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## **Depicting EFL Students' Difficulties in Oral Performance**

Case Study: Second Year Licence Students at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla

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## **Dedication**

*This work is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration, who continually provide me with their moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support.*

*To my brother Mohammed who gave me strength when I thought of giving up, and to my little sister khedidja.*

*I would like also to dedicate it to my beloved partner and best friend MEDKOUR RadjaaImane, for her encouragement, enthusiasm and unfailing support along the way.*

*To all my relatives, friends and classmates who shared their words and advice to finish this study.*

*Dalila*

# Dedication

*I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved parents, Naceur and Rouba, two strong and gentle souls who have always supported and encouraged me in every way possible and taught me to believe in hard work and in myself.*

*To my beautiful sisters, Nourelhouda, Ikhlas, and Malak who never failed to have my back and been one of my sources of happiness since their birth.*

*To the loving soul of my grandfather Ahmed who made me feel special, my grandmother Hafsa and my aunt Kheira, who kept praying and wishing for my joy and success.*

*To Hassan, Dhia, and Lotfi, I will always appreciate the time spent together and I thank you with all my heart for not judging me and being the best friends I always wanted to have.*

*To all the teachers who I have been honored to be taught by during my whole educational career.*

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to depict the speaking difficulties that affect EFL learners' oral performance at the English department, at university of Ouargla. Throughout this study we hypothesize that students encounter a number of obstacles like linguistic problems, psychological problems, or the learners' bad attitudes towards the topic...etc. These obstacles prevent them from improving their oral skill. In order to confirm the previous hypotheses, we investigated the case of second year licence students and the teachers of oral expression module at the same level at the department of English, at university of Ouargla. We have used more than one research tool; a questionnaire, an interview, and a classroom observation. The data obtained from the research tools indicate that there are some factors affect the students' oral performance in oral expression course. As the last step, the data suggests some techniques and activities that help EFL students effectively to face their speaking problems, as it provides some advice for both EFL learners and teacher for a successful oral performance session.

**Key terms:** *Speaking difficulties, Oral performance, EFL, Linguistic problems, Psychological problems.*

## **List of Abbreviations**

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**CELTS:** The Cambridge Certificate in English Language Speaking Skill

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**L1:** Native Language

**L2:** Second Language

**LMD:** Licence Master Doctorate

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المخلص

Résumé

# **General Introduction**

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

Teaching English requires teaching all its aspects and its four skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Teachers often focus on teaching the linguistic aspects of the language and neglect the speaking skill which is very important in learning any language.

Speaking has begun to emerge as a branch of teaching, learning and testing in its own right in the last two decades due to three main reasons. The first one is tradition, where language teaching was more influenced by grammar-translation method rather than teaching communicative skills. The second reason is technology as the tape-recording has been sufficiently cheap and practical to enable the study of talk since the mid 1970s. Teachers, methodologists, applied linguists and linguists focus more on written language than spoken language due to the difficulty of studying talk. The third reason is exploitation i.e. most approaches to language teaching such as: the direct method, the audiolingual approach, the silent way, community language learning and suggestopedia exploited oral communication centrally as part of their methodology, but the focus on teaching oral skills was limited to pronunciation. Carter & Nunan, (2001).

In EFL classroom teaching speaking is hard, it is taught through the activities that provide much practice to the language and to the real-life speaking. Students face some difficulties that prevent them speaking in classroom. The present study will shed some light on the linguistic, the affective and other difficulties related to the learner, taking the second year Licence students as a case study at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla to identify these difficulties.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

The main objective of this research is to shed some light on the different difficulties that face EFL students and affect their speaking performance.

The research is conducted to identify the obstacles and to determine the techniques and the activities that should be adopted by the teachers in order to help students face their speaking problems and improve their oral performance.

### **3. Purpose of the study**

The overall aim of this research is to shed some light on the difficulties of oral skill that students of second year Licence at the department of Letters and English language-KMUO encounter, and how these difficulties affect their oral performance.

**Independent variable:** speaking difficulties

**Dependent variable:** student's oral performance

### **4. Research questions**

Through this study, we try to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main difficulties that affect students' oral performance?
2. What are the most dominant difficulties that the students encounter?

The possible answers to these questions formulate the following hypotheses.

### **5. Research hypotheses**

In this study, we will investigate the difficulties that face the second year License students at KMUO during the oral courses.

It is hypothesized that:

1. The lack of vocabulary, grammatical mistakes, mispronunciation, and some psychological problems like anxiety and shyness may affect students' oral performance.
2. Students might not get enough opportunities to speak and express their ideas in class.

### **6. Limitation of the study**

While conducting the present research, the researchers were limited in time and they found difficulties to distribute the questionnaire, the students' absences also hinder the development of the study.

