. According to him, there are specific skills that can be gained by role- play. These are; namely, (1) modifying one's performance in light of feedback, (2) becoming a good listener, (3) showing sensitivity to social cues, (4) managing emotions in relationships, and (5) exercising assertiveness, leadership, and persuasion.(as cited in Crow and Nelson, p.1)

In their study, Karwowski and Soszynski (2008) used role- play successfully to train undergraduate education students in creativity. Also, Sileo, Prater, Lukner, Rhine, & Rude (1998) suggested role- playing activities as well as service- learning as appropriate strategies to facilitate pre- service teachers' active involvement in learning.

In their research, Svinicki & McKeachie (2011) noticed the chief advantage of using role- playing in EFL classes: EFL students become active participants rather than passive observers and; therefore, they are able to make decisions, solve problems, and react to the results of their decisions.

Dell'Olio & Donk (2007) believed that role- playing helps students make responsible autonomous choices because it provides a forum for exploring multiple ways of acting and reacting in a given situation. In this regard, Randel et al. (1992) found, in their study, that students reported more interest in role-playing when compared to traditional methods of teaching.

Liu and Ding (2009) used role- play technique to see how the students performed in groups when they were given a familiar situation to role play in. They also observed their language potency and how the errors can be corrected as well as how to give feedback to the learners for further improvement. Their observation was that if the teacher gave a familiar situation than the result would be positive and rather giving instant feedback they should be shown the video tapes with oral feedback for 'self or peer correction.'

4. The significance of the study:

The findings of this study are expected to be beneficial for EFL learners, EFL teachers and the readers. It will provide a more effective and interesting technique of learning speaking for learners. Also, it is expected to help teachers know whether or not role- play is an effective teaching classroom technique. Furthermore, this study can be used by other researchers who want to conduct researches on how to improve the learners' EFL speaking abilities.

5. The research questions and hypotheses:

In the present study, we aim to answer the following questions:

- ✚ Is role- playing an effective teaching tool that can be used for improving speaking skills?
- ✚ What are the advantages of using role- play as a technique of teaching speaking?
- ✚ Can the implementation and the use of role- playing activities improve EFL students' speaking skills?
- ✚ To what extent can learners' oral fluency be improved through participating in role- playing activities?

6. Hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that:

- ✚ If role- play is an effective teaching technique, it can contribute to improve the learner's speaking skills.
- ✚ If role- playing is a motivating learning activity, it can make EFL learners involved in the learning process.
- ✚ If the students are given the opportunities for interaction in the classroom, then their speaking skill would develop.

7. The purpose of the study:

The purpose of our study is mainly to answer the research questions. We want to research whether role-play is an effective classroom technique that improves EFL learners' speaking skills. Also, we want to find out the advantages of using role-play technique in teaching speaking. Furthermore, we want to know whether role-play is a reliable classroom activity that motivates the learners and makes the learning process more active.

8. The research methodology:

In the present research, the methodology is based on a questionnaire to be filled by first year EFL students at Jijel University, and a classroom observation that comprises short plays to be performed by EFL students. As far as the questionnaire is concerned, it is made up of twenty-seven questions and it is divided into three sections namely: personal information, the practice of speaking and oral skills, and the role of role-play activities in improving speaking skills. Concerning the classroom observation, we selected eight topics of short plays to be performed by EFL learners in their oral expression class. We have to attend the oral expression class and observe the learners' performances and discuss them concerning the development based on different criteria which are: speakability (fluency and accuracy), creativity, pronunciation and introversion vs. extroversion.

The topics of short plays that learners are asked to work on are:

- 1) Candidate in presidential elections;
- 2) Candidate in a singing competition (Arab Idol);
- 3) Mother– in-law and daughter-in-law relationship;
- 4) Disobedience to parents;
- 5) Religion vs. modernism;
- 6) Drama life vs. real life;
- 7) Fashion addiction;
- 8) Witch craft;

In the end of the classroom observation, we have to work on the findings of the study using the notes and comments we made after observing the performances. Through those findings we will come to a conclusion whether the treatment we have used (role- play) was workable and effective in enhancing and improving the learners' speaking skills or not; and thus, the correctness or the incorrectness of our hypotheses.

9. The structure of the dissertation:

Our study is organized in three chapters. The first chapter is entitled "The Use of Drama Techniques and Activities in EFL Learning". It focuses on defining drama and describing its characteristics.

Also, it identifies the integration of drama techniques in EFL teaching/ and learning within the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA) and the advantages of using drama in EFL classes.

The second chapter deals with the speaking skills and EFL learning. It provides information about the speaking skill; such as definition, elements of speaking skill, characteristics, and its importance in EFL learning. Besides, this chapter reveals the major difficulties faced by EFL learners in their speaking skill.

The third chapter is the field of investigation. It discusses the method of research, the analysis of the results of both the questionnaire and the classroom observation, and the final results

Chapter one: The use of drama techniques and activities in EFL learning

Introduction:

This chapter introduces an overview of the different drama techniques that can be used in EFL classes. Many EFL learners aim to learn English for the purpose of expressing themselves, and conveying their thoughts and ideas in meaningful communication; however, speaking becomes an obstacle that obstructs them to reach their aims. Therefore, they cannot master the speaking skill, and this problem is the purpose of suggesting drama techniques as a key method to improve learner's speaking proficiency.

Drama techniques are very helpful in the learning process because they make it more lively and active. They involve learners in different communicative situations in which they practice speaking; thus, they can develop the ability of speaking English in real conversations because the language used in the drama activities belongs to every-day life language.

It is very important to make the learning process lively and more active, and get rid of the routinely atmosphere by reviving the learner's motivation and interest. This took place by including new methods of teaching. Using drama techniques, particularly role-play, attracts the learner's interest and leads to a more developed proficiency in oral skills; students are activated and motivated to use the language once they are set in an interesting speaking environment.

Also, learners are given the chance to use the language in different contexts and talk about different topics and this can be enjoyable for them. This can lead to using the language more fluently and naturally.

1. The Character of drama:

With the aim of satisfying students' need for improved English speaking skills and effective communicative skills, EFL teachers include the use of drama techniques to enhance learners' communicative skills and achieving the required speaking proficiency.

1.1. Definition of drama:

The word drama comes from the Greek meaning "to act", "to do" or "to perform". Drama is considered as a major form of literature. It is an imitation of life in which the actors perform life experiences to the audience on stage. Drama is presented in dialogues, it is read but it needs to be performed in front of the audience.

With accordance to language teaching/learning, drama can be defined as an activity in which people are involved in an imaginary social context where they interact and communicate with one another. Drama is also used as an educational activity where learners take roles and participate in imaginary social contexts.

Holden (1982) stated that drama is “any kind of activity where learners are asked either to portray themselves or to portray someone else in an imaginary situation” (p. 1). Similarly, Hubbard (1986) defined it as “a wide range of oral activities that have an element of creativity present” (p. 317). In this context, Holden (1982) believed that “Drama is concerned with the world of ‘let’s pretend’; it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person” (p. 1).

Wessels (1987) referred to drama as a normal situation in daily life “drama is doing. Drama is being. Drama is such a normal thing. It is something that we engage in daily when faced with difficult situations. You get up in the morning with a bad headache or an attack of depression, yet you face the day and cope with other people, pretending that nothing is wrong [...] getting on with our day-to-day lives requires a series of civilized masks if we are to maintain our dignity and live in harmony with others.” (p. 7)

Courtney (1980) defined drama as “the human process whereby imaginative thought becomes action, drama is based on internal empathy and identification, and leads to external impersonation” (p. 7). In other words, it represents the world of “let’s pretend”, the act of using imagination to become someone, or something other than yourself. In addition, Slade (1958b) believed that drama is the art of doing in life, whereby one may assume various roles until he finally discovers who and what he really is (as cited in Ulldemolins, 2014, p. 6).

Also, Slade (1955a) stated that personal play, where the whole person or self is used, is obviously drama as it is typified by movement and characterization (as cited in Ulldemolins, 2014, p. 6). In this context, Courtney (1980) expressed that life is drama as humans are always acting and improvising (p. 7).

1.2. The characteristics of drama:

There are plenty of properties of drama, but the common characteristics of using drama in education are described below as follows:

- ✚ **Imagination and creativity:** both concepts of imagination and creativity are essential ingredients in drama. These are usually focused on understanding human behaviour in terms of how people feel and behave in certain situations and contexts;
- ✚ **Play:** It is a very important activity in the process of character development;
- ✚ **The social aspect of drama:** It helps the inherent qualities of the person making the effort, partly by increasing the sensitivity involved in sharing with other people and partly by determining for himself the sort of the world he wishes to life in;
- ✚ **Creative problem solving through drama:** Drama is a social activity since learners work together on problem solving through drama. They are working towards expressing their solutions.

This can be communicated to others with a finished scene which is performed and which serves as a communicating link between them and others;

 **Performance:** Dramatic activities are not always performed in front of an audience. They are sometimes a result of learners wanting to communicate their work to others.

1.3. Types of drama works:

Drama has been used for language teaching since many years. Teachers find that drama can be joined into foreign language classes effectively to accomplish communication purposes.

Drama contextualizes language in real or imagined settings inside or outside the classroom. It is a tool to amuse the learners and provide motivation to not make the learning process boring. Some studies exposed that drama activities are effective in improving communicative competence because they involve interaction among students. According to Fleming (2003a) "drama activities give the learners the opportunity to interact directly with the target language in order to acquire it by using it rather than learning it by studying it" (p. 9).

Learners while doing the dramatic activities use the target language and this helps them to acquire it unconsciously rather than learning it by study. Many studies have discussed a variety of dramatic activities such as role-play, mime, simulation, improvisation, and scripts in second or foreign language classrooms.

1.3.1. Role-play:

Role-playing is an effective tool in the EFL classroom. It encourages the exchange of knowledge and information between learners, supports team work and leadership and educates cooperation and empathy for others. Also, role-playing promotes self-esteem and enlarges confidence in using the target language. It involves being a creative and imaginary person in imagined situations and sometimes in authentic ones.

According to McCaslin (1996), "role-play involves a situation in which a setting, participants and a goal problem are described. Participants are to accomplish the task given, drawing on whatever language resources they can" (p. 12).

Makita (1995) considered role-play as a class activity which gives the students the opportunities to practice the language aspects of role-behavior, the actual roles they may need outside the classroom (p. 12). From the previous definitions, role-playing implicates spontaneous interaction of participants as they attempt to terminate a task. It is an activity in which learners should take a role that is authentic or hypothetical.

Role-plays vary from simple to complex and from structured to unstructured. There are many examples of the kinds of role-plays such as sketches, story dramatization and socio-drama. Role-play, then, gives the learners the opportunity to use language freely and creatively and also using it as a conversational resource.

1.3.2. Mime:

Drama activities comprise not only the verbal communication but also the non-verbal communication. John Dougill (1987) defined mime as “a non-verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression” (p. 13). EFL learners here do not need to use the language because they remain silent and they just perform using gestures. This technique makes the learners feel comfortable and not being afraid from using language in front of their classmates. Miming activities can be used in the classroom individually or in groups. EFL learners can read a story or an extract from a newspaper and then mime it in front of their classmates. In his article, Guadart (1990) referred to the three main ways to use mime in the classroom which are:

- 🎭 The first way to use mime in the classroom requires imagination. Learners imagine themselves in a certain physical environment and then act in mime as though they are.
- 🎭 The formal mime in which students are involved in a more formalized movement.

🎭 Learners perform the mime in groups (p. 24).

1.3.3. Simulation:

Simulation is a type of oral communication activity in drama. It is considered as a problem solving activity in which behaviour is not controlled and the learners bring their own skills, experiences, knowledge and opinions. Hyland (1993) stated that “students are given tasks to perform or problem to solve together with the necessary background information and environment in which to do it” (p. 16).

Simulation provides authentic situations for more interaction in which the learners get motivated. Authenticity and credibility are two important elements of simulation. In simulation, students tend to memorize sentences and idioms but they should be aware about their meaning. They have the opportunities to perform roles within specific situations. These situations help them practice communicative skills so as they will be able to assert themselves, express their opinions, argue, persuade other people and solve problems.

1.3.4. Improvisation:

Improvisation is a technique used by teachers to improve the students' speaking ability as well as improving their motivation to speak. It focuses on the students' ability to use the language they have acquired.

The improvisations should have a problem to solve or a goal to achieve because this enables learners to have something specific to talk about. In this dramatic strategy, learners are given roles to perform conversations or dialogues using their own words.

The first thing the teacher does is to explain the topics on a role- card, then, he divides the students into small groups. After that, students receive the role-card and start preparing to perform but they do not have much time (2-4 minutes). In improvisation there is no need for writing because the learners speak spontaneously using their own knowledge and words. Therefore, the main advantage of improvisation is the level of freedom that students are given during the whole performance. This leads to improving their self- confidence.

2. The integration of drama into foreign language teaching within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):

For many years, drama has been considered as a successful strategy in EFL learning. It is used within the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA) in which it helps learners in developing their communicative skills, especially speaking skills. Drama activities are used to achieve the main goal of CLT which is developing an effective communicative competence that allows learners to interact successfully using the target language.

2.1. A short history of the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CLT):

The communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the different approaches to language teaching in EFL/ ESL classroom. It could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio-lingual and grammar translation methods of foreign language teaching. They felt that learners were not learning natural/realistic language, as they could not communicate using appropriate social language. There was a need for authentic use of language where learners are engaged in real communicative situations.

In 1970's the emphasis switched from the mechanical practice of language patterns activities used in the audio-lingual method to activities that engaged the learner in more meaningful and authentic use of language.

Allen and Widdowson (1991) stated that "there is a need for a new approach to language teaching which will shift the focus of attention from the grammatical to the communicative properties of language, in order to show the student how the language system is used to express scientific facts and concept" (p. 123)

Communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that emphasized interaction and communication. A realistic situational context and a real practical use of the target language provide learners with the language needed in everyday situations. Hence, EFL teacher have to set up learning situations that his or her students are likely to encounter in real-life.

Many researchers have developed the theory and practice the communicative language teaching approach (Brumfit and Johnson, 1979; Nunan; Savignon, 1983). In a communicative classroom, Students do not only learn the linguistic structure and grammar rules, they have to learn also how to use the language properly to communicate in real-life situations. According to Littlewood (1981), one of the characteristic features of the communicative language teaching approach is that this approach pays a systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of the language (p. 1).

While the audio-lingual method of language teaching, which relies more on repetition and drills, the communicative approach can leave students in suspense as for the outcome of a class exercise. In addition, CLTA emphasized the communicative activities that involve the real use of language in daily real-life situations. Accordingly, real life communication in classrooms is intrinsically useful to students to encounter communicative problems they may face in real-life. In this context, Englander (2002) believed that students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics (pp. 8- 9).

According to Larsen- Freeman (1986), "we learn to communicate by communicating" (p. 131). To speak is to communicate; therefore, applying the communicative approach in the classroom helps learners become active participants. This approach comes up with activities that would promote self-training, and interaction of the group in authentic situations (Sam, 1990, as cited in Benabadji, 2007, p. 21).

Within a communicative approach classroom, the learner is personally and directly involved in the learning process. He is active, responsible and autonomous in producing the target language in situations similar to those he might encounter outside the classroom.

EFL teachers acknowledge that structures and vocabulary are important; however, learners would not be adequately prepared for communication if only grammatical items were taught. Furthermore, it is more important for learners to speak fluently, but not correctly; hence, to have good grammar knowledge without being able to use the target language to communicate and express oneself is of no use. One should assume that EFL learners must get an ability to use the language for communicative purposes even with a reasonable amount of mistakes and inaccuracies of structures and pronunciation which do not seriously impede understanding.

The Communicative Language Teaching Approach acknowledges the fact that while language learners may know the rules of language usage, they may be quite unable to actually use the language (Larsen- Freeman, 1986, p. 131). Learners are unable to communicate even though they master the basic grammatical rules.

In this regard, Johnson (1991) believed that:

Much of the very considerable momentums of present day language teaching may be seen as a response to a problem which teachers have been aware of for a long time. It is the

problem of the student who may be structurally competent, but cannot communicate appropriately.” (p. 192)

Aural practice was based on the acquisition of language structures and vocabulary for many years; but this did not help learners communicate effectively using the target language. Oral communication becomes valuable and great emphasis was put on the function of language rather than its form. That is what language is used for, rather than correct grammatical and phonological structures.

As far as real-life communication is concerned, learners are expected to reach a degree of negotiating meaning. This degree can be reached through the application of some communicative activities of fluency characteristics such as: problem solving (simulation and role- plays), topic discussion and information gap. These communicative activities create a certain dynamic creativity in the classroom since they referred to learners’ centeredness (Larsen- Freeman, 1986, as cited in Benabadji, 2006, p. 22).