## **7. Research Methods**

In order to test our hypotheses, and to fit the objectives of our present research we will use two main tools descriptive and analytic method.

The Descriptive Method has been selected in order to determine the speaking difficulties that affect the students' oral performance and to present the effective techniques and activities that can be adopted to enhance the students' performance during the oral session. The Analytical Method has been used to investigate the problem and to answer the questions above. We will administer a questionnaire to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Licence students, an interview to their teachers of oral and conduct the classroom observations as well.

## **8. Setting and Participants**

The present study takes place at the department of letters and English language at Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University.

The participants of the present study are 2nd year Licence students and two oral instructors. About 67 undergraduate (2018/2019) students of English were randomly chosen from both genders to answer the questionnaire.

## **9. Data collection:**

The data of the research were collected from the students' questionnaire, the teachers' interview and from the classroom observations. This research was applied on the 2nd year Licence students at the department of Letters and English Language at KMOU during the academic year 2018/2019.

## **10. The structure of the study**

The present work is divided into two main parts: a theoretical part that includes two chapters, and an empirical part that includes one chapter. Chapter one deals with general issues about speaking skill as it discusses the different difficulties of speaking that affect the students' oral performance difficulties. Chapter two deals with the techniques and activities, and the role of the teacher and the administration to help students enhance their performance during the oral session. The last chapter deals with data analysis. It provides a detailed analysis of students' questionnaires, teachers' interview, and the classroom observation.



# **Chapter One**

**Speaking skill and EFL students' difficulties in Oral Performance**

# Speaking skill and EFL students' difficulties in Oral Performance

## Introduction

In EFL classroom, students learn to speak through the use of different oral activities in order to improve their oral production and to increase the use of language. However, many students encounter some difficulties that affect their oral production.

This chapter deals with general issues about speaking skill: definition of speaking, importance of speaking, elements of speaking, speaking events and the difference between L1 and L2. Then, the light will be shed on the speaking difficulties that affect the students' oral performance. These difficulties are due to linguistic factors, affective factors, factors from the students themselves, L1 use and other obstacles.

## 1. Speaking definitions

Speaking is defined as "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts (Chaney, 1998, p. 13)".(kayi, Teaching Speaking: Activities to Promote Speaking in a Second Language)

Harmer (2007, p,269) states "speaking is the ability to speak fluently and presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language 'on the spot'".

The speaking proficiency is influenced by the components of communicative competence. Being communicatively competent requires the mastery of the following sub competencies:

- Linguistic competence: knowing how to use the grammatical rules accurately, choosing vocabulary appropriately, and pronouncing words clearly.
- Pragmatic competence: means performing functions or expressing intentions clearly and effectively in order to achieve certain communication goals.
- Discourse competence: knowing how to construct a coherent and cohesive discourse and the ability to interpret the context.
- Strategic competence: knowing how to deal with difficulties when communication breakdowns occur: "recognise and repair".
- Fluency: "It is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness, or undue hesitation". Hedge ( extract)

## **2. The importance of Speaking**

Speaking is one of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). People communicate to express their thoughts, opinions, intentions, and feelings. In addition, it is considered as the most important skill; hence, if you know a language, this means that you are a speaker of that language as Ur (2000: 12) argues: “Of all the four skills, 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.”

## **3. Elements of Speaking**

Speaking a foreign language fluently necessitates the two main elements of speaking skill provided by Harmer, (2001) which are language features that learners should know about and mental processing i.e the ability to process information immediately.

### **3.1. Language features are the following**

- Connected Speech: is the ability to modify, to omit, to add, or to weaken sounds.
- Expressive devices: is the ability to convey meaning and to express feelings through the variation of speed, volume, and stress of utterances.
- Lexis and grammar: Teachers are the essential source for providing students with certain useful phrases and language function, such as agreeing or disagreeing, surprising... etc, so that they help students to generate phrases and sentences at different stages of an interaction.
- Negotiation language: it is used to clarify and show the structure of what we are saying, which benefits effective speaking.