According to Richards (1985), the communicative approach emphasizes the communicative competence in language learning. The goal is not to have knowledge of grammatical rules of language and how to build up the grammatical sentences.

It is also to know when, where, and to whom are these sentences used in a speech community. Moreover, the use of communicative activities within the communicative approach puts more emphasis on the language use for negotiating meaning rather than learning the language structures and forms. Yet, this does not mean that the grammar and lexis are neglected. Every time language is used, it does so to accomplish some language functions such as giving direction, asking for information, persuading or giving assurance (pp. 82- 100).

The fact of having some knowledge about the target language forms or functions is not enough for EFL learners; but, they must be able to apply this knowledge in real-life communicative situations, as Englander (2002) confirmed that “classroom activities that emphasize interaction help students to use language” (p.8).

Nunan (1989) stated that the communicative tasks used in the classroom are preferred because they involve the students in understanding, manipulating, and producing in the target language. Meanwhile, he points out that the focus is mainly on meaning rather than form (as cited in Benabadji, 2006, p. 24).

On the other hand, German and Netten (2005) stated that:

The interaction between teacher and learner or between learners within the framework of group activities makes it possible to provide many occasions to use the language learned in “authentic” context. Through an activity of interaction, the learner will then tend to

concentrate on the message he wants to transmit, which will contribute to make increasingly automatic (proceduralized) the language structures and vocabulary words use, i.e. to develop his implicit competence in L2. (p. 10)

2.2. Principles and characteristics of the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CLT):

The communicative language teaching approach (CLT) was emerged when language teaching was looking for a change. This approach was due to the failure of traditional methods and syllabus in facilitating learners' ability to use language for communication. Then, linguists attempted to find a syllabus to achieve communicative goals. CLT was a new approach which was adapted in the area of second language teaching. In this chapter, we are going to discuss the principles and characteristics of communicative language teaching approach.

2.2.1. Principles of CLT:

Doughty and Long (2003) describe CLT as a set of methodological principles. They define these principles as features that can be facilitative to second language acquisition (as cited in Douadi, 2010, p. 21).

2.2.1.1. Using tasks as an organizational principles:

This principle indicates that tasks should be used as an organizational principle. Unlike traditional methods which focus on grammar texts while organizing a syllabus, CLT attempted to develop communicative skills for better learning. Some linguists (Nunan, 1989; Long, 1985) viewed that tasks should be used as central units of a lesson plan. The employment of communicative tasks is based on the theories of language learning and acquisition.

Social interaction is the best way to learn and also to teach a foreign language because they give the learners the chance to share information and opinions with each other, they allow them to work in order to achieve goals and also they help the interlocutor in understanding the input and receive feedback.

Tasks that are presented help the learners to use grammar in meaningful contexts. Also, they involve them in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language but they should focus on meaning not only the form. These tasks should be authentic in order to prepare learners for real-life language use.

2.2.1.2. Promoting learning by doing:

Learning by doing is considered as a fundamental principle to CLT. It is based on the theory that a practical approach positively increases a learner's cognitive engagement. Doughty and Long (2003) believe that "new knowledge is better integrated into long term memory, and easier retrieved, if tied to real-world events and activities" (as cited in Douadi, 2010, p. 22). So, this principle entails that learning can be developed if it is based on authentic and real conditions of communication.

2.2.1.3. Making input rich:

The third principle stresses the importance of the input of the learners. Sanz (2005) defined input as "... the linguistic forms to which learners are exposed" (p. 207). Input is considered rich when the learners are able to hear the language from any source whether from the teacher, TV, video or from other students.

In this context, Doughty and Long (2003) state that rich input entails "realistic samples of discourse use surrounding native speaker and non- native speaker accomplishments of targeted tasks" (p. 61).

In addition, the authenticity of materials used makes the input rich. Authentic materials refer to the use of texts, photographs and videos... etc. They contain authentic language and reflect real-life language use, so as, the learner will be exposed to real language. The use of the target language in the classroom is considered as an important factor which makes the input rich.

The teacher should use the target language (TL) as a means of instruction because there is a strong emphasis on using it and it is believed that learners will gain more in the new language when the amount of input is great (Cummins and Swain 1986, as cited in Douadi, 2010, p. 23).

2.2.1.4. Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated:

The input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated. The input is meaningful when the new knowledge has a relation with the preceding knowledge of the learner. According to Ausubel (1968), the existing knowledge must be organized in such a way that the new information is easily assimilated, or “attached” to the learner’s cognitive structure (as cited in Bran, 2007, p. 16). Throughout the history of language teaching, there has been a focus on meaning rather than the form and also on developing learner ability to enable the learners to use language for communication.

Meaningfulness is a primary principle of CLT which has emerged as a reaction to audio-lingual that was criticized for repetitive drills, so the content made sense or became important and meaningful to learner. The notion of meaningful input is closely related to comprehensible one. Input cannot be meaningful unless it is comprehensible.

Lee and Van Patten (1995a) state that “the learner must be able to understand most of what the speaker(or writer) is saying if acquisition is to happen....., the learner must be able to figure out what the speaker is saying if he is to attach meaning to the speech stream coming at him”(as cited in Bran,

2007, p.16). So, in this context, the learner should have the ability to understand all what is going on around him.

Lynch viewed (2001) that successful comprehension of input is important for language learners because it is "... regarded as an important potential route to progress in the foreign language" (p. 13). Input, also needs to be elaborated. Elaboration has different meanings. It is the numerous ways that native speakers use language to make the input comprehensible to non-native speakers. Tsui (1995) put a number of devices. She states that "... native speakers use both to avoid and to repair breakdowns in communication" (p. 65). These devices are as cited below:

✚ **Confirmation check:** This device helps the interactionists to confirm that they have understood the speech. There are two strategies of confirmation check which are repetitive and paraphrasing the previous speech of the speaker;

✚ **Clarification request:** This device is used to clarify the ambiguous and the misunderstood utterances;

✚ **Repetition request:** Repetition request is used when the speaker fails to hear or to understand the speech of the previous interactionists. So, he asks him to repeat to make it clear for him;

- ✚ **Decomposition:** Decomposition means breaking up the initial question into many questions to make it simple and easier for the other speaker to understand, so as he can answer or respond to it;

- ✚ **Comprehension check:** Comprehension checks are those expressions and utterances which the teachers' use to decide whether the learners have understood the previous utterance. They are usually realized by "ok", "right" or "do you understand";

- ✚ **Self- repetition:** Self-repetition means that the speaker can repeat what did he say before without modifications or he can change and modify his speech while repeating.

2.2.1.5. promote cooperative and collaborative learning:

Cooperative and collaborative learning have long been considered as strategies which facilitate learning and make it easier for the learners to acquire the target language.

Communicative Language Teaching encourages cooperative and collaborative learning because when learners interact with each other and work together on language- learning tasks, their educational aspirations and achievements will be influenced. Also, student-student interactions help in developing social competencies and encourage the learners to take on the opinion of the others.

Harmer (2001) proposed that teachers can organize their students in different ways. Students can work as a whole class, in groups, in pairs, or individually. He further argues that whatever the way students are organized “good teachers are able to use different class groupings for different activities. While they do this, they will monitor which is more successful and for what, so that they can always seek to be more effective” (p. 22).

In these situations, the key to learning is what takes place during the interaction between the students and the teacher, and among the students themselves. Interaction involves both input and output of the learners. Accordingly, they cannot only listen to input but also they should be active participants who interact with others using the input they received before.

Learners’ interaction promotes and develops the learners’ abilities to acquire language because it gives them the opportunities to participate in less structured and more spontaneous language use. Also, in this situation, learners can rely on their own previous knowledge and interactional competencies to communicate with others. They share responsibility for learning with each other, and discuss different understandings.

Therefore, interaction helps learners to develop language learning and social skills (politeness, respect for others... etc.) that they need to operate successfully with others. Teachers have to maximize interaction in the classroom for better learning.

2.2.1.6. Focus on form:

Communicative language teaching relates both structural and functional features of language into communicative view. It emphasizes the importance of achieving a communicative goal but at the same time it does not ignore the structural side of the language. Nunan (1991) explained that "... grammar exists to enable us to "mean" and without grammar it is impossible to communicate beyond a very rudimentary level" (p. 153).

Nunan (1991) stressed the importance of grammar because with grammar we can mean what we say and write; also language will be structured in a good way that learners can acquire it easily (as cited in Douadi 2010, p. 33). There are some debates about grammar teaching. Researchers differ in the way of teaching grammar; some of them prefer to use explicit or deductive grammar while the others prefer the implicit or the inductive grammar in teaching the target language. Explicit or deductive grammar is when the teacher explains the concept or the grammatical rule and then the learners will practice it.

Richard et al. (1985) defined deductive learning as "an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules and given specific information about a language. They then apply these rules when they use the language" (as cited in Douadi, 2010, p.33). Implicit or inductive grammar is teaching grammar by urging the learners to notice and to think how the concept works.

Moreover, Richard et al. (1985), quoted in Nunan (1991), stated that "... learners are not taught grammatical or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language" (as cited in Douadi, 2010, p.33).

2.2.2. Characteristics of CLT:

Communicative language teaching is a newly adapted approach in the area of foreign language teaching. Brown (1994) defined CLT as "communicative language teaching is a unified but broadly-based theoretical position about the nature of language and language learning and teaching" (pp. 244- 5). CLT has many characteristics which make it different from the other methods. These are cited below:

- ✚ Classroom goals and tasks are concentrated on all of the components of communicative competence. They are not limited on grammatical and linguistic competence;
- ✚ The techniques of language teaching are drawing up to involve learners in the authentic, pragmatic and functional use of language;
- ✚ CLT does not focus on language forms but it focuses on the aspects of language that help the learner achieve meaningful purposes;
- ✚ Fluency and accuracy are emphasized in CLT. Fluency is considered as more important than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully involved in language use;

- ✚ In communicative classrooms, learners have to receive and produce language in different contexts that they did not work on them or practice before;
- ✚ CLT gives a great importance to the function of language and less importance to the structure;
- ✚ CLT has a great emphasis on meaning (messages that learners create and try to convey to the others and also tasks they are completing) rather than form or structure (whether language is correct or not);
- ✚ Classrooms should give the learners the opportunity for real communication and also real-life situations;
- ✚ In CLT there are some activities that help the learners provide spontaneity like role-plays, dramas simulations and drills;
- ✚ There is a focus on the four skills of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The learners should work on them from the beginning to promote its confidence in all these skills;
- ✚ CLT encourages group and pair works in problem-solving tasks in order to maximize the time allotted to each student to negotiate meaning;
- ✚ Errors are tolerated; they are seemed as natural outcome of the development of the communicative skills. Teacher should give the learners the opportunity to talk and express themselves even they make mistakes and errors then he may correct for them;
- ✚ Students who have good vocabulary and know the rules of grammar are not necessarily the best communicators but they have to be fluent and

accurate in using the target language. So, the teacher has to use communicative test to evaluate his/ her learners;

- ✚ The mother tongue or the native language of the learner has no role to play in this approach. The target language is the vehicle of communication in the classroom. The teacher's instructions are in the target language and also learners while doing the activities or tasks, they have to use only the target language;
- ✚ The teacher is the facilitator of students' learning, manager of classroom activities, and advisor during activities and 'co- communicator' engaged in the communicative activity along with the students. (Littlewood, 1981; Breen and Candlin, 1980, as cited in Breshneh, 2014, p. 442)

3. The importance of using drama in English language classes:

Many EFL teachers today have a general idea of the benefits that drama activities bring to the language learners. Drama activities provide learners with realistic situations in which they are engaged cognitively, physically and emotionally. Drama activities train learners to be ready to face the complexity of unpredictable language and behaviour they may face outside the classroom.

In this context, Drama can bridge the gap between the classroom and real- life situations by providing insights about how to face real situations. Drama provides practice of body language and facial expressions use; and offers good listening practice.

Drama activities are considered as an effective way for the acquisition of communicative competence and developing fluency.

Maley and Duff (2005) set out a list with various points defending, in general, the use of drama as a learning technique and its benefits:

- ✚ It integrates language skills in a natural way, careful listening and spontaneous verbal expression;
- ✚ It integrates verbal and non- verbal aspects of communication (physical and intellectual aspects of learning);
- ✚ It integrates both cognitive and affective domains (importance of feeling as well as thinking);
- ✚ It brings the classroom interaction to life through an intensive focus on meaning;
- ✚ It offers unequalled opportunities for catering to learner differences;
- ✚ It fosters self- awareness, awareness of others, self-esteem and confidence;
- ✚ It provides motivation through the variety of expectancy generated by the activities;
- ✚ It offers transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners;
- ✚ It encourages an open, exploratory style of learning, where creativity and the imagination are given scope to develop. Risk-taking is an essential element in effective language learning;
- ✚ It has a positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere.
- ✚ It is an enjoyable experience;

✚ It is low-resource. All you need is a roomful of human beings. (p. 2)

Other researchers discussed the ideas of Maley and Duff. Fleming (2006) and Munther (2013) insisted on the eighth point believing that by using drama in the classroom the learning method becomes learner-centered, which only operates through active cooperation of the pupils while the teacher becomes just a facilitator (as cited in Ulldemolins, 2014, p. 10).

Wilhelm (1995) added that through drama, students become part of the learning process rather than mere observers. Different authors have also focused on the sixth and tenth point of Maley and Duff, arguing that drama in has the characteristic of involving the whole person and the whole class group. (as cited in Ulldemolins, 2014, p. 10).

Drama activities emphasize the importance of cohesive group-work; therefore, it builds trust between learners. This leads to reducing stress and building self-confidence among learners. Also, drama activities encourage learners to take pride in any kind of performance work as learners have to rely on each other to produce something of value and quality. This increases their self-esteem and motivation.

Furthermore, drama develops empathy among learners, as it sensitizes them to others' thoughts, feelings and behavior because it requires them to take the role of somebody else and see the world through his perspectives.

Also, drama activities works well in mixed-abilities classes, as less challenging roles and responsibilities can be given to less competent learners; while, more competent learners can take leadership responsibility within a group work activity.

4. The advantages of using drama in English language classes:

Drama is one of the most effective techniques to teach a foreign language. In this section we will discuss the advantages of using drama in EFL classes.

4.1. Increasing students' motivation, participation, confidence and fluency in the target language:

Using drama techniques makes the learning process more lively, funny and motivating. Heldenbrand (2003) believed that “nobody has ever said the English classroom has to be serious”. The learning environment should be motivating and enjoyable for learners. The learning environment should link language experimentation and fun (p. 29). Furthermore drama helps much in facilitating the learning process and involving all learners in practicing the learned language effectively., Malley and Duff (1988) stated that: “if drama is motivating– and we believe it is- the reason may be that it draws on the entire human resources of the class and that each technique, in its own way, yields a different and unique result every time it is practiced” (p. 13).

Also, one of the greatest advantages to be gained from the use of drama is that students become more confident in their use of English by experiencing the language in operation. The student- centeredness inherent in all dramatic activities also improves students' maturity and motivation, and the physical involvement in drama along with the concept of learning language through action is an effective variation where the learner rather than the language or indeed the teacher is at the centre of the learning process.

Drama in the English language classroom is ultimately indispensable because it gives learners the chance to use their own personalities. It draws upon students' natural abilities to imitate and express themselves, and if well-handled should arouse interest and imagination. Drama encourages adaptability, fluency, and communicative competence. It puts language into context, and by giving learners experience of success in real- life situations it should arm them with confidence for tackling the world outside the classroom.

4.2. Extending emotional expressions:

Drama opens up possibilities for EFL learners for free choices and individual decisions. Therefore, it helps them to explore many aspects of the world and even their own feelings and emotion through the involvement in different situations and taking different roles.

Fleming (2003b) stated that drama allows participants to be emotionally engaged even though they are distant. i. e. it is easy to become emotionally engaged while knowing that the situation is purely fictional (as cited in Toricco, 2015, p. 11).

4.3. Developing creativity and spontaneity:

EFL students can learn a foreign language through drama by using their previous knowledge in a creative way to interact with each other and work with imagination and fantasy in different communicative contexts. Also, they learn how to immediately use the target language and face any communicative problem they may encounter while interacting with others into a particular position and situation. Generally speaking, drama activities, such as role-play, require learners being imaginary while taking different roles in different situations. The advantage of this is that it involves spontaneous actions, improvisation and it also develops social skills.

4.4. Developing learners' performance skills:

Using drama techniques in the classroom is a good vehicle for learners to develop their own performance skills. Through these techniques teachers provide learners with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills to make progress in their learning process. Also, Learners are provided with opportunities to use the learned language to communicate, share ideas and express feelings and emotions.

4.5. Developing conversational competence among foreign language learners:

The enhancement of speaking ability involves not only the acquisition of linguistic forms but also the knowledge of communication contexts, which determine both the content and manner of verbal expression. The ability to interpret and appropriately respond to non-verbal clues such as facial expressions and tones of voice also plays a part. Therefore, learners should be provided with learning environments where different forms of social interaction are simulated in order to acquaint them with a variety of linguistic forms and communication contexts.

Drama activities involve learners in interactive situations which enable them to construct knowledge which is meaningful to express their ideas, feelings and thoughts effectively. Drama enables them to learn how to use both linguistic and para-linguistic forms to express oneself.

Hymes (1966), stated that “communicative competence must include not only the linguistic form of a language but also knowledge of when, how and to whom it is appropriate to use this form” (as cited in Paulston and Bruder, 1976, p. 55).

4.6. Providing opportunities for self- expression:

Drama provides a relaxed context where learners feel free to express themselves and use their personal ways to negotiate meaning.

Maurer (1997) stated that: “students should feel that they are investigating, discovering and fiddling around with the language in question without having too much riding on the outcome” (as cited in Benabadji, 2006, p. 46).

4.7. Promoting confidence, trust, cooperation and group cohesion:

Through drama activities, learners can learn and discover together, be part of something larger than themselves and experience the support of the group. By being part of this environment students are able to take risks, build on the strengths of others and grow in confidence, making decisions and taking actions on behalf of the group.

Also, drama context allows participants to be distanced or liberated from themselves to speak and behave in role, allowing their character to voice truths and opinions that the individual may not express in daily life. Also, some introvert or shy students are more active compared to the typical classroom situations as they identify themselves with the characters being portrayed.

4.8. Fostering verbal and non- verbal communication:

Drama allows students to deal with language from a different angle. i. e. they (1) go above the words to the actions they are most likely to perform in the language, and (2) from the patterns of behaviour to the functions, including persuading, agreeing, and accepting that lie behind all languages (Maley and Duff, 1982, p. 10).

So, through drama activities, learners have the chance to communicate, even with limited language, by using non-verbal communication, such as body language, gestures and facial expressions.

Communication is not conducted only by uttering words (verbal means), it can be done through non- verbal means (gestures). Language, together with feelings and movements, provides learners with chances to participate in conversations using all means of communication including body movements. In this context, Heldenbrand (2003) stated that EFL learners “incorporate speaking with their bodies and their words” (p. 31).

4.9. Promoting EFL learners with the ability of maximum use of English:

Through drama techniques, learners are provided with the opportunity of participating in activities in which they produce the target language. Therefore, the emphasis on learning to communicate is established through the interaction between learners using the target language. Thus, through group discussion and collaborative work, learners are able to interact and produce more spoken language; they participate in oral communication, and express their ideas and feelings using the target language. They are exposed to more opportunities to practice, use and experience a wide range of speech events.

4.10. Involving learners in decision- making:

Drama activities involve students in social contexts where they are required to think, talk, manipulate concrete materials, and share viewpoints in order to arrive at decisions. They are in charge of deciding the language they can use in each situation.

4.11. Creating sensitivity and a sense of awareness:

Excessive use of drama activities in EFL classes supports student's problem solving skills, and at the same time, works to encourage an increasing awareness in how to solve issues at problems they face in their learning process. Instead of school just being a place where students are being taught and told what to think and feel, drama turns this into a deeper experience in thinking, further motivating students to question, respond, and explain what they are feeling and thinking.

4.12. Preparing learners for real life and unpredictability:

Drama activities enable EFL learners to develop the required skills to participate in conversations similar to ones they may encounter in real-life. In addition, drama helps learners to develop communication strategies which enable them to remain in the conversation and convey their message effectively and successfully avoid any conversational break-down.

5. Drama techniques used in EFL classes:

Communication or the ability to communicate effectively with other people is one of the main purposes of learning foreign languages particularly English. Teaching to communicate in real situations is somehow neglected because learners have little chances and opportunities to practice in classrooms.

To solve this problem, teachers have to provide their learners with opportunities to enhance their speaking skills. They use many drama techniques like role-plays, mime, simulation, improvisation, scriptwriting, reader's theatre, and skits to make their learners fluent speakers.

 **Role-play:** It is considered as a successful tool which aims to improve students' interaction inside classroom. It can be short and simple or very structured. This difficulty depends on the language level.

In role-play, learners should have some information about a role like a person or a job title. To present a role-play, teachers have to give the learners a little preparation time and then they meet up with other students to act out small scenes. Learners use their own ideas based on their previous knowledge.

The key feature of a role-play is that learners can take the role of anybody or they can become anyone they want for a short period of time for example they act like a doctor, a parent, a pop star, etc.

There are two types of role- plays: real- plays and surreal- plays. To deal with, real- play is that activity which is a practice for the real life or world. Materials which are used in this kind should be authentic and also realia may be brought into the classroom because it gives learners the opportunity to practice typical activities they will accomplish in their real- life. Learners perform role- plays that help them in their real-life like booking a hotel, asking for directions, ordering food in a restaurant, etc. Thanks to that kind of role- playing, learning will not face many problems in their real-life in the future because they are already practice in the classroom and have an idea about how to react and how to behave when facing the same situations.

Surreal-plays are those plays which encourage imagination. In defining surreal- play, Al- Arrishi (1994) stated that “Surreal-play should encourage an imaginative self-expression of the inner world of each student’s mind” (p. 337). Surreal- playing stimulates an expression of thoughts and feelings of the student’s mind. Learners here imagine themselves in various situations and the teachers have to give them the freedom to do what they find enjoyable.

 **Mime:** In drama activities there is not only verbal communication but also there is non-verbal communication. Miming is considered as an excellent way to enable learners practice their senses and their verbs. It is a representation of ideas through gestures and bodily movement without saying anything.

The mime is a helpful activity for learners because it makes them feel comfortable while performing in front of their classmates. They do not take into consideration whether language is correct or not. Miming activities can be used in groups or individually. Learners read a story or something else and then mimed in front of their friends.

Before starting playing this activity, the class select some actions and write out them, then the class will be divided into groups and from each group the teacher bring one student to the front of the class and another student of the team choose an action from the bag. After that, the students in the front mime the action to their teams. The first team who find the right answer wins a point. This work will be repeated until all the students mime an action.

 **Simulation:** It is considered as a drama technique which enables learners to integrate language and communicative skills with their previous knowledge. It is also a mode which intended to reflect a situation is the real-life.

In simulation, learners become participants in an event. They have roles, duties and functions within a situation involving problem-solving. In addition to that, learners can practice several communicative skills for example expressing their opinions, trying to convince other people, solving problems and analyzing situations while the teachers take the role of a facilitator.

Simulation is used because it provides chances to practice fluency and accuracy in contexts and encourages creativity and motivation. Then, using simulation in learning English as a foreign language increases learners' talking time and lowers anxiety among learners.

 **Improvisation:** It is a dramatic activity used in a language classroom. It is based on learner's creativity because no one can predict what will happen later on.

Landy (1982) defines improvisation as an unscripted, unrehearsed, spontaneous set of actions in response to minimal directions from the teacher, usually including statements of which one is, where one is, and what one is doing there. (cited in Sehibon, 2012, p.1426). So, here learners have to create a scene, speak and act without preparing it before. They can express their spontaneity freely because improvisation does not rely on a script.

Improvisation has a big role in improving learners' language communicative skills and their self-confidence. It aims to improve learner's pronunciation, reinforce grammatical structure and enhance vocabulary.

Learners, while implementing improvisation, should have a situation which is easy to act out and try to complete it with suitable facial expressions and gestures because they have freedom or much time to act and speak.

Practicing an improvisation exercise requires active and enthusiastic students who can use many skills, aware of body expressions and also respond quickly.

 **Scriptwriting:** According to Davis et al. (2012) scriptwriting is an activity in which students write their own words (and sometimes actions) to dramatize. This means that learners before performing a scene, they write what they will say then they analyze and discuss what they want to present and after that they memorize the script to transform it in a dramatic performance.

Scriptwriting can be done individually, in pairs or in groups. While using scriptwriting, learners feel comfortable because scripts are less threatening than the other drama activities because the content is provided rather than created by them.

Learners can perform their scripts when it is completed; they are not restricted by time like the other activities. Scriptwriting helps learners focus on register, fluency and vocabulary context, involves participation by all the members of the class and also developing their self-confidence.

Dougill (1985) believed that “scripts can be used in a lot of ways, such as reading comprehension, fluency practice, pronunciation, style and language analysis and vocabulary work” (as cited in Torrico , 2015, p. 22).

 **Reader's theatre:** It is a technique adopted in western educational settings. It is an oral representation of drama, prose or poetry by a number of readers. It aims to improve the reading skills of the learners.

In reader's theatre the readers read a story than transform it into a written form before performing in front of the audience. It involves characters and to take the role of a character, learners should have good pronunciation and their voice must be flexible.

Pronunciation is considered as a key component in reader's theatre because it focuses on vocal expressions and also learners have the chance to practice and repeat the play many times.

Hill, stated that "In creating RT scripts, students increase their knowledge of language structure (vocabulary, syntax and meaning), and language use (forms and functions of language use) and the meta-linguistic awareness such as the ability to talk about the language" (a cited in Sehibon , 2012, p. 1427).

Learners may face difficulties with reader's theatre especially if they are not familiar with theatre and have not big amount of vocabulary to produce their own scripts. So, the teacher should give them the opportunity to create sufficient characters by relating to the topic and try to reinforce their vocabulary and grammar.

 **Skits:** These include activities in which learners act out a scene from a textbook or a storybook to present a full theatrical production. They are varied in length and purposes. Skit activities can help in decreasing flagging interest and frustration which learners often face when learning a foreign language.

The success of learning English as a foreign language needs students, or learners' involvement and practice; so, learners should be creative, cooperate, and communicate with each other. Also, in EFL classes, motivation is considered as an important reason for the use of skits because it allows learners to participate in the new culture.

The seven drama techniques discussed above which perform various functions in foreign language teaching. It can be clearly understood that drama activities do not make any threat to foreign language learning. It is hope that foreign language teachers take into consideration these techniques to enhance the student's level in learning a foreign language whether in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar,... etc.

Conclusion:

Drama is one of the effective and successful techniques that can be used in foreign language classes to improve learners' speaking skills. Drama activities help in getting rid of the routinely atmosphere in EFL classes and making the learning process more lively and active, and brings motivation and interest to learning the target language. Furthermore, drama gives learners a chance to act out different roles and use the target language in different situation and contexts similar to real ones; this prepares learners for real-life and unpredictability. In addition, drama activities help learners developing self-confidence, self- esteem.

Chapter two: The speaking skill and EFL learning

Introduction:

Speaking is a crucial tool that humans use to share ideas and express feelings and emotions. In learning a foreign language, learners have the desire to be able to use the target languages for communicative purposes and not only to get knowledge about lexis and grammar rules. . According to Ur (1984), "Many if not most foreign language learners are interested in learning to speak" (p. 120). Therefore, the use of English is a priority of any learner. Speaking is one of the important language skills which aim to improve learners' communicative skills. So, during an EFL learning process the mastery of the speaking skill is necessary to say that a learner has mastered the language or not.

The ability to speak in a foreign language involves several components that speakers need to acquire in order to communicate effectively. For this reason, the enhancement of speaking ability involves not only the acquisition of linguistic forms, but also the knowledge of communication contexts which determine both the content and manner of verbal expression. Learners should be provided with learning environments where different forms of social interaction are simulated in order to acquaint themselves with a variety of linguistic forms and communication contexts.

The current chapter is devoted to a theoretical background about the key concepts related to the speaking skill and its elements, including the main characteristics of speaking performance, as well as demonstrating strategies and activities for effective speaking, in addition to the influence of the use of mother tongue in class.

1. The speaking skill: Definition and characteristics:

The purpose behind learning a foreign language is to speak and communicate in that language. We speak for many reasons; namely, (1) to be sociable, (2) to respond to someone else, (3) to express our feelings, (4) to convey messages, and (5) to exchange information with other people. Therefore, speaking is as an active and a productive skill which involves the ability to communicate i. e. producing and receiving information.

1.1. Definition of speaking skill:

The speaking skill can be defined in different ways. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2009), speaking is “the action of conveying information or expressing one’s feeling in speech” (p. 414).

According to Brown (1994), speaking is defined as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information” (p. 19).

In other words, speaking is one of the basic skills that must be mastered by students since it is very important for them to communicate. i. e. they exchange information to learn from each other particularly when speech is related to their studies.

Widdowson (1980) defined it as performed face to face interaction and occurs as a part of dialogues or other form of verbal exchange (p. 58).

Chaney (1998) noted that speaking is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal or non- verbal symbols in a variety of contexts” (p. 13), Florez (1999) considered speaking as “an interactive process of constructing, receiving and processing information” (p. 1).

Harmer (2001) justified that “the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on spot” (p. 69). In this respect, Harmer viewed that the speaker’s mastery of the target language is measured by how well he can use it, not only by how much he knows about i.e., to enable the speaker to be a good performer.

In addition, Chaney and Tamara (1998) described speaking as “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts” (p. 13). In the act of communication, the speaker has to select suitable expressions in order to be more fluent and which enable the receiver to form an interpretation of the intention of his message .i.e., good speaking skill is the act of generating words that can be understood by listeners and the good speaker is clear and informative.

1.2. The elements of the speaking skill:

EFL/ESL students must practice to speak English as often as possible so that they get the ability to speak English fluently and accurately. As part of that, there are a number of elements which have been put forward by Harmer (2001) in order to speak the foreign language fluently and accurately, which include the language features that the learners should know and the processes of the language and information in the same time when an interlocutor interacts with them (p. 269- 271).

1.2.1. Language features:

In order for speaking to be effective, there has to be some language features that are necessary aspects for language production. These are cited below as follows:

Connected speech:

Any speaker of English language needs to produce more connected sounds and not only separated phonemes. These sounds may be modified (assimilation), omitted (elision), added (linked) or weakened in the connected speech (through contractions and stress patterning).

Expressive devices:

English native speakers use effectively the phonological rules which refer to the pitch, stress, volume, speed with the use of non verbal means. These phonological rules enable them to convey their intended meaning.

Then EFL learners need to have this ability to use such rules or devices to be effective communicators. Harmer (2001) stated that “The use of these devices contributes to the ability to convey meanings. They allow the extra expression of emotion and intensity” (p. 269).

Lexis and grammar:

Learners often use the same lexical structures when they produce some language functions. The teacher’s role then is to provide them with different phrases which carry different functions so that they can use them in the different stages of communication with others (express agreement, disagreement, shock, surprise ...).

Negotiation language:

It is beneficial for learners who often ask for clarification when they are listening to someone else’ talks. So, the teachers have to provide them with the necessary expressions they need when they ask for clarification from other speakers. Learners also need to well perform their utterances to be understood and clear especially when they see that the other interlocutor did not understand them.

1.2.2. Mental/ social processes:

Language skill of the speaker depends on rapid mental and social processing skills as follow:

Language processing:

This refers to the ability of the speakers to process the language in their minds through putting it in a coherent order so that the other interlocutors can understand it and get the intended messages. It refers also to the ability of the speakers to retrieve words and phrases from their memories to use them while communicating with others.

Interacting with others:

Most of the speaking situations involve interaction between two or more interlocutors, an effective speaker needs to be able to listen and understand others' talk then reacts through taking turns or allowing the others to do so.

(On the spot) Information processing:

The speakers need to be able to respond to others' talk by processing the information in mind rapidly, though it is culture specific the time speaker gets information, they should be ready to respond immediately. From Harmer's point of view; the ability to wage oral communication is necessary that the participant possesses knowledge of language features and the ability to process information and language on the spot (as cited in Kadri and Sahraoui, 2015, p. 19).

1.3. The characteristics of the speaking skill

There are two major and central criteria which determine the success or failure of learners in their learning process. Accuracy and fluency are the two main concepts through which the oral skills are assessed and different activities to gain these two aspects are planned.

1.3.1. Fluency:

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 breakdown because listeners will lose their interest” (p. 14).

This definition shows that fluency and accuracy are knit together, and that fluency means getting the ability of producing the language rapidly, smoothly and accurately.

Also, Hedge (2000) stated that “The term fluency relates to production and it is normally reserved for speech. It is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness, or undue hesitation” (p. 54).

According to Skehan, fluency is the “capability to produce language in real time without undue pausing or hesitation” (as cited in Thornbury, 2000, p.3). This means that speaking fluently is the faculty of using the language spontaneously and confidently while communicating one’s thoughts, ideas or opinions in several contexts.

In addition, fluency means the ability to communicate and talk without making a lot of pauses to think too much about what to say and without worrying too much about errors (accuracy) until it becomes unnatural speech.

Richards et al (1992) pointed that fluency is: “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 use of interjections and interruptions.” (as cited in Houhou, 2013, p. 2)

1.3.2. Accuracy:

Accuracy refers to the “ability to produce grammatically correct sentences” (Richards, Schmidt, Kendricks, and Kim, 1992, p. 204).