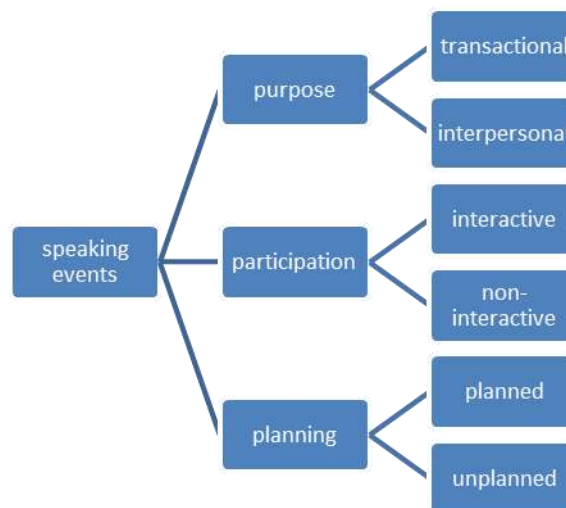
### **3.2. Mental processing includes the following**

- Language processing: “It involves the retrieval of words and phrases from memory and their assembly into syntactically and propositionally appropriate sequence.” (Harmer, *ibid*, p. 271)
- Interacting with others: the ability to listen to others, to understand how they feel, and the ability to take turns in a conversation. These are what effective speaking requires.
- (On-the-spot) information processing: effective communicators should process information in the moment they get it; the longer it takes, the less effective they are.

Using the appropriate stress and intonation patterns, being able to pronounce phonemes correctly and speak in a connected speech are what students need to be able to be fluent in English. Speakers of English as a second foreign language need also some other elements to survive real life situations exchanges too, like the ability to speak in a range of various genres and the use of conversational repair strategies.

#### 4. Speaking Events

In his book of speaking, Thornbury suggests various dimensions of different speaking events according to their purpose, the amount of participation, and if their planning in order to describe different speaking genres (Thornbury,2005).



**Figure 01:** speaking events

There are, of course, some exceptions as these distinctions are not absolute and always terminal, but they are still helpful in a way that is to provide different speaking activities in those different categories.

#### 5. Differences between L1 and L2 Speaking

What is different between L1 and L2 is language itself, and students' knowledge about the language in terms of grammar and vocabulary too. Some deficiencies such as: the lack of L2 fluency, the lack of automaticity, and less opportunities to practice speaking are caused by anxiety and the lack of confidence, as it is pointed out by Thornbury (ibid).

Other factors such as the tendency to formulate an utterance in L1 and translate it in L2, and the stress to be accurate i.e the fear of making errors will affect L2 fluency directly and lead to speaking failure.

## **6. The EFL Students' Difficulties**

EFL students may encounter different speaking difficulties that affect their oral performance. These difficulties may be related to linguistic factors, psychological factors or related to learners themselves.

### **6.1. Linguistic Factors**

According to Thornbury (2005) being skilful requires having some basic knowledge. Since speaking is considered as a skill, students should have some knowledge related to language features i.e, linguistic knowledge and other extralinguistic, in order to develop their speaking abilities.

The linguistic barriers that EFL students may face are caused by the grammar mistakes, lack of vocabulary, and pronunciation mistakes.

#### **6.1.1. Grammatical Mistakes**

Learners should know about the grammatical rules as they should differentiate between written and spoken grammar in order to be able to form correct structures of sentences and to avoid making mistakes. EFL learners avoid speaking during oral tasks because of the fear to make grammatical mistakes which will affect their performance later.

Thornbury (ibid) summarised the features that distinguish between written and spoken grammar in the following table:

**Table 01:**The difference between written and spoken grammar (Thornbury,2005, p.21)

<i>Written grammar</i>	<i>Spoken grammar</i>
Sentence is the basic unit of construction	Clause is the basic unit of construction
Clauses are often embedded ( subordination)	Clauses are usually added ( co-ordination)
Subject + verb + object construction	Head + body + tail construction
Reported speech favoured	Direct speech favoured
Precision favoured	Vagueness tolerated
Little ellipsis	A lot of ellipsis
No question tags	Many question tags
No performance effects	Performance effects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hesitations</li><li>• Repeats</li><li>• False starts</li><li>• Incompletion</li><li>• Syntactic blends</li></ul>

### **6.1.2. Lack of Vocabulary**

According to Thornbury (ibid) speech in English mostly consists of a few words and a great number of prefabricated chunks in which speakers can achieve fluency through the use of these chunks. In addition, he made a distinction between the productive and the receptive vocabulary where the former is the half the size of the latter as he suggests. Thus, EFL students need to recognize a huge lexical knowledge and how to select words and expressions appropriately when speaking, because their performance will be affected by limited number of lexis.

### **6.1.3. Pronunciation Mistakes**

According to Nunan (2003), teaching speaking is teaching students how to produce sound patterns, intonation patterns, rhythm and sentence stress, etc.

EFL students often hear this comment: “you have a good accent or you pronounce words perfectly ...”. They are judged if they are a good speaker of a language through their pronunciation. Mispronouncing words reflects the students’ poor knowledge since pronunciation is the lowest level of knowledge students draw on as Thornbury points out. Pronunciation mistakes prevent students from performing their oral task.