Harmer (2001) added that “accuracy involves the correct use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation” (p. 104). In other words, to be accurate in oral production, learners should be knowledgeable and master the use of these three concepts of language: Pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

1.3.2.1. Pronunciation:

Pronunciation is the way for EFL learners to produce clearer language and be understood when they speak. Redmond and Vrchota (2007) 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” (p. 104).

To be clear and understood, learners have to concentrate on the pronunciation areas during any oral production activity. According to Florez (1999), pronunciation is concerned with: “production of sounds, stress patterns, rhythmic structures and intonation of the language” (p. 2).

In addition, before speaking students should plan and prepare their talk, practice and rehearse, learn to cope with nerves and control their body language, volume of the voice, pitch and speed of the speech.

1.3.2.2. Grammar:

According to Harmer (2001) grammar is the system of language in which the principles of that language are organized. It is generally known that a sentence needs at least a subject and a verb which can often be followed by an object, complement or by an adverbial. It is known that questions are often formed by inverting the order of subject and verb or bringing an operator for this function (as cited in Kadri and Sahraoui 2015, p. 21). This means that learners should be aware of how elements of a sentence are put and work together such as morphemes, phonemes, words, phrases, clauses... etc.

However, the grammar of speech has its own constructional principles; it is organized differently from writing. Thornbury (2005) listed the features of spoken grammar as follows:

- ✚ Frequent non-clausal units (e.g.: Mmm, No, uh, huh, yeah);
- ✚ A variety of tags not found in written style such as tag questions;
- ✚ Interjections (e.g.: ah, oh, wow...);

- ✚ Hesitators (e.g.: umm, emm);
- ✚ Condensed questions (e.g. more milk? Any luck?);
- ✚ Response forms (e.g. sure!) to acknowledge and request;
- ✚ Fixed polite speech formulate (e. g. happy birthday! Congratulations);
- ✚ Direct speech favoured. (as cited in Kadri and Sahraoui 2015, p.10)

1.3.2.3. Vocabulary:

learners should study words and know their meanings, their use, also they should be able to distinguish between words classes which are lexical ones as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or function ones as determiners, particles, prepositions...etc. Mastering vocabulary helps learners to be able to select and use the appropriate words, utterances and expressions with the context when speaking. This means that learners should study words and know their meanings, their use; also, they should be able to distinguish between words classes.

2. The types of speaking skill:

Speaking is one of the four language skills through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions. Mastering this skill is a vital element for foreign language learners due to its value in evaluating the performance and achievement of students.

The speaking skill is divided into many types such as: imitative speaking, intensive speaking, responsive speaking, interactive speaking and extensive speaking.

2.1. Imitative speaking:

Many learners, when they are exposed to authentic materials, tend to imitate native speakers, they pronounce words in the same way they heard them. This imitation, actually, helps learners and improves their speaking skill.

2.2. Intensive speaking:

It goes one step beyond imitative speaking to include any speaking performances that are designed to practice some phonological or grammatical aspects of language.

2.3. Responsive speaking:

The learners in a classroom are responsive; they reply to their teachers with short answers when they are asked or comment about a given situation. However; it cannot be extended to dialogues and their speech might be (meaningful and authentic).

2.4. Interactive speaking:

It commonly contains face to face interaction, it happens as a part of dialogue in communication, and what is said is dependent on the understanding of what the other interlocutor says, i.e. if something is said in a conversation, it must be related to what has been said previously.

2.5. Extensive speaking:

Learners in the intermediate or the advanced level are required to give oral reports, summaries or short speeches.

3. The importance of the speaking skill in EFL learning:

The main question often given to foreign language learners is *do you speak English?* But not *do you write English?* We understand that most of people take speaking and knowing a language as synonyms. Celce- Murcia (2001) argued 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” (p. 103).

3.1. The significance of the speaking skill:

There are four major language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Proficiency in each skill is necessary to become good communicator, but the ability to speak skilfully provides the speaker with several advantages.

Effective foreign language learning necessitates assimilation of all four skills, but special emphasis is put on teaching speaking. Ur (2000) declared that: “of all the four skills [listening, speaking, reading and writing], speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as “speakers of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing” (p. 12).

As defined by Karen (1994), speaking is an expressive language skill in which the speaker uses verbal symbols to communicate. So, through speaking we communicate with others, express our ideas, thoughts and feelings; and know others’ ideas as well. So, communication takes place, where there is speech. Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. Hence, the importance of speaking skill is enormous for the learners of any language.(as cited in Kaddour, 2016, p.16)

3.2. The role of the speaking skill:

As a mean of communication, language has an important role to get or to share the information. To convey the information we may use written or spoken language, but if we want to convey our ideas directly we need to speak. We can say that people are not able to comprehend the language if they cannot use the language in speaking, so it is important for people to have a good speaking ability and being able to speak a foreign language means having communicative efficiency.

It is inconceivably difficult to imagine what life would look like if people could not communicate verbally. Dakowska (2005) claimed that speaking is now the most emphasised skill in the field of foreign language teaching, speaking a foreign language means being able to interact with people in authentic situations, not only during classroom controlled speaking activities (p. 231).

Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. The importance of speaking skills; hence, is enormous for the learners of any language. Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community where people are supposed to speak correctly and effectively in-order to communicate well with one another. Any gap in communication results in misunderstandings and problems.

Through speaking activities learners are expected to interact verbally with other people. It is worth pointing out at this level that the speaking skill helps students receive a large amount of the new vocabulary through oral activities. Also, they develop grammar and improve their writing skills even. They learn to express their personal feelings, opinions or thoughts clearly and confidently in conversations and discussions.

3.3. The benefits of the speaking skill on developing EFL learning:

Speaking skill is considered as the important skill in learning a foreign language. It helps learners developing their capacities while communicating with each other or with other people. Researchers give a great focus to this skill and try to use it in foreign language classrooms to enhance communication and make learners fluent and accurate to enable them understand and interact with native speakers. The speaking skill has various benefits to help students acquire a foreign or a second language easily and appropriately.

3.3.1. Motivating EFL learners to use the target language in class:

The use of activities that involve students in situations and conversations where they have to speak and interact with each other helps much in building and developing their vocabulary. So, teaching speaking is the best way to reach the communicative proficiency and to be fluent, and being so needs tremendous efforts from both learners and teachers.

3.3.2. Developing strong communicative competence:

Getting students to practice spoken language in situations they are likely to face outside the classroom helps much in developing fluency and communicative skills. Speaking gives students the chance to use the new language they are learning and lead them to speak fluently and without difficulty. This helps to improve students' communicative skills.

Through speaking we communicate with others, express our ideas, and know others' ideas as well. So, communication takes place, where there is speech. Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. Hence, the importance of speaking skill is enormous for the learners of any language.

3.3.3. Developing critical thinking skills:

During a speaking classroom activity, students develop speaking skills and critical thinking. In such activities, students have to find various solutions to different types of problems. Some problems might have more than one solution. These activities require pair or group work throughout. In terms of language, students will have to make suggestions, give reasons, and accept, modify or reject suggestions or reasons provided by their colleagues.

3.3.4. Developing pronunciation and accuracy:

Excessive use of speaking activities in class helps students to improve their pronunciation skills. Also, it raises their awareness on the importance that intonation has when conveying a message. Thus, speaking activities are beneficial in terms of improving pronunciation skills by means of focusing on patterns such as intonation, word stress, etc.

4. Speaking difficulties in foreign language learning:

In teaching speaking, learners face many problems while acquiring a foreign language. Teachers should have an overall understanding of what speaking is and what are the difficulties that learners may face through developing their speaking skills.

Hence, there are many difficulties and obstacles that learners face in their learning of a foreign language.

4.1.1. Inhibition:

Learners are inhibited to talk or to express their ideas and opinions in front of their teachers and friends when using the target language.

Littlewood (1999) stated that “it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition anxiety” (as cited in Kouicem, 2010, p. 37). Inhibition from one side can be a result of learners’ feeling of ignorance in front of their teachers who are considered as the source of input and from the other side, it can be related to learners’ shyness and fear of making mistakes in front of the others.

So, learners become embarrassed when trying to talk and they are careful about making mistakes when they talk because of their inability to develop their communicative skills. Most of them prefer reducing their speaking time and remain silent.

4.1.2. Nothing to say:

In foreign language learning when teachers impose their learners, the common expressions they use are *I do not know*, *I do not have anything to say*, and sometimes they remain silent.

Learners use these expressions because of the lack of motivation in expressing themselves inside the classroom. Rivers stated “The teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him [the learner] or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express, whether in the native language or the foreign language” (as cited in Kouicem, 2010, p. 37). So, teachers should choose suitable topics which learners can discuss.

4.1.3. Low uneven participation:

This problem refers to the time that is given to each student to talk. Rivers claimed that “some personality factors can effect participation in FL and teachers then should recognize them” (as cited in Kouicem, 2010, p. 38). There are some students who participate and take almost the whole students’ talk time, while others prefer to remain silent and some others speak only when they confirm that what they will say is correct.

Weak participators should be put in groups to work together. In this case, they will not hide behind the strong participators and as a result a high level of participation will be achieved.

There are other factors that affect participation which are classroom arrangement that may prevent students to perform some speaking activities in a good way, and also there is the ignorance of teacher' s motivation in which the teacher does not motivate his learners and as a result there will be no interest even by the talkative students.

4.1.4. Mother tongue use:

Students of second language of the same mother tongue prefer to use their mother tongue outside and even inside the classroom because they find it easy, feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. Those learners who are influenced by the use of mother tongue will not be able to use the target language correctly.

According to Baker and Westrup (2003), “barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language” (as cited in Kouicem, 2010, p. 39). So, here when learners feel that there is a lack of vocabulary, they go directly to borrow words from their mother tongue.

5. Teaching techniques for improving oral proficiency:

In teaching a foreign language, there are many techniques and strategies that the learners should follow to improve their oral or speaking proficiency. Teachers should motivate their learners to enhance their communicative skills and to increase the level of proficiency. To do so, they can rely on the

following four techniques to improve EFL learners' oral proficiency. These techniques are; namely, group work, role-play, problem solving and discussion and debates.

5.1.1. Group work:

Group work is a technique which has been emphasized as an interactional dynamic of language classroom. It is a classroom situation where students are working in small groups. The learners can be given the chance to oral exchange through interacting with each other in the group. It is through this kind of tasks that researchers believe many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence are developed (Bright & McGregor, 1970 as cited in Boussiada, 2010 p. 17).

The aim of a group work is to involve the students in oral interactions. They ask/ answer questions; they try to find a collective solution to problems, they may agree, or disagree certain points and also they can add or propose some modifications. Through this kind of tasks, many aspects of linguistic and communicative competence are developed and students need to focus on meaningful negotiations and information exchange.

Group work has a number of advantages. It decreases the dominance of teacher's talk over the class (Mackay & Tom, 1999 p. 26), raises the opportunities for learners to practice new features of the target language and encourages collaboration among learners.

5.1.2. Role- play:

Role- play is a common activity which is used either to encourage general oral proficiency or to train learners for specific situations. It is an authentic technique because it involves language use in real interactive situations, according to Forest, “it provides a format for using element of real life conversation and communication” (as cited in Boussiada, 2010, p. 19).

Revell (1979) viewed role-play as “an individual’s spontaneous behaviour reacting to other in a hypothetical situation” (p. 16). This implies that learners perform a task spontaneously and they speak thought an unreal identity in an imagined situation.

In a role- play, learners can be offered two main choices. They can play themselves in an imaginary situation or they can be asked to play imaginary people in an imaginary situation (Byrne, as cited in Boussiada, 2010, p. 19).

Role- play as a speaking activity has many positive impacts on learners because it gives them the chance to practice their oral skills and interpretations, develops both speaking and listening skills, gives them empathy as they negotiate others’ ideas and also provides them with the opportunity to practice decision-making and problem solving.

5.1.3. Problem solving:

Problem solving has been used to group activities which require the students to find solutions to problems. Barker and Gaut (2002) defined problem solving as “A problem-solving group is a group of people who work

together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making a decision based on their findings” (p. 160).

The problem tasks range from the imaginary to the more realistic. In problem solving, students are involved in collecting information to solve a problem through oral expression and negotiation of meaning. They can be asked to solve the problem individually or collectively. Problem solving activities require that the students give reasons, make suggestions, accept, modify or reject suggestions and reasons given by others.

Problem solving can be divided into two kinds: short-term task which can be done in course of one class session for example putting items in categories and long-term task which is more time consuming and it may be done in many sessions.

5.1.4. Discussion and debates:

Discussion is one of the best ways of presenting speech and it is an interesting form of oral practice in the classroom. Harmer (1995) stated that "it can provide some of enjoyable and productive speaking in language classroom" (p. 46). Also, discussion is an exchange of ideas, opinions, arguments and points of views on a class either with the teacher or among the learners themselves. It can be said that this technique is student-directed and teacher-guided discussion (Hill and Ruptic 1949; in Byrne, 1976 cited in Boussiada, 2010, p. 22).

According to Thornbury (1998), "many teachers would agree that the best discussions in class are those that arise spontaneously either because of something personal that a learner reports or because a topic or a text in the course book triggers some debate" (p. 102).

Discussion has many advantages for second language learners. It increases comprehension levels; opportunities to improve listening skills and develop spoken language proficiency; increases participation of shy students and more time for teacher observation of students learning.

Conclusion:

Throughout this chapter, we have tried to examine some of the theoretical aspects that concern foreign language speaking skill. We have demonstrated the role of speaking skill in the process of learning and find that speaking is appropriate for learning objectives. In this chapter also, we have shown what is meant by a successful oral performance stating that it is the ability to speak freely and clearly, unashamed. However, this oral performance is somehow complex to realize and the speaking skill is difficult to practice because learners face many constraints.

Yet, foreign language teachers try to overcome these difficulties adopting a variety of techniques that feat the learners' interest, needs and level in order to enhance their speaking skills, oral proficiency, group interaction and problem solving.

Chapter three: Field of investigation

Introduction:

This chapter attempts to investigate the effects of role-play activities on EFL students speaking performance. It aims at describing the experimentation plan of research conducted in Jijel University. Moreover, this chapter deals with analyzing the results obtained from a questionnaire addressed to first year EFL students, and result of the classroom observation.

1. Description of the teaching context:

In higher education context in Algeria, particularly Jijel University, there is a growing dissatisfaction on the part of EFL teachers about the poor oral performance of first- year EFL learners because of many reasons. EFL teachers give much emphasis on the writing skill compared to the speaking skill. Therefore, students have fewer opportunities to talk and interact using the target language only in oral expression class.

Furthermore, oral expression teachers rely more on traditional ways of teaching speaking that focus basically on memorization rather than creativity and spontaneity which can take place if drama techniques; such as, role-playing, are to be implemented and used instead.

Being EFL students at the said university, we have been thought oral expression for four years, but we did not have many opportunities to use the target language in communicative tasks. Our oral activities centered only on presenting about a free topic, or summarizing chapters of books.

In our research, we suggested the integration of drama techniques, particularly role-playing; in the oral expression class to better improve EFL learners speaking skills and communicative competence by involving them as much as possible in communicative tasks where they will have use real-life language. This will help them be fluent, confident and much competent speakers.

2. Description of the participants:

We conducted our research at the department of the English language at Jijel University. The participants were first year EFL students. The participants answered a questionnaire investigating the impact of drama techniques on the speaking skills, and participated in a teaching project where they were asked to prepare and participate in a series of role-plays during their oral expression course. The reason behind choosing first year EFL students is that they are in the process of receiving basics of speaking skill and they are more excited to learn about it. Hence, they are conscious of the difficulties that hamper them to promote their speaking skill.

3. Description of the teaching project:

Our methodology to collect data was multi-faceted. First, we asked first year EFL learners at Jijel University, department of the English language, to fill out a questionnaire about drama techniques and activities, particularly role-play, before they were given a role-playing project.

After the participants in each class completed the questionnaire, we gave them a clear definition of role-play. Next, with the help of their oral expression module teacher, we gave them a role-playing project that required them to create and participate in role-plays in a form of groups. We gave them eight role-plays topics to work on and explain what each group is supposed to do in each session.

4. Description of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire was used for the sake of gathering information about the attitudes of EFL students towards the use of drama techniques in EFL classes.

The questionnaire includes three sections. The first section contains questions related to personal information about the participants. It consists of eight questions. The second section deals with the practice of speaking and oral skills; this section consists of eleven questions. The third section deals with the role of role-play activities in improving speaking skills. It consists of eight questions.

This questionnaire was given to a hundred of students, so one hundred copies were distributed but only ninety were received. The questionnaire was explained, and clear instructions were given. It is important to indicate that a certain number of students have partly answered the questions, leaving some questions and especially explanations unanswered.

4.1. Description of the questionnaire results:

Section one: Personal Information:

Eight questions are included in this section; they are about students' gender, age and the number of years that they have been studying English. The remaining questions were about learners' attitudes and opinions towards the English language and using it for speaking purposes.

Question 1: Gender:

Option	N	%
Male	19	21,11
Female	71	78,88
Total	90	100

Table1: Students' gender.

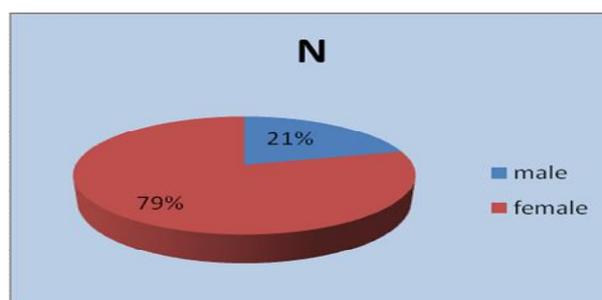


Figure1: Students' gender.

As it is shown above, the first table is about students' gender. We notice that the majority of the respondents are females (78, 88%), whereas the number of males is very few (21, 11%). So, we conclude that foreign languages and particularly English attract female learners more than males.

Question 2: Age:

Option	N	%
18-20	71	78,88
20-22	17	18,88
22-24	1	1,11
24 and up	1	1,11
Total	90	100

Table 2: Students' age.

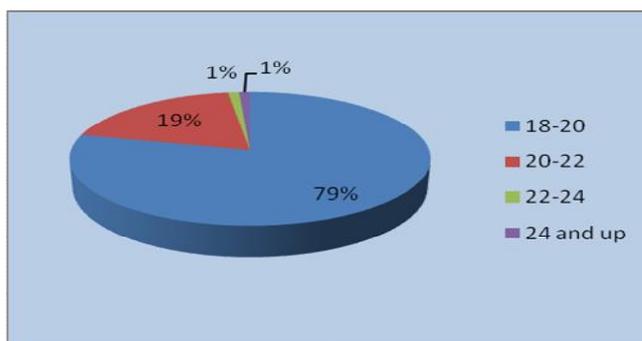


Figure 2: Students' age.

This table shows that there are four age groups in our selected sample. We have noticed that seventy- one of the total students (78, 88%) who are aged between eighteen to twenty years old represent the first rank of the students' age, seventeen students represent 18,88% of the students who are aged between twenty and twenty- two years old. However, only one student aged between twenty- two and twenty- four and also only one student aged from twenty- four and up. From these results, we noticed that the students are not at the same age; so they do not have the same abilities.

Question three: How long have you been studying English?

Option	N	%
3 years	0	0
5 years	0	0
6 years	0	0
more than 6 years	90	100
Total	90	100

Table3: Students' years of studying English.

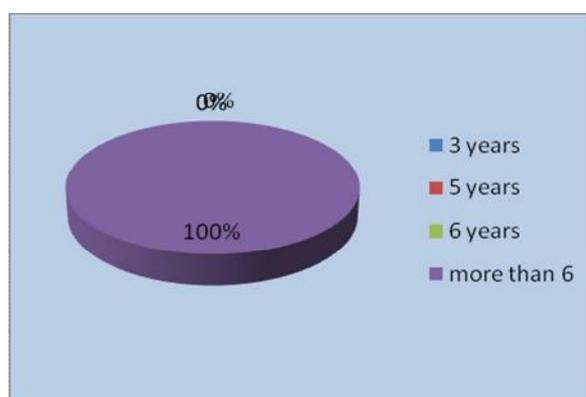


Figure3: Students' years of studying English.

As the answers shown in the table above, all the students have been studying English for more than six years (100%), which is the normal situation in Algeria, in general, for students who started learning English in the first year at the middle school at the age of eleven.

Question four: in your opinion, speaking English means:

Options	N	%
Speaking quickly and fluently like a native speaker	37	41,11
Speaking correctly using the rules of the language	53	58,88
Total	90	100

Table 4: the meaning of speaking English.

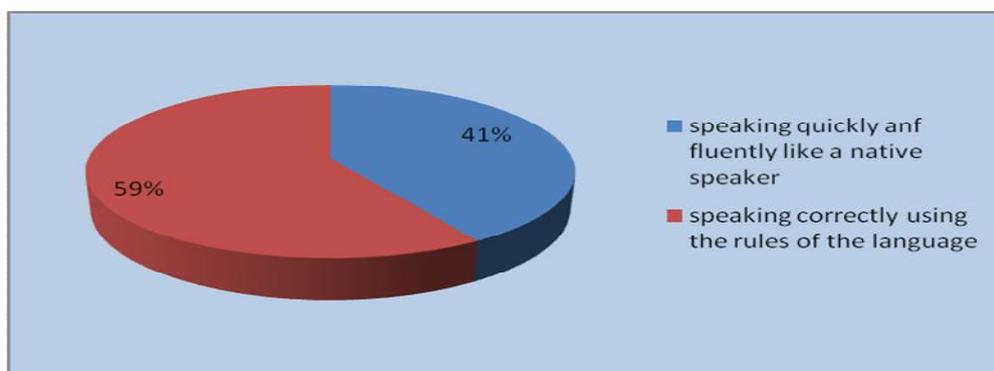


Figure4: The meaning of speaking English.

From the table above, we notice that the high number of respondents (58,88%) considers that speaking English means speaking correctly using the rules of the language, whereas (41,11%) of them prefer to speak quickly and fluently like native speakers. So, from these results we can say that the majority of students give a great importance to language rules and relate to being able to speak .

Question 5: how do you rate your level in English?

Options	N	%
Good	38	42,22
Average	33	36,66
less than average	2	2,22
I do not know	17	18,88
Total	90	100

Table 5: Students' level in English.

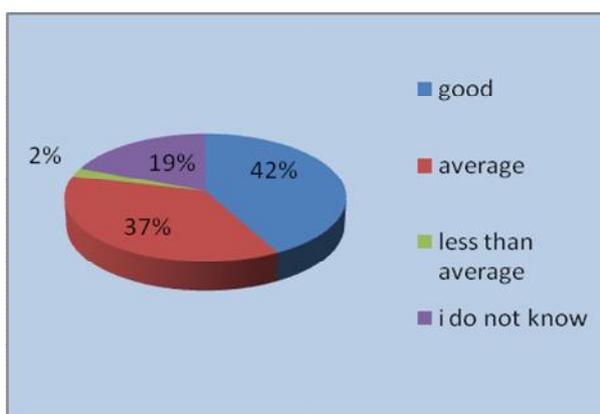


Figure 5: Students' level in English.

A quick glance at this table will show that the highest percentage of students (42, 22%) claimed that they are in a good level in English. Others (36, 66%) show that they have an average level. Also, (18, 88%) of them say that they do not know about their level. However, only (2, 22%) said that their level is less than average. Students ,then, rank their level in English between good and average coming to the conclusion that students are good in general.

Question 6: why did you choose to study English?

Options	N	%
interest in learning English	46	51,11
having no other choice	10	11,11
because my parents force me to learn English	3	3,33
because i want to understand the native speakers	10	11,11
for future career	21	23,33
Total	90	100

Table 6: Students' reason for studying English.

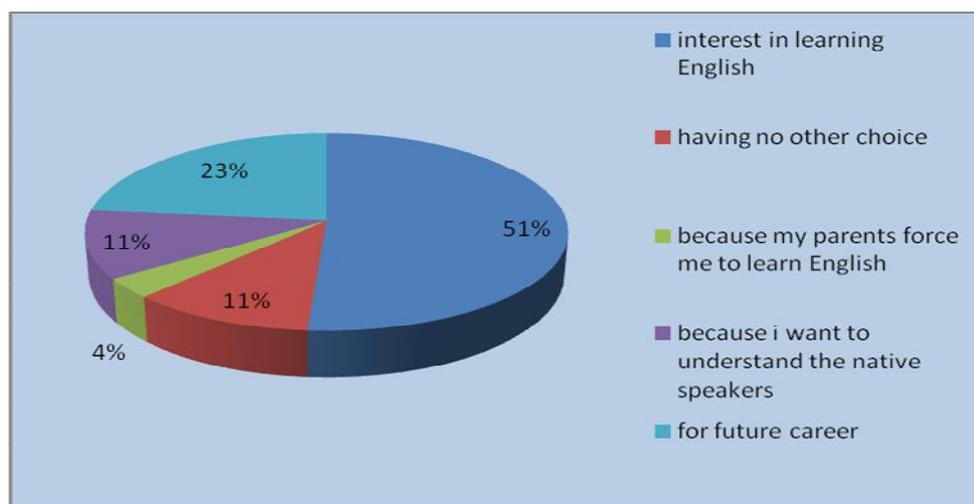


Figure 6: Students' reason for studying English.

According to the findings in the table and the figure above, the majority of students (51, 11%) said that they choose English because they have an interest in learning it. Also, (23, 33%) of students prefer studying English for future career like for example being a teacher, a translator or to travel abroad. However, (11, 11%) of students have chosen English because of having no other choice. (11, 11%) of students choose to study English in order to understand native speakers while few students (3, 33%) choose English because their parents force them to learn it. So, we can say that most of the students of English choose to study this language because they are interested in it and they are sure for their choice.

Question 7: How do find speaking English?

Options	N	%
very easy	48	53,33
easy	27	30
difficult	15	16,66
very difficult	0	0
Total	90	100

Table 7: Student's level of English.

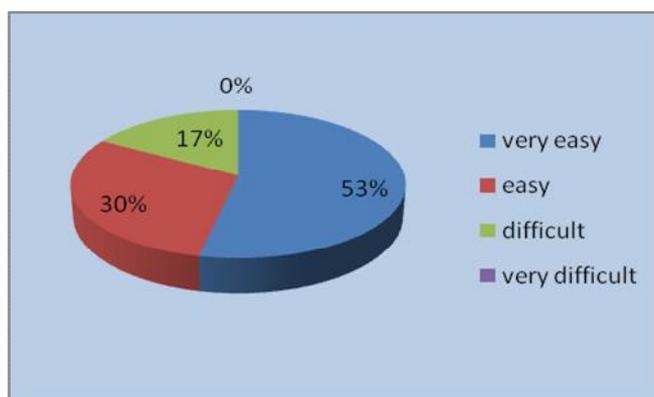


Figure 7: Student's level of English

The results in the table above show that most of the students (53, 33%) find that speaking in English is very easy. In addition, (30%) of them claimed that English is an easy language. However, (16, 66%) of students find some difficulties in speaking English but no one said that it is very difficult. So, in this case we can say that most of students find English easy and do not face problems while learning it.

Question 8: How often do you speak English in a week?

Options	N	%
Always	22	24,44
Sometimes	56	62,22
Very often	8	8,88
Rarely	4	4,44
Never	0	0
Total	90	100

Table 8: Frequency of speaking English.

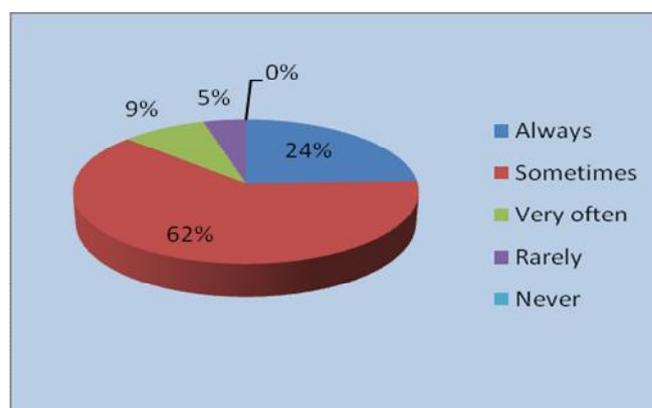


Figure 8: Frequency of speaking English.

We notice from the results obtained above that (24, 44%) of the students said that they always speak English in a week while a big number of them (62, 22%) use it only sometimes. However, some students (8, 88%) claimed that they speak in English, but they use it very often. Also, a small number of them (4, 44%) say that they rarely speaking in English, but no one said that he/ she does not speak in English. From these results, we conclude that learners like speaking in English and they try to improve themselves by using it.

Section 2: The practice of speaking and oral skills

This section includes eleven questions. The fundamental aim of this section is to gather data about the practice of communication and oral performance in English classes.

Question1: in your opinion, how important is speaking in learning English?

Options	N	%
very important	70	77,77
Important	19	21,11
not so important	1	1,11
Total	90	100

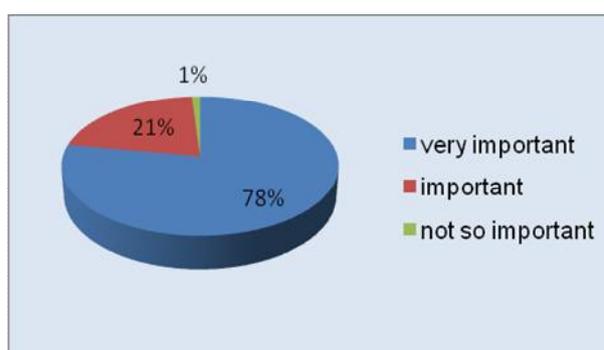


Table 9: The importance of speaking in EFL. Figure 9: The importance of speaking in EFL.

The findings presented in the table and the figure above reveal that the majority of students (77, 77%) found that speaking in learning English is very important. In addition, some other students (21, 11 %) said that it is important to speak English language because these two groups consider it as the first and the international language and they want to learn this language to be like native speakers. However, only one student (1, 11%) said that it is not so important to speak using this language because he does not like it and he does not have other choice. This means that specializing in English language was the students' own choice and also students are aware about what they want to do in the future.

Question 2: which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?

Options	N	%
High	8	8,88
above average	36	40
Average	36	40
below average	6	6,66
Low	4	4,44
Total	90	100

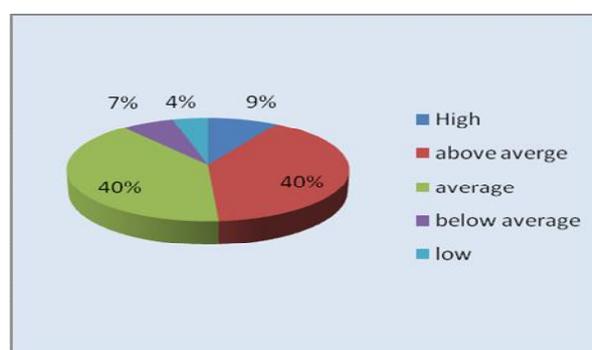


Table 10: Student's level in oral performance. Figure 10: student's level in oral performance.

From the table above, we notice that (40%) of the students claimed that their level of oral performance in English is above average is the same of those who say that their level is average.

However, (8, 88%) of the students said that their level is high; others say that their level of oral performance is below average (6, 66%) and only four students (4, 44%) claim that they have a low level. So, we can say, in general, that the students' level of oral performance in English is average and they try to improve themselves for better results in the future.

Question 3: do you always feel afraid to talk?

options	N	%
Yes	56	62,22
No	34	37,77
Total	90	100

Table 11: Student's fear to talk.

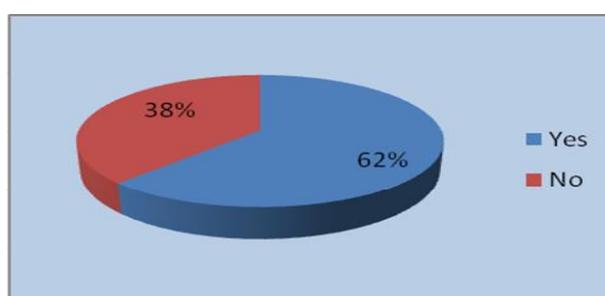


Figure 11: Student's fear to talk.

The results obtained in the table above denote that the majority of students (62, 22%) said that they feel afraid to talk while; others (37, 77%) claimed that they do not have problems to talk and they speak without being afraid. So, we conclude that most of students face problems and difficulties to talk in English.

Question 4: if yes, it is because:

Options	N	%
a- a fear of making grammatical mistakes	25	27,77
b- Fear of making pronunciation mistakes?	30	33,33
c- Having deficient vocabulary?	11	12,22
d- Fear of teachers' negative feedback?	8	8,88
e- Lack of self- confidence?	16	17,77
Total	90	100

Table 12: Student's reason for fear of talking.