## **6.2. Affective Factors**

In a foreign language classroom, students may encounter different psychological barriers which are limited to personality characteristics, attitudes, and emotional responses to the language learning process, as Hedge (2000) points out. The following factors can prevent students from developing their speaking skill: anxiety and inhibition, lack of confidence, shyness, and more.

### **6.2.1. Anxiety and Inhibition**

Littlewood (1981, p.93) argued that “It is all too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety”. The two factors prevent the learning process as they make students worried and afraid of making mistakes or being criticised by the teacher or by their peers when speaking. The feeling of embarrassment and shyness prevent students from speaking in front of their classmates. Too simply, if students are shy and anxious, they will not be able to perform their oral tasks and develop their communication skills.

### **6.2.2. Lack of Self-confidence**

EFL students who are not confident enough in themselves, they are not capable to speak in class and perform their oral tasks. Even if they participate to share their opinions, they will say just a few words in order to avoid embarrassment and making mistakes.

The lack of self-confidence is one of the obstacles that affect students’ oral performance because they will keep silent during the oral sessions.

## **6.3. Learners’ Factors**

There are some factors that affect students’ performance during an oral task, these concern the learners themselves when they are not motivated to speak or not interested in the topics suggested to be discussed.

### **6.3.1. Lack of Motivation**

Motivation is a kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. As Brown points out, a cognitive view of motivation includes factors such as the need of exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge, and ego enhancement (Brown 2000: 160-166)

Williams and Burden suggest that motivation is a 'state of cognitive arousal' which provokes a 'decision to act' as a result of which there is 'sustained intellectual and/or physical effort' so that the person can achieve some 'previously set goal' (Williams and Richard Burden 1997: 120)

Motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic. The former is caused by any number of outside factors. By contrast, the latter comes from within the individual as Harmer (2001) points out.

According to Littlewood (1981), students can develop their communicative skills only when they are motivated to speak and they are given opportunities to express their identity and have friendly relationships with people around them.

### **6.3.2. Lack of interest in the topic**

Thornbury (2005) suggested that when learners are familiar to the topic, the easier the speaking task is. They avoid speaking when the task is about a new topic because they have no idea about it, or they have a negative attitude towards it. When students are not interested in a topic, they will not perform their tasks freely.

## **6.4. Mother tongue use**

Students use their L1 in class when they are linguistically incapable of discussing free topics, or explaining information to their colleagues when performing a task. Sometimes, this happens naturally because students unconsciously translate the new items they learnt. Another reason is the teachers themselves, especially when they are native speaker of the foreign language. They use the student's language which makes students feel comfortable to use their L1.

Harmer (2001) suggests what to do to promote L1 use in the classroom by setting clear guidelines, choosing appropriate tasks, creating an English atmosphere and using persuasion and other inducements.



## **6.5. L1 interference**

Students who learn English as a foreign language already have a deep knowledge of one or two languages, but when it comes to use English, students will commit some errors because of L1 influence; interference most commonly affects pronunciation, grammar, structure, vocabulary, and semantics as it is pointed out by Harmer (nd, p.99).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, we have attempted through this chapter to shed some light on the speaking skill and the difficulties that affect the EFL students' oral performance. Students hesitate to speak in classroom's tasks because of the problems discussed above such as linguistic factors, psychological factors, none motivating atmosphere, and others.

# **Chapter Two**

**Strategies and Activities to Overcome the Students' Problems and  
Difficulties in Oral Performance**

# **Strategies and Activities to Overcome the Students' Problems and Difficulties in Oral Performance**

## **Introduction**

In this chapter, we will try to suggest different solutions to enhance the students' participation in class and develop their speaking skill. We will denote a few pedagogical activities that help the students and teachers through the teaching and learning process of oral performance. We also make sure to define the administration's and teachers' role in helping to achieve the goal we are aiming to achieve, which is decreasing the difficulties preventing those students from developing oral performance skill.

### **1. The Role of the Administration**

Any administration in English departments should be aware of the importance of choosing the right teacher, timing, duration, and also the right number per group for the oral performance course. It is well known that the speaking skill is not easy to master; it needs the right amount of time, and most importantly the appropriate teacher.

These sessions should be programmed in early mornings because it is the perfect timing for teaching and learning the oral performance skill. The students would be motivated, energetic, and willing to practice and speak more.

The number of students per group should be carefully studied to ameliorate the teaching/learning process.