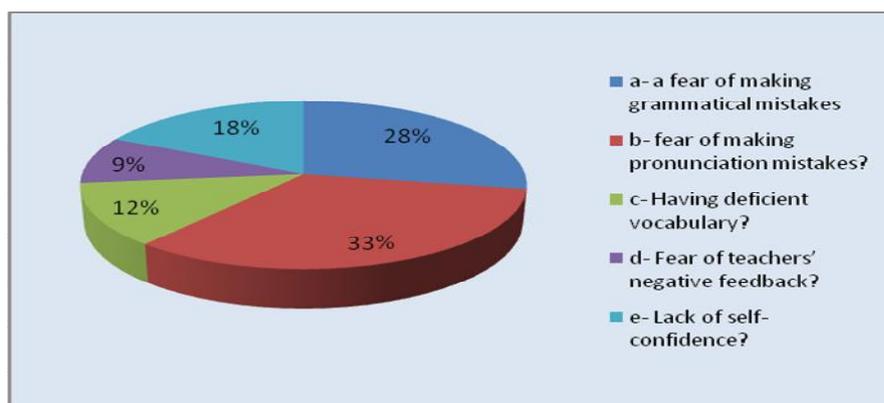


Figure12: Student's reason for fear of talking.

The table and the figure above show the causes of being afraid for English students. The majority of students (27, 77%) said that they fear of making grammatical mistakes; others (33, 33%) claimed that they have a Fear of making pronunciation mistakes and for these problems they do not want to talk. Also, a group of students (17, 77%) said that they lack self- confidence and others (8, 88%) stated that they fear of teachers' negative feedback. So, we conclude that the major problems that make students afraid to talk are those which are related to grammar rules and pronunciation.

Question 5: in order to improve your English oral skills, do you listen to:

1. English songs

Options	N	%
Almost daily	59	65
about once a week	14	15,5
about once a month	10	11,5
less frequently	5	5,5
Never	2	2,22
Total	90	100

Table13: Listening to English songs.

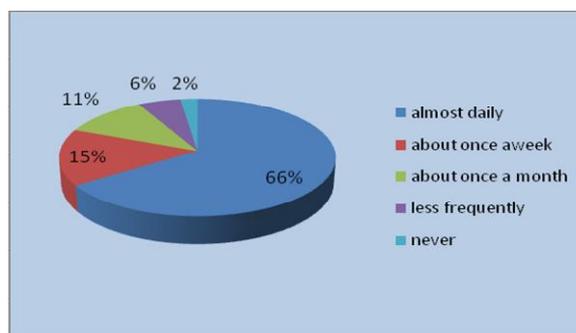


Figure 13: Listening to English songs.

The table above shows one process through which students try to improve their English oral skills. The majority of students (65%) said that they listen to English songs almost daily. Others (15, 5%) preferred to listen to those songs only for once a week and (11, 5%) for once a month. However, a group of students (5, 5%) claimed that they less frequently listen to songs and only two students (2, 22%) said that they never listen to English songs. So, the majority of students believe that songs are a key to improving oral skills.

2. English speech in subtitled films or television programmes

Options	N	%
Almost daily	30	33,3
about once a week	39	43,3
about once a month	12	13,3
less frequently	7	7,7
Never	2	2,22
Total	90	100

Table 14: Listening to English on TV.

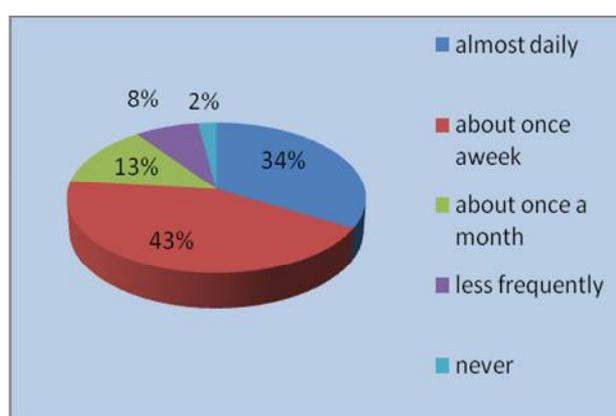


Figure 14: Listening to English on TV.

The table and the figure above show a way to improve students' English oral skills. This way is listening to English speech in subtitled films or television programmes. We noticed that a high number of students (43, 3%) said that they listen to English speech about once a week to improve their English oral skills and others (33, 3%) stated that they almost daily listen. Twelve students (13, 3%) claimed that they listen to such speech about once a month while seven students (2, 22%) said that they less frequently listen to English speech

in subtitled films or television programmes. However, we found only two students (2, 22%) who never listened to that kind of speech. As a conclusion, we can say that English speech in subtitled films or television programmes help students in improving their English oral skills.

3. English speech programmes on the radio:

Options	N	%
Almost daily	4	4,4
about once a week	9	10
about once a month	8	8,89
less frequently	15	16,67
Never	54	60
Total	90	100

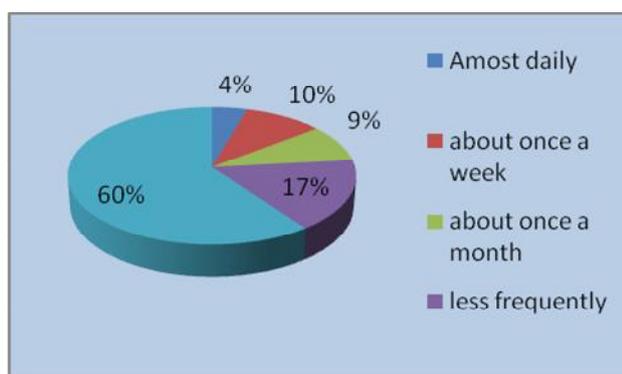


Table 15: Listening to English on radio. Figure 15: Listening to English on radio.

As it is shown in the table above, we noticed that most of students (60%) do not listen to English speech programmes on the radio while others (16, 67%) said that they less frequently listen to that kind of English speech. However, few number of students (4, 4%) listened to radio almost daily, nine students (10%) listened about one a week and eight students (8, 89%) listened about once a month. so, we conclude that students think that English speech programmes on the radio do not help to improve their English oral skills.

4. English movies/ or television programmes without subtitles

Options	N	%
Almost daily	20	22,22
about once a week	40	44,44
about once a month	8	8,89
less frequently	11	12,22
Never	11	12,22
Total	90	100

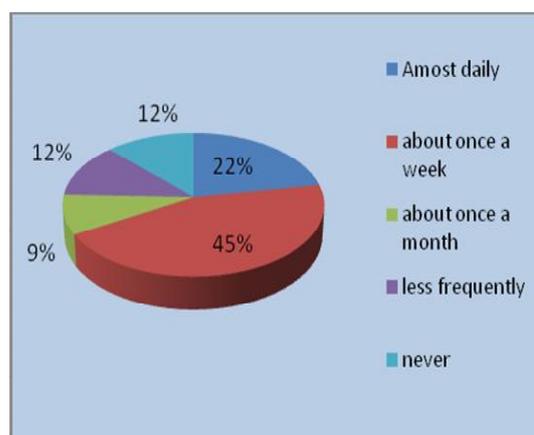


Table 16: Watching TV programmes without subtitles. Figure 16: Watching TV programmes without subtitles.

The answers tabulated above have shown that the majority of students (44, 44%) said that they improve their oral skills through watching English movies or television programmes without subtitles about once a week while some others (22, 22%) watched them almost daily. However, eight students (8, 89%) claimed that they improve their oral skills when watching movies about once a month; eleven students (12, 22%) said that they watch such kind less frequently and the same number of students said that they never watch programmes without subtitles. So, here we can say that many students rely on English movies and television programmes without subtitles to improve their English oral skills.

Question 6: How often do you participate in oral expression class?

Options	N	%
a) Frequently	20	22,22
b) Sometimes	48	53,33
c) Rarely	18	20
d) Never	4	4,44
Total	90	100

Table 17: Participation in oral classes.

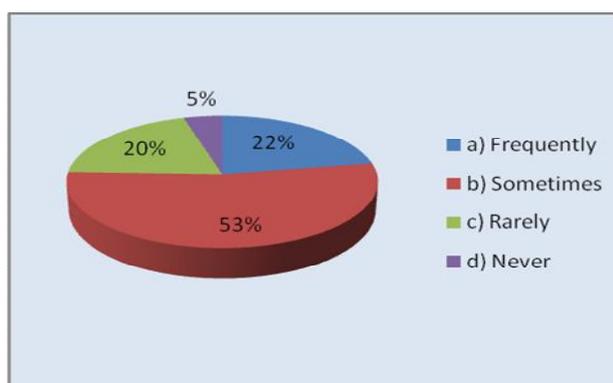


Figure 17: Participation in oral classes.

The table and the figure above show the student's participation in oral expression class. Most of students (53, 33%) said that they do not always participate but sometimes and some others (22, 22%) preferred to participate frequently. However, eighteen students (20%) claim that they rarely participate while four students (4, 44%) said that they never participate in the oral expression class. As a result, we see that a big number of students like participation and they are active in the oral class.

Question 7: What do you think about English speaking sessions in the classes?

Options	N	%
a) I Do not like it at all	2	2,22
b) I Do not like it	15	16,66
c) Like it	52	57,77
d) I Like it a lot	21	23,33
Total	90	100

Table 18: English speaking classes.

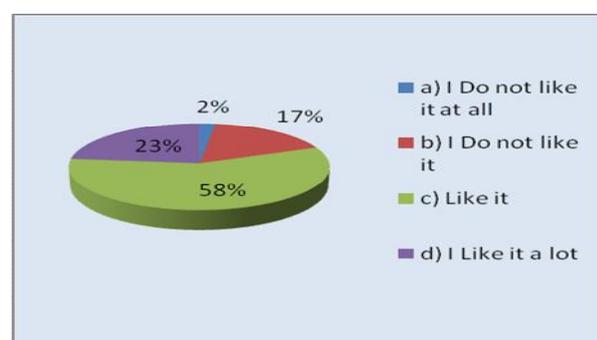


Figure 18: English speaking classes.

The table above is an investigation about students' opinions about English speaking sessions in the classes. As we notice, the majority of students (57, 77%) like those sessions and (23, 33%) like them a lot because, according to them, they find them motivated, funny and they practice English language more than the other sessions. Some students (16, 66%) claimed that they do not like those sessions and two students (2, 22%) said that they do not like them at all. So, in general, we can say that most of students admire English speaking sessions in English classes.

Question eight: How often do you practice oral communication in the English classes?

Options	N	%
a) not so often	17	18,88
b) Quite often	24	26,66
c) Often	41	45,55
d) Very often	8	8,88
Total	90	100

Table 19: Practicing in oral classes.

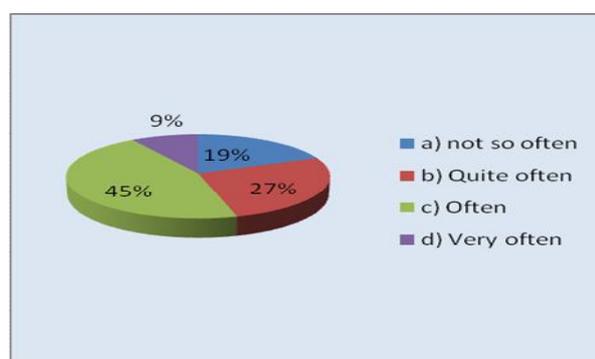


Figure 19: Practicing in oral classes.

The findings presented in the table above reveal that the majority of the students (45, 55%) often practiced oral communication in the English classes and (26, 66%) of them quite often practice it. The rest of students (18, 88%) claimed that they not so often communicate while eight students (8, 88%) said that they very often practice oral communication. So, we deduce that students

practice oral communication in the English classes and this help them improving their speaking abilities.

Question nine: How active are you orally when you communicate orally in your class?

Options	N	%
Not so active	31	34,44
Quite active	30	33,33
Active	24	26,66
Very active	5	5,55
Total	90	100

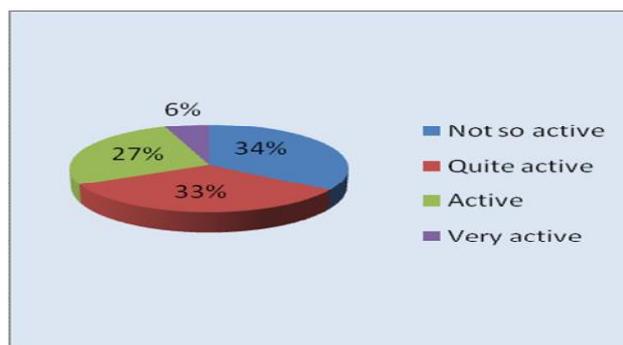


Table 20: Being active in oral classes. Figure 20: Being active in oral classes.

According to the results in the table and figure above, 34, 33% are not so active while 33, 33% are quite active when they communicate orally in their class. However, 26, 66% of students say that they are active while communicating orally and five students say that they are very active. So, we come to the result that students do not have high speaking abilities.

Question 10: How often do you practice speaking outside the classroom?

Options	N	%
Always	17	18,88
Usually	20	22,22
Sometimes	42	46,66
Rarely	7	7,77
Never	4	4,44
Total	90	100

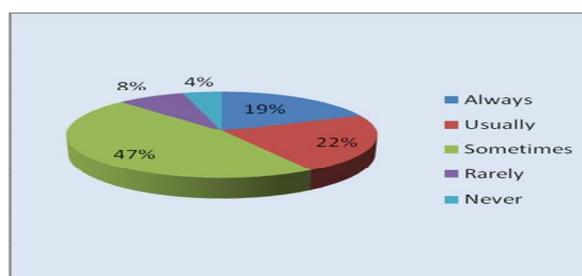


Table 21: Frequency of speaking practice. Figure 21: Frequency of speaking practice.

As it is shown in the table, most of the learners (46, 66%) sometimes practice speaking outside the classroom and (22, 22%) of them usually speak outside. However, there are students (18, 88%) who usually speak outside their classroom but at the same time there are students who rarely or do not speak English at all outside classroom. As a result, we can say that speaking English outside classroom helps learners developing and improving their speaking capacities.

Question 11: when you speak in the classroom, you give priority to:

Options	N	%
a) Expressing yourself using correct English	30	33,33
b) Conveying interesting and original ideas	25	27,77
c) Making yourself understood by others	35	38,88
Total	90	100

Table 22: Priority when speaking in class.

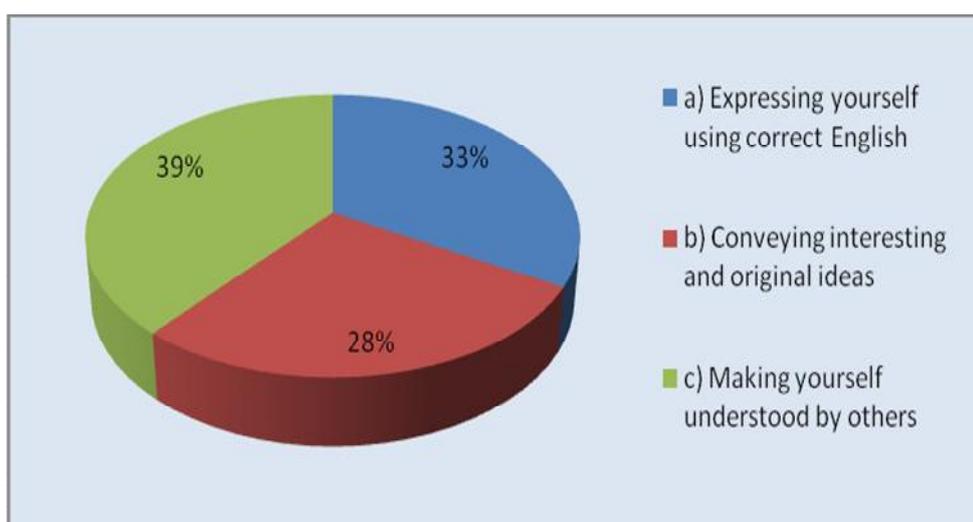


Figure 22: Priority when speaking in class.

The table above is an investigation which aims to know the students' purpose behind speaking in the classroom. Most of students (38, 88%) saw that when you speak you try to be understood by others. Others (33, 33%) claimed that their aim behind speaking is to express themselves using correct English while (27, 77%) of students tried to convey interesting and original ideas while speaking. So, here we see that the aim behind speaking differs from one learner to another.

Section three: the role of role-play in improving speaking skill

This section constitutes of eight questions. The fundamental aim of this section is to gather data about the role of role-playing activities in improving EFL/ ESL speaking skill.

Question one: how are the performance conditions in your speaking class?

1. Are you given plenty of time to perform a speaking task?

Options	N	%
Yes	50	55,5
No	40	45,5
Total	90	100

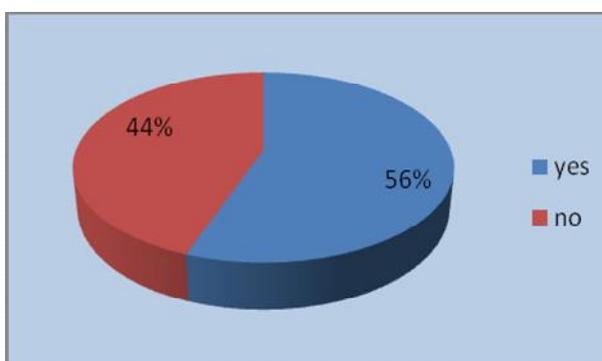


Table 23: Time availability for speaking tasks. Figure 23: Time availability for speaking tasks.

The table above shows a performance condition which time is given for students to perform a speaking task. The majority of students (55, 5%) agreed that their teachers give them plenty of time to perform a speaking task while (45, 5%) disagreed. So, time is an important factor for better performance.

2. Do you prepare for a task before the task is performed?

Options	N	%
Yes	69	76,66
No	21	23,33
total	90	100

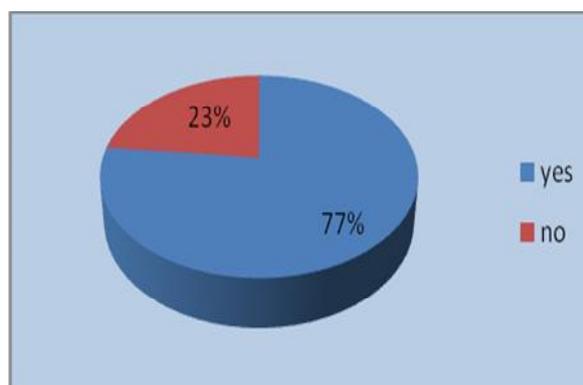


Table 24: Task pre- preparation for speaking. Figure 24: Task pre-preparation for speaking.

The findings shown in the table and figure illustrate that most students (76, 66%) prepared for a task before they perform it. However, (23, 33%) of students said that they do not prepare. So, preparing for a task before it is performed is very important to enable learners know about the topic and to not perform it arbitrary without knowing anything.

3. Do you have the pressure to perform well?

Options	N	%
Yes	68	75,55
No	22	24,44
Total	90	100

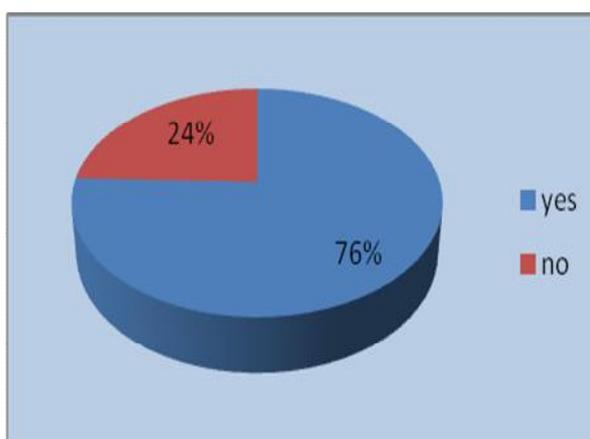


Table 25: Pressure for performing well. Figure 25: Pressure for performing well.

This table show that most of students (75, 55%) had the pressure to perform well while (22, 44%) did not interesting whether to perform well or not. So, we can say that pressure for performing is beneficial for learners. It encourages them and makes them aware about their task and as a result they will perform it well.

4. Are the listeners patient, understanding, sympathetic and supportive?

Options	N	%
Yes	69	76,66
No	21	23,33
Total	90	100

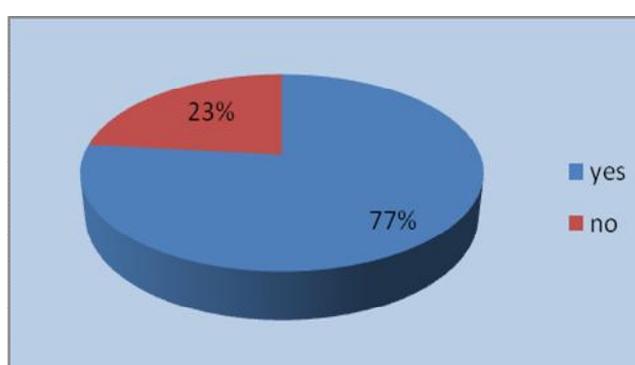


Table 26: Listeners' behavior.

Figure 26: Listeners' behaviour

The table above shows that the majority of students (76, 66%) claimed that when they perform a task, the listeners are patient and sympathetic. They understand and support them while (23, 33%) said the opposite. So, listeners play a great role in encouraging and supporting students who perform a speaking task.

Question two: what factors affect your speaking performance?

Options	N	%
Time for preparation	47	21,65
Pressure to perform well	31	14,28
Listener's support	13	5,99
Motivation to speak	19	8,75
Confidence	41	18,89
Anxiety	18	8,29
Topical knowledge	13	5,99
Listening ability	20	9,21
Time allowed to perform a speaking task	15	6,91
Total	217	100

Table 27: Factors affecting student's speaking performance.

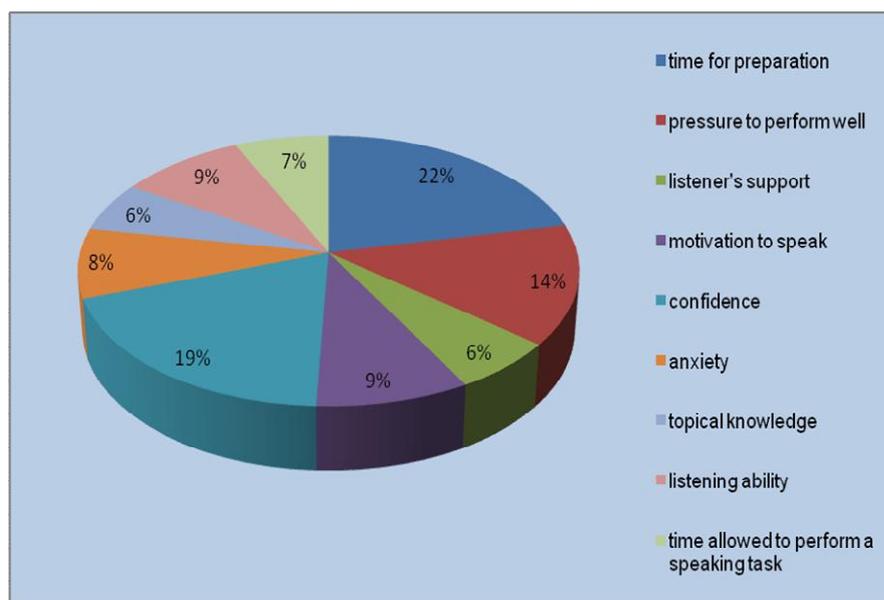


Figure 27: Factors affecting student's speaking performance.

According to the results in the table and figure above, (21, 65%) of students agreed that the main factor that affects their speaking performance is time for preparation. For instance, giving enough time will help learners perform better.

Furthermore, (18, 89%) of them believed that confidence is an important factor which affects their speaking performance because when they have self-confidence this enable them perform well without being afraid. Besides, (14, 28%) of students argued that pressure to perform well can affect their speaking performance. So, when there is pressure this will encourage them to do good works. However, (8, 75%) of learners confirmed that their speaking performance is affected by motivation. With motivation, they can perform well and actively without feeling boring. Others, (8, 29%) said that anxiety makes them not perform well. Listening ability also affect speaking performance, (9, 21%) agreed with this. They say that when their teachers provide suitable environment for listening, they perform well but if not they will not present good works. Also, some students (5, 99%) claimed that topical knowledge enable them perform well but if they do not have such knowledge the performance will be worst. Another factor which learners 5, 99% talk about is listener's support. They argue that listeners give them courage to perform well but if they do not care the performance will fail.

Question three: which problems do you encounter in learning speaking skill?

Options	N	%
You are worried about making mistakes	67	39,18
You are fearful of criticism or losing face	12	7,01
You cannot think of anything to say	22	12,86
You have no motivation to express yourselves	12	7,01
You speak very little or not at all	11	6,43
You are shy	47	27,48
Total	171	100

Table 28: Problems encountered in learning speaking.

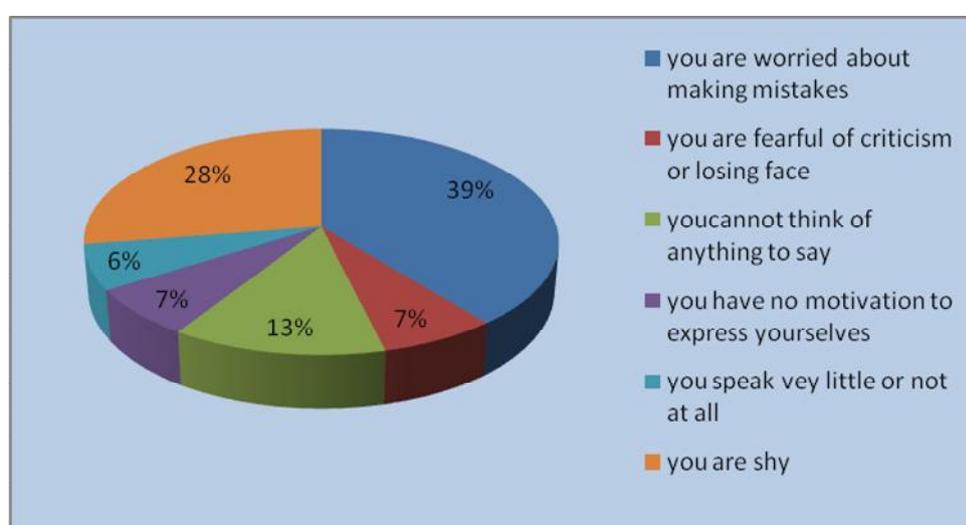


Figure 28: Problems encountered in learning speaking.

The table shows the problems that learners encounter in learning speaking skill. The major problem for most students (39, 18%) is the fact of worrying about making mistakes; so, they prefer to remain silent to avoid such problem. Besides, (27, 48%) of the students believed that they are shy to talk; so, they cannot speak in front of other people.

Then, another problem which learners (12, 86%) face is the fact that they cannot think of anything to say; in this case they remain silent. (7, 01%) of the students confirm that having no motivation to express themselves, which makes learning boring to them. Moreover, few students (7, 01%) are afraid of being criticized by their teachers; (6, 43%) of the students speak very little or not at all. As a result, EFL learners face many problems which affect their learning.

Question four: are you satisfied with the way you are thought oral expression?

Options	N	%
Yes	61	67,77
No	29	32,22
Total	90	100

Table 29: Satisfaction towards ways of teaching oral expression.

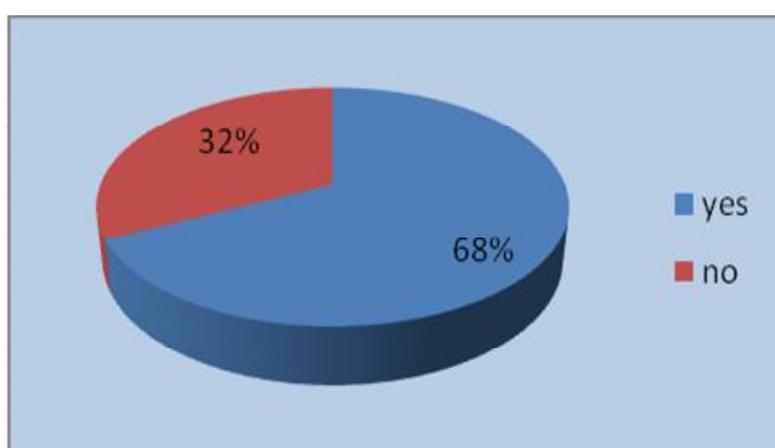


Figure 29: Satisfaction towards ways of teaching oral expression.

The table above shows the students' satisfaction with the way they are taught oral expression. The majority of EFL learners (67, 77%) said that they are satisfied with the way their teachers teach them oral expression. Some of them appreciate learning oral expression in laboratories because they practice English language. Others say that their teachers motivate them with authentic materials and encourage them to talk without feeling afraid. However, (32, 22%) of students stated that they do not satisfied the way they are taught oral expression because their do not afford suitable environment to practice language and they feel bored in this session. As a result, we notice that most of English learners admire the session of oral expression.

Question five: which of the following techniques did you enjoy best?

Options	N	%
Group work	28	31,11
Role-play	23	25,55
Problem solving	7	7,77
Discussion	20	22,22
Dialogues	12	13,33
Total	90	100

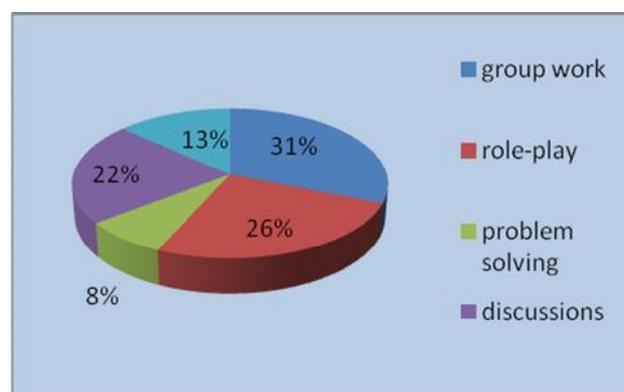


Table 30: Oral techniques enjoyed by students. Figure 30: Oral techniques enjoyed by students.

The findings showed in the table and figure are about the techniques that learners enjoy best. The majority of the students (31, 11%) enjoyed group work because according to them they can exchange information with each other and this helps them acquire English language.

Besides, (25, 55%) of learners liked role- playing activities because through they can express themselves and create situations from their own. Also, discussions are enjoyable for a group of students (22, 22%) who said that through discussion they can express their opinions and share information with others and this will rich their input. Dialogues and problem solving are also two techniques which learners enjoy. So, we can say that each learner enjoys a specific technique through which he/ she can improve his/ her communicative skills.

Question six: what do you think about role-play activities?

Options	N	%
like very much	16	17,77
like	54	60
like a little	14	15,55
do not like	6	6,66
Total	90	100

Table31: Using role- play activities.

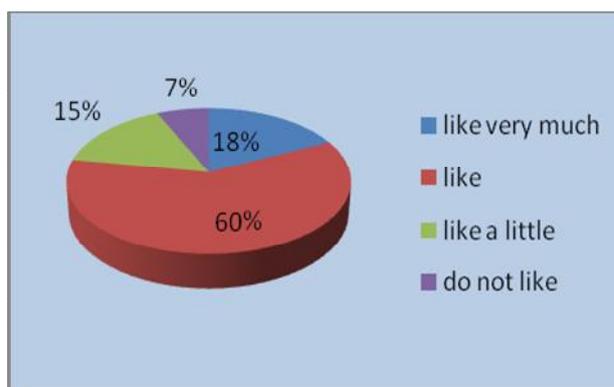


Figure 31: Using role- play activities.

As it is shown in the table, the majority of students (60%) like role- playing and (17, 77%) of them like these activities very much because they believe that the best way to improve speaking skills is role- playing activities. Moreover, a group of students (15, 55%) like role- playing a little but we notice that only few students (6, 66%) do not like them. To conclude, we can say that role- playing is a successful techniques that teachers can use inside classrooms to enhance the students' level.

Question seven: what is your opinion about using role-plays in EFL speaking classes?

Options	N	%
very interesting	18	20
Interesting	63	70
little interesting	8	8,88
not interesting	1	1,11
Total	90	100

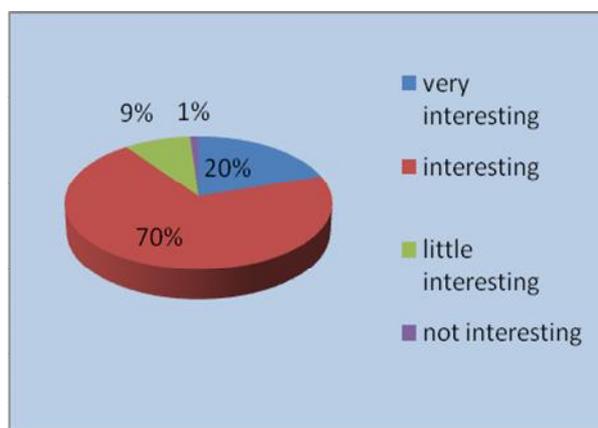


Table 32: Implementing role- plays in class. Figure 32: Implementing role- plays in class.

As we notice in the table above, the majority of students (70%) said that role- plays are interesting and others (20%) argued that the use of role- playing inside classrooms is very interesting. So, we can say that role- playing has a great importance among students and it helps them developing themselves. However, few students argue that using role- playing is not interesting.

Question eight: role-play improves your language use:

options	N	%
strongly agree	23	25,55
agree	52	57,77
neutral	14	15,55
disagree	1	1,11
strongly disagree	0	0
Total	90	100

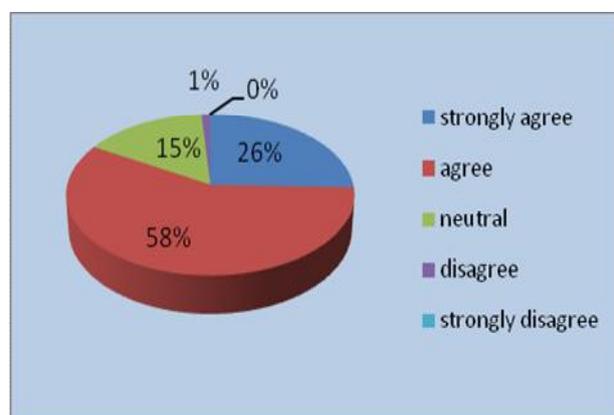


Table 33: Does role- playing improve lge use? Figure 33: Does role- playing improve lge use?