### **2. Teachers' Role**

Harmer states that teachers have different roles in the classroom and these roles may change from one activity to another or from one stage to another. Teachers change their roles to facilitate learning to EFL students and help them face the different obstacles that may affect their learning development. The following are the most common teacher's roles:

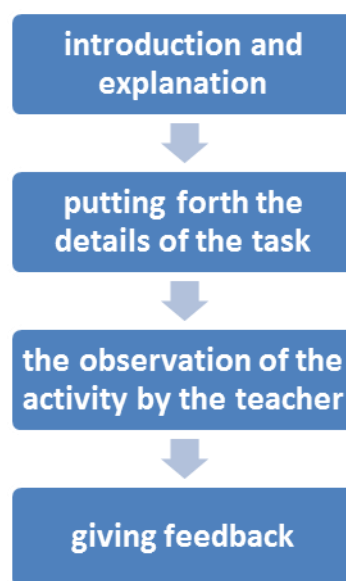
#### **2.1. Controller**

Harmer (2001, p.58) argues that "When teachers act as controller they are in charge of the class and of the activity taking place in a way that is substantially different from a situation where student are working on their own in groups". Teachers are controllers of what is said

and done as they have different activities to do such as: take the role, tell students things, organize drills, and read aloud. Certain stages of a lesson require control like making announcements, giving explanation, or an order to be restored, though other stages do not demand such a control. Teachers feel very comfortable as controllers when they transmit knowledge from themselves to their students.

## 2.2. Organizer

One of the teacher's important roles is organizing the class in every sense. The role of an organizer is summarized according to Harmer (ibid) as the following: engage, instruct, initiate, and organize feedback. The first role is to engage students and get them involved in the activity when they are ready. The second one is to give clear instruction to the students in a logical order and in an unconfusing way in order to benefit from the activity. The two last roles are to initiate the activity, because students need to know how much time the activity requires and when they can start it, then provide them with feedback.



**Figure 01:** The Stages in a Speaking Class (Adapted from Harmer, 2007).

## 2.3. Assessor

The teacher checks the students' performance and progress so as they can know if they are getting English right. An assessor offers feedback and correction and grades students in various ways. Therefore, "students need to know how and for what they are being assessed" as Harmer (2001, p.60) views. Also they do not want to feel like they are judged unfairly.

## **2.4. Prompter**

Nudging students forward in a discreet and supportive way when they lose thread of what is going on here we are acting as a prompter. The teacher provides encouragement gently and sensitively, above all, with discretion. Harmer (ibid).

## **2.5. Participant**

According to Harmer (ibid), teachers are mostly standing back from the classroom activities, they intervene just for the sake of correcting mistakes or providing feedback, but, sometimes, they may need to participate and take part in the activity. Students enjoy when their teacher participates with them; however, care must be taken because the teacher can dominate the proceedings easily.

## **2.6. Resource**

A teacher as a resource is another role that students need. Very often, the teacher is called on to explain words or to provide information during the lesson activities. According to Harmer (ibid), acting as a resource means being available and helpful, but not to spoon-feed the students, in order not to rely completely on the teacher.

## **2.7. Tutor**

The tutoring role means combining the roles of prompter and resource, as Harmer (ibid) argues, because when students are doing a project, they may need some advice and guidance. The teacher will act as a tutor to point them with directions and work with them. In addition, it is difficult for the teacher to act as a tutor in large group because guidance and help are easily provided when students work in pairs or in small groups.

## **2.8. Observer**

In oral communicative activities, the teacher needs to adopt the observer role in order to provide students with individual feedback and to give them useful group. When observing students' performance, notes should not be taken only on what students fail to do but also on what they succeed to do it. Moreover, the act of observing students is not just to give them feedback, but also to judge the success of different materials and activities so that teachers can make change in the future if there is a failure.

### **3. Feedback and Correction**

According to Thornbury (2005), the decision how to provide learners with feedback and correction is delicate, especially when learners are focusing on the content rather than on the way they say things. The teachers' interruption and intervention to provide correction will hinder the learners' performance by focusing their attention to how accurate they are. However, many teachers do not support the idea of 'letting errors go' even in fluency activities believing the idea of maintaining formal accuracy is good for learners.

It is argued that the teachers' over-monitoring prevent the learners' self- repair when they make mistakes. Sometimes, it is important to intervene to repair the students' breakdown especially when their message is unintelligible. Intervention perceived as a repair is less inhibiting than the one perceived as a correction by the learner. In addition, the teacher has the choice of immediate "on- the- spot" correction or delayed one. Later on, correction requires errors' recording during the activity to be given to the learner as feedback notes or to be dealt with orally.

At last, the teacher should always know his students' wants and needs, so that he would know what type of feedback to use with each individual in his classroom, to avoid any negative results.

### **4. Grouping Students**

#### **4.1. Task-based teaching and oral communication practice**

Task-based is defined by Willis (1996, 36) as "a goal-oriented communicative activity with a specific outcome, where the emphasis is on exchanging meaning not producing specific language forms." (Cited in English teaching forum, 2009). Before, it was difficult to motivate students and to find more time for them to communicate in class since the oral activities were mainly focused on drilling and studying grammatical forms. With the task-based activities, classes are more effective because students use English to interact with each other and discuss real life situations meaningfully.

"According to Brown (1994), interactive classes have the following beneficial features:

- There is a large amount of pair and group work.
- Students engage in spontaneous and authentic conversations.
- Students write for actual audiences and purposes, not artificial ones.

- Tasks prepare students for the real world outside of the classroom.” (English teaching forum2009, p. 25).

## **4.2. Group and pair work**

Group and pair work are requisite to task-based teaching. Working in pairs or in groups creates a totally different atmosphere from that of traditional teacher-centered class.

According to Brown (ibid), group work creates a favorable climate for communication because it stops students feeling anxious to talk in front of the whole class. Miraculous changes are reported by Brown in students who had been too shy to talk until they worked in groups. In addition, students are more responsible and autonomous when they work in groups; they have equal responsibility for performing a task. Also, group and pair work increase the student talk time in class. As Long and Porter (1985) point out that “small-group interaction allows more talk for each of the students, and greater variety of talk” (Bygate, 96).

## **4.3. Organizing group work**

Teachers face some difficulties when organizing group work. For example, classrooms are not equipped with movable tables and chairs. Mostly, they are attached to the floor which is not helpful to create comfortable atmosphere to work in pairs or in groups.

Noise is another problem to teachers when students work in groups, making them working and practicing English quietly is hard for them. Jacobs and Hall (2002, 55) suggested a technique that is efficient to make students less noisy by the use of stoplight cards for example the group who is working silently the teacher put on their desk a green card, the yellow is provided to the group who is more noisy, if the red card is given to the group they will stop working then start counting till ten to restart again working. This technique is useful with time students will learn how to work silently.

## **5. Classroom atmosphere**

A good atmosphere in the classroom is always key to get students comfortable to speak spontaneously and voluntarily when giving them a suitable topic or task that matches their level of learning of course; however, sometimes, the choice of the tasks or topics, or the class mix will not be on point for that atmosphere to be good, and that affects the students and makes them not willing to speak in class. The reluctance of the students remains the main problem in classes, and, here, the teacher has to take part to solve it.

## **6. Speaking activities**

In his book *How to Teach Speaking*, Scott Thornbury divided the activities on three types:

### **6.1. Awareness Raising Activities**

According to Cognitivism, awareness raising is the prerequisite stimuli that either restructure or awaken the learner's mental representation Thornbury (2005). In the awareness stage, the learner performs activities that enable him/her to notice new knowledge or situation. According to Thornbury (ibid), awareness consists of the following processes:

- Attention: Raising interest, curiosity and a desire for involvement on the features of the target skill.
- Noticing: This is more than just paying attention. For example, while driving a car, we pay attention to the road without noticing until a deer appears in front of us. We immediately notice it away from the other details on the road. Just like that, a learner learning a new word can see it in many different places because he is now noticing it.
- Understanding: It is the last process. Understanding is noticing a general rule or system and comprehending the relation of the subparts between each other and how these parts interact.

As an example of this kind of activity:

- Using recordings and transcripts.
- Focusing on selected language features.
- Using live listening...and many more.

### **6.2. Appropriation activities**

Controlled practice helps the students to learn the control of speaking skills. One way to practice that control are drills and chants.

### **6.3. Autonomous activities**

According to Thornbury (2005), the speaking activities that enable the learners to produce autonomous language should include the conditions of productivity, purposefulness, interactivity, challenge, safety and authenticity. One of the main objectives of EFL classes is



to develop learners to be in a certain degree of fluency and automaticity in the speaking competence, therefore activities resulting the student to produce authentic language should be present in the oral performance courses.

## **7. Speaking Activities to Enhance Students' Oral Performance**

In EFL classroom, it is important to do speaking activities because through the use of activities students can retrieve and use the language that they know and this help them remembering it. Also, it gives the teacher an idea of the improvement of the student's language as it gives students the desire to speak with a communicative purpose.

Many activities could be used to build and enhance the speaking skill; most of them are likely to be games to make the students more motivated and enthusiastic about speaking.

Here are some activities that highly motivate and help the students to be active in class:

### **7.1. Simulation and Role-play**

Simulation and role-play are very similar activities; they differ just in terms that the former is more elaborate and realistic than the latter. Students in a simulation activity can bring real stuff to the classroom to make the environment more realistic whereas in role-play activities students will perform a social role of different contexts. Both types of activities help to increase self-confidence, as it is suggested by Harmer (1984).

Down below is an example of role play where the students could see and practice the expressions needed first. Then they are asked to form groups or pairs depending on the example given by their teacher to act the scene in front of their classmates.