This table reveals that most of students (57, 77%) agreed that role- playing improves their language use and (25, 55%) of them are strongly agree with this. Besides, (15, 55%) did not give a specific answer and only few students say that they disagree with the idea that role- playing improves language use. Accordingly, the majority of students are aware of the importance of role-playing activities in improving their language use.

5. Description of the classroom observation:

In addition to students' questionnaire, we used classroom observation as an additional tool to collect information about the teaching process of oral expression using one of the drama techniques which is role-playing.

5.1. Definition of classroom observation:

Classroom observation is one of the interesting tools that are used to collect data about the teaching/ learning process. Mason (1996) defined classroom observation as a method of "generating data which involves the researcher immersing him or herself in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events, and so on, within it" (p. 60).

Moreover, Dornyei (2007) claimed that classroom observation provides “direct information and it is one of the three basic data sources for empirical research” (p. 178). Furthermore, Loftland (1971) described observation as: “The most penetrating of strategies, the closest and telling mode of gathering information” (p. 32). So, classroom observation is one of the research tools that would help the researcher to gather more valid and reliable data about a given situation.

Accordingly, we used classroom observation in an attempt to gather useful data about the role of role-playing in improving speaking skills of first year EFL students at the University of Mohammad Seddik Ben Yahia, in Jijel. Our classroom observation lasted for two months in which we conducted eight sessions of classroom observation in oral expression class.

5.2. Aims of the classroom observation:

This classroom observation aims to investigate the role of role-playing as a teaching technique to improve first year EFL students speaking abilities. We focused on different criteria which are speakability, pronunciation, creativity and introversion vs. extroversion.

5.3. Data collection through classroom observation:

In order to carry out this observation we asked for the permission of the oral expression teacher and suggested eight different topics for students to work on. The oral expression teacher explained for his students what they are

supposed to do in each class and divided them into groups. Each time he gave them a topic to work on for the next session.

During the observation we focused on four different criteria to judge the students' performance. These criteria are as follow speakability (fluency and accuracy), pronunciation, creativity and extroversion in addition to the reaction of the audience.

This classroom observation revealed the following results:

- ✚ During the first performance which was about *religion vs. modernism*, students faced many communication problems. They relied more on memorization rather than creativity so that most of them forgot what to say in some situations and mixed things up. Moreover, they were a bit shy, especially introvert student, to perform in front of the class and they were a bit clumsy. In addition, they couldn't focus much on their pronunciation and tone while speaking. Concerning the audience, they were not much satisfied about the performances. At the end of the class the teacher gave his students some pieces of information on how to overcome some of the problems they faced during their performances;
- ✚ During the next two performances which were about *fashion addiction and mother-in-law daughter-in-law relationship*, students show some development concerning their performance. They didn't have much fear and shyness to perform to the class; and their use of language seemed to be more natural. They were somehow able to control their mistakes and paid much attention to pronunciation. The audience showed some

empathy towards the performers and encouraged them. The teacher complained his students and corrected some of their mistakes;

✚ For the fourth and the fifth performances which were about *disobedience to parents and drama life vs. real life*, students speaking abilities improved. They were better concerning fluency and creativity. The contexts and the language they used were similar to real-life ones. They could handle their grammar and pronunciation mistakes. They worked as groups as they were creative to cover each other's problems and mistakes especially when forgetting their scripts. Students together with the audience enjoyed the performances and have fun while commenting each other's performances. The teacher ended the classes by giving his students some clues to apply in their next performances;

✚ Concerning the sixth and the seventh performances which were about *witch - craft and candidate in presidential election*, students show a noticeable improvement in their speaking abilities. They were creative in selecting the suitable language for each situation, performed well and felt at ease despite committing some mistakes in grammar and pronunciation. The audience had fun watching their mates' performances and even took notes about the language used then;

✚ During the last performance which was about *candidate in a singing competition*, the students were very creative. They looked natural and communicated well with each other as they were more spontaneous while interacting. They were much fluent in comparison to their first

performance despite some mistakes in grammar and pronunciation. Introvert students could handle their roles and were less shy. All the class enjoyed the session and had fun commenting each other's performances using the target language. The teacher was satisfied with their performances.

5.4. Classroom observation data analysis:

This section is devoted to the analysis of data collected during the classroom observation in order to check the influence of role-playing on EFL students' speaking abilities.

Both teacher and students appreciated the use of role-playing as a motivating strategy to teach oral expression. It makes students more creative and spontaneous in using the suitable language for each context. Also, it helps them to get rid of shyness of using the target language despite lack of accuracy; so that they will be able to use it in real life. Introvert student were more involved in the learning process and get more self-confidence to use the target language for speaking purposes. Through speaking students developed their pronunciation and became more fluent.

Conclusion:

The major concern of this chapter was to analyze the data collected through the two research instruments, a students' questionnaire and a classroom observation. Based on the findings of this chapter, it is worth saying that oral expression teachers at Jijel University should use more motivating teaching strategies such as role-playing in order to provide students with opportunities to use the TL for communication purposes.

Pedagogic recommendations:

In this research, we suggest the use of drama techniques, particularly role- playing, as a teaching strategy to improve EFL/ ESL speaking skills. So, we propose the following recommendations for better improvement of EFL speaking classes:

- ✚ It is important for EFL/ ESL teachers to use and adopt motivating techniques and strategies in teaching speaking skills;
- ✚ Teachers should create a more motivating and relaxed atmosphere to make the learning process successful;
- ✚ Oral classes need to be authentic by exposing learners to native speeches and real communication;
- ✚ Role-playing is a beneficial strategy to improve EFL/ ESL speaking skills and it should be used;
- ✚ EFL/ ESL teachers should create situations that allow students to learn about the use of language in real-life communication.

General conclusion

Our research aimed to investigate the effects of drama techniques to improve first year EFL learners' speaking skills and oral production and indicate the role of role-playing as an effective teaching strategy to enhance learners' speaking abilities. Through this study, it was hypothesized that if drama techniques, particularly role play, are to be applied in EFL classes, it will contribute in improving their speaking skills.

The first chapter shed light on the definition of drama, its characteristics and types. In addition, it dealt with a short history of the communicative approach to language teaching (CLT) and its principles and characteristics. Moreover, it represents the importance and the advantages of using drama in English language classes and some drama techniques used in EFL classes.

Regarding the second chapter, it discussed the definition, elements, and characteristics of the speaking skill. Also, it covers the types and the importance of the speaking skill in EFL learning. Furthermore, it represented the speaking difficulties in FLL and some teaching techniques for improving oral proficiency.

Concerning the third chapter, it represented an investigation based on a students' questionnaire and classroom observation as the main research tools to carry out this research. For the students' questionnaire, it was delivered to a hundred of first year EFL students at Jijel University.

The main aim behind conducting this questionnaire is to investigate on the impacts of drama techniques and activities; such as, role plays to improve EFL learners' speaking skills and oral production. Concerning the classroom observation, it was conducted, for eight sessions, in order to gather more data. The main aim of the classroom observation is to examine the effectiveness of role- playing in improving students' speaking abilities.

Through the analysis of the research tools, the questionnaire and classroom observation, the findings revealed that role- playing is an effective teaching strategy in enhancing EFL/ ESL speaking skills. It makes students more fluent and creative in using the TL for communicative purposes as it provides them with opportunities to use the language in different situations and contexts similar to ones they may face in real- life. Also, this technique involves all the class including introverts in the learning process, and develops self- confidence and self-esteem.

Concerning the first hypothesis, it has been confirmed by the results obtained from the research tools, the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation. They revealed that role- playing is considered as an effective activity which contributes to improve EFL learners' speaking in the sense that it provides them with opportunities to use the language to interact and communicate.

Regarding the second hypothesis, it was found that role-play is a motivating classroom activity which involves learners in the learning process in the sense that all of them take roles and participate in different role-plays.

As far as the third hypothesis, the results revealed that giving EFL learners opportunities for interaction leads to a gradual development in their speaking skills.

Therefore, the integration of drama techniques, particularly role-play, contributes at enhancing EFL/ ESL speaking skills. It provides them with opportunities for self- expression and with maximum use of the TL. In addition, it helps them develop creativity, spontaneity, and fluency. Furthermore, it prepares them for real- life and unpredictability.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Students' questionnaire

Dear students,

The present questionnaire is a part of a research which is conducted for the purpose of investigating on the impacts of drama techniques and activities; such as, role plays to improve EFL learners' speaking skills and oral production. The target population is EFL first year students. Your willingness to fill in this questionnaire will provide us with the necessary data to finish our master's dissertation. Therefore, we appreciate your efforts to answer these questions. Please tick (√) the choice which corresponds to your answer and make full statement whenever it is required.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Section One: Personal Information

1) Gender:

- a) Male
- b) Female

2) Age:

- a) 18- 20
- b) 20- 22
- c) 22- 24
- d) 24 and up

3) How long have you been studying English?

- a) Three years
- b) Five years
- c) Six years
- d) More than six years

4) In your opinion, speaking English correctly means:

- a) Speaking quickly and fluently like a native speaker
- b) Speaking correctly using the rules of the language

5) How do you rate your level in English?

- a) Good
- b) Average
- c) Less than average
- d) I do not know

6) Why did you choose to study English?

- a) Interest in learning English
- b) Having no other choice
- c) Because my parents force me to learn English
- d) Because I want to understand the native speakers
- e) For future career

Please, specify which career

.....

.....

7) How do you find speaking in English?

- a) Very easy
- b) Easy
- c) Difficult
- d) Very difficult

8) How often you speak English in a week?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Very often
- d) Rarely
- e) Never

Section Two: The practice of speaking and oral skills

9) In your opinion, how important is speaking in learning English?

- a) Very important.
- b) Important.
- c) Not so important.

Explain why

.....

10) Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?

- a) High
- b) Above average
- c) Average
- d) Below average
- e) Low

11) Do you always feel afraid to talk?

- a) Yes
- b) No

12) If “yes”, is it because:

- a) Fear of making grammatical mistakes?
- b) Fear of making pronunciation mistakes?
- c) Having deficient vocabulary?
- d) Fear of teachers' negative feedback?
- e) Lack of self- confidence?

13) In order to improve your English oral skills, do you listen to:

	Almost daily	About once a week	About once a month	Less frequently	Never
English songs					
English Speech in subtitled films or television programmes					
English Speech programmes on the radio					
English movies/ or television programmes without subtitles					

14) How often do you participate in the oral expression class?

- a) Frequently
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

15) What do you think about English speaking sessions in the classes?

- a) I Do not like it at all
- b) I Do not like it
- c) Like it
- d) I Like it a lot

Reasons:

.....

16) How often do you practice oral communication in the English classes?

- a) Not so often
- b) Quite often
- c) Often
- d) Very often

17) How active are you orally when you communicate orally in your class?

- a) Not so active
- b) Quite active
- c) Active
- d) Very active

18) How often do you practice speaking outside the classroom?

- a) Always
- b) Usually
- c) Sometimes
- d) Rarely
- e) Never

19) When you speak in the classroom, you give priority to:

- a) Expressing yourself using correct English
- b) Conveying interesting and original ideas
- c) Making yourself understood by others

Section Three: The role of role-play activities in improving speaking skills**20) How are the performance conditions in your speaking class?**

Performance conditions	Yes	No
Are you given plenty of time to perform a speaking task?		
Do you prepare for a task before the task is performed?		
Do you have the pressure to perform well?		
Are the listeners patient, understanding, sympathetic and supportive?		

21) What factors affect your speaking performance? (You can have more than one choice)

- a) Time for preparation
- b) Pressure to perform well
- c) Listeners' support
- d) Motivation to speak
- e) Confidence

- f) Anxiety
- g) Topical knowledge
- h) Listening ability
- i) Time allowed to perform a speaking task

Other factors (please specify):.....
.....

22) Which problems do you encounter in learning speaking skill? (You can have more than one option)

- a) You are worried about making mistakes
- b) You are fearful of criticism or losing face
- c) You cannot think of anything to say
- d) You have no motivation to express yourselves
- e) You speak very little or not at all
- f) You are shy

23) Are you satisfied with the way you are taught oral expression?

Yes No

Please, explain why:
.....

24) Which of the following techniques did you enjoy best?

- a) Group work
- b) Role-play
- c) Problem solving
- d) Discussion
- e) Dialogues

Other, please specify:
.....

25) What do you think about role-play activities?

- a) Like very much
- b) Like
- c) Like a little
- d) Do not like

26) What is your opinion about using role-plays in EFL speaking class?

- a) Very interesting
- b) Interesting
- c) Little interesting
- d) Not interesting

27) Role-play improves your language use:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

APPENDIX II:

Checklist for classroom observation

Criteria	Sub- criteria				Points	Remarks
	1	2	3	4		
Speak-ability	Students were not fluent, accurate and understood	Students were somehow fluent, accurate and understood	Students were fluent, accurate and understood in general	Students showed a high level of fluency, accuracy and understanding	.....	.....
Creativity	Students were not creative in selecting the suitable language and dealing with speech blocks	Students were somehow creative in selecting suitable language and dealing with speech blocks	Students were creative in selecting the suitable language and dealing with speech blocks	Students showed a high level of creativity in selecting suitable language and dealing with speech blocks	.....	.....
Pronunciation	Students committed a large number of pronunciation mistakes and did not pay attention to speech tone and stress	Students committed some pronunciation mistakes and were somehow attentive towards tone and stress	Students committed a few number of pronunciation mistakes and paid attention to tone and stress	Students committed a very few number of pronunciation mistakes and were highly attentive towards stress and tone	.....	.....
Introversion	Students were extrovert/ shy to use the TL while performing and were not cooperative and tolerant	Students were somehow extrovert/ shy to use the TL while performing and were somehow cooperative and tolerant	Students were introvert/not shy to use the TL while performing and were cooperative and tolerant	Students showed a high level of introversion, cooperation and tolerance towards each other	.....	.....
Audience' reaction	Audience did not like the performances and were not involved in the discussion	Audience somehow liked the performances and were somehow involved in the discussion	Audience liked the performances and were involved in the discussion	Audience totally liked the performances and were totally involved in the discussion	.....	.....

Résumé:

L'habileté parlante est une compétence essentielle que les apprenants d'anglais doivent maîtriser. Les apprenants font face à de nombreux problèmes dans leur processus d'acquisition de cette compétence, comme avoir peur d'utiliser la langue cible à des fins de communication et l'absence de motivation. En ce qui concerne ces problèmes, le jeu de rôle est une activité d'enseignement et apprentissage qui est suggérée pour surmonter ces problèmes.

La présente étude étudie l'effet du jeu de rôle en tant qu'activité en classe chez les apprenants d'anglais du première année à l'Université Jijel. Cette étude tente de déterminer si l'utilisation des activités de jeu de rôles dans les classes d'anglais améliore les capacités d'expression orale chez les apprenants d'anglais.

Les outils de recherche utilisés dans cette étude se compose d' un questionnaire pour les étudiants d'anglais de première année et des séances d' observation en classe dans les cours d'expression orale. Les résultats de cette étude ont montré que les compétences linguistiques des apprenants de l'EFL augmentaient et se développaient grâce à l'utilisation du jeu de rôle comme technique pédagogique.

الملخص:

تعد مهارات التحدث أساسية في اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية وحب على المتعلمين للغة الإنجليزية ان يتقنوها. يواجه طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية العديد من المشاكل في اكتسابهم لهذه المهارة من بينها تخوفهم من استخدام اللغة الهدف للاتصال وعدم وجود الحافز. وفي ظل هذه المشاكل اللغوية لدى الطلاب، يمكن لأسلوب و طريقة لعب الأدوار و الذي يعتبر من بين الأنشطة التعليمية المقترحة للتغلب على هذه المشاكل.

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير لعب الأدوار كنشاط تعليمي بين متعلمي السنة الأولى للغة الإنكليزية في جامعة جيجل. تحاول هذه الدراسة تحديد ما إذا كان استخدام هذه الأنشطة أن تلعب دورا أساسيا في تحسين مهارات التحدث بين المتعلمين للغة الإنجليزية.

تتكون أدوات البحث المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة من استبيان للطلاب الجدد ودورات مراقبة الفصول الدراسية أثناء التحدث. وأظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن المهارات اللغوية لمتعلمي الإنجليزية زادت ونمت من خلال استخدام لعب الأدوار كأسلوب تدريسي فعال.