This activity helps:

- Memorizing expressions needed in real life situations.
- Turn the class's atmosphere into a fun one; therefore, the students are comfortable and motivated to be a part of it.
- Building students' self-confidence and decreasing the feeling of shyness.

## Complaining in a hotel – Teacher’s notes

### Time / Level

20–30 minutes / Pre-intermediate to Advanced

### Target language

#### Grammar

*Will* for spontaneous decisions (*I'll tell them...*)

*There is / there are* (*There aren't any towels.*)

#### Functions

Complaining (*That really isn't good enough!*)

Providing excuses (*We're very busy, sir.*)

Apologising (*I'm terribly sorry, sir / madam.*)

#### Vocabulary

Hotels (*wake-up call, guest, reduction*)

### Preparation

Copy the worksheet and role play cards A and B (one of each per pair). Cut up as indicated.

### Role Play instructions

Hand out the worksheet (one copy per pair) and give them five minutes to do exercise A. As the pairs finish, tell them to discuss the question in exercise B. Get feedback. Write up any other complaints the students thought of on the board. Give them 3–4 minutes to do exercise C and then elicit a possible response to each of the complaints.

Put students into AB pairs and hand out the two role play cards. Give them a few minutes to read their card. Make sure they don't show it to their partner. Let them begin when they're ready. Encourage them to use the *Target language* expressions. They can swap roles when they finish.

**Idea:** Students may enjoy watching an episode of the *Fawlty Towers* BBC TV series before they do the role play if you can get the recording!

## Complaining in a hotel

Role Plays for Today

**A** Look at this list of complaints in a hotel. Working in pairs, put them in order from the most serious (1) to the least serious (7). Give reasons for your choices.

- "There is a party in the room next door. I can't get to sleep."
- "The TV remote control doesn't work."
- "I didn't get a wake-up call this morning. I was late for my meeting."
- "My camera was stolen from the room."
- "There aren't enough pillows in the room."
- "There was no hot water left when I took a shower this morning."
- "The waiter spilt wine all over my dress at dinner last night."

**B** Which of these problems have you had at a hotel? Can you think of any other problems?

**C** Now think of a possible response to each complaint from the receptionist.  
e.g. "I'm so sorry! They're here for a wedding. I'll tell them to keep the noise down."



### Student A – Receptionist

You are a receptionist at the Faulty Towers Hotel. It's very busy and lots of guests are complaining. Try to calm them down, explain the problems and be polite. Try not to offer any reductions. If any guests are really angry, take 10% off the price, and offer them free dinner tonight.

#### Target language

*I'm terribly sorry, madam / sir.  
Oh dear! This has never happened before.  
I see. What can I do to help?  
I'm sorry, but reductions are not possible.  
Can we offer you free dinner tonight?  
I understand. I'll take 10% off the price.  
Enjoy the rest of your stay.*

### Student B – Unhappy guest

You are a guest at the Faulty Towers Hotel, but it's been a nightmare since you arrived. You are now very angry. Go down to the reception and complain. Use some of the complaints you studied. Try to get a reduction in the price, or a better room.

#### Target language

*I'm extremely unhappy with...  
The first problem is...  
What are you going to do about it?  
I'm sorry. That really isn't good enough.  
It's no good making excuses!  
I demand a reduction!  
I'm going to report your hotel!*

Figure 02: role play activity. Anderson (2006)

## **7.2. Interviews**

Students will practice their speaking ability through conducting interviews with people. They will be more socialized because they will be very involved in the conversation by answering and questioning people.

## **7.3. Discussions and debates**

These are the most common activities used in EFL classrooms to enhance students' oral performance skill. They aim to make the students share their opinions, points of views, experiences, ideas; all while enjoying listening to their peers.

It is preferable that the topics of those discussions are chosen by the students. Thornbury (2005) suggests five discussion formats: discussion cards, warm up discussion, balloon debate, pyramid debate, and panel discussion.

Discussion and debates help students:

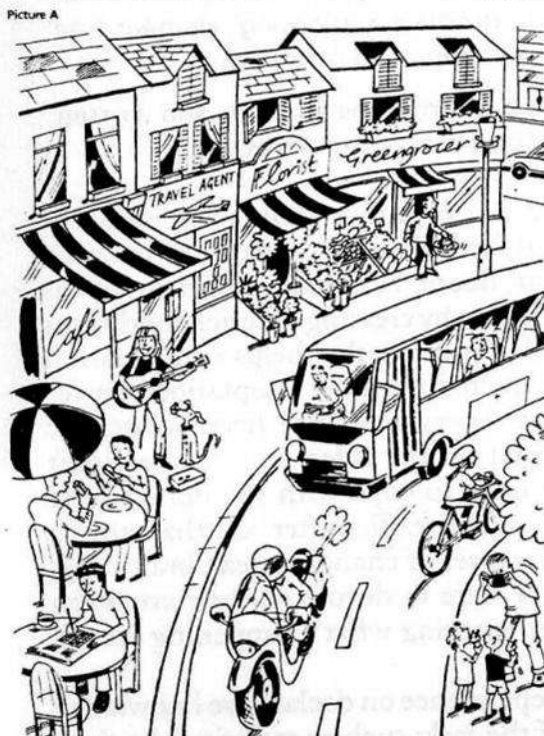
- To be confident to hold long conversations and dialogues.
- Know how to express their ideas respectfully.
- To practice the strategies of interpersonal communication.

And so many advantages, which makes it an ideal activity for oral performance classes.

## **7.4. Information-gap activities**

This type of activity can be done when two speakers have different information and there is a gap between them, they will complete the gap through sharing that information.

Here is an example of the information gap activity suggested by Thornbury (ibid)



**Figure 03:** information gap activity

In the pictures above there are differences and similarities that the students have to work in pairs to help each other and find them.

### 7.5. Telling stories

The activity is done to enable students tell a short story they have heard before from somebody, or they are given pictures to tell a story about. The activity encourages students' creative thinking. They can also start what we call a chain story in which one student starts by a sentence he chooses and the other have to complete it with coherent sentences until they get a whole meaningful story.

**2 4 MAKING CONVERSATION**

**The first time**


In pairs, A choose two 'first times'. Tell it about what happened. B listen and ask for more information. Swap roles.

A *I'm going to tell you about the first time I drove a car. I was staying in the country with my uncle and he had an old Renault 4...*

B *How old were you?*

The first time I....

- bought a record or CD
- went to a live concert
- smoked a cigarette
- fell in love
- travelled by plane
- went abroad
- drove a car
- saw a lot of snow
- earned some money
- had to go to hospital



**3 prepare your story**

5 Think! You're going to tell a partner about a good or bad shopping experience. Read the checklist.

**Checklist**

- Use the questions in the framework to help organize your story.
- Use a dictionary or ask your teacher to help you with new words.
- Make notes, but don't write the full story.
- When you've finished, practice telling the story to yourself. This will help your confidence.

**6 tell your story**

6 Work with a partner. Tell each other your stories. At the end, make sure you understand each other's stories. Use the phrases in the **natural English** box if necessary.

**asking for clarification**

I didn't understand the bit about ...  
 Could you explain the bit about ... again?  
 I'm sorry but I didn't understand what/why/when/how ...

7 You're now going to tell your partner's story. Tell it as if it's your own story. You may need to make small changes so sound realistic. Your partner should correct any factual mistakes you make.

8 Work with a **new** partner. Tell the two stories, without saying which one is yours. Your new partner can ask you questions. At the end, they have to decide which was your story, and why.

Figure 04: story telling activity. Thornbury (2005)

## 7.6. Oral Presentations

Students will give a talk on a given topic or a person individually, the other students will listen to the presentation while having a listening task, including giving feedback by the teacher or students.

## 7.7. Problem Solving Activity

According to Klippel (1985) “ problem solving activities demand that the learners themselves decide upon the items to be ranked ... the language which is needed for problem solving activities depends on the topic of each exercise, but in general students will have to make suggestion, give reasons , and accept, modify suggestions and reasons given by others” (p. 103). Usually students tend to speak out their minds and participate when they struggle to find solutions for the problem presented in the problem-solving task.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has stated the different roles of the EFL teachers that have to play to develop the student's oral performance skill. Besides the administration that has to pick the right teacher, right timing, duration to assure a successful oral performance course, the teacher plays the most important part in his classroom.

Group and pair work are also beneficial in such classes. They create a better atmosphere for the learners and that will reflect positively on the oral performance course. More importantly, the application of different activities such as role plays, storytelling, problem solving activities, and so on are one of the best ways to enhance the students' participation and developing their speaking skill which is our goal from the beginning.

# **Chapter Three**

**Field of Investigation**

# Field of Investigation

## Introduction:

This chapter is designed to analyze the data found through researching the difficulties that face the students during oral expression sessions. Our aim from conducting this study is to test our hypotheses. To contribute to our study, teachers and students were selected as the best source of information. Their opinions and views were crucial to test the stated hypotheses. We chose to use as tools for this investigation, an addressed questionnaire to the students, an interview to the teachers, and classroom observation. Thus, we have opted for working with the second year LMD English students of the English department of KasdiMerbah University, and to two out of three teachers of oral expression course at the second year level of the same University of the academic year 2018-2019.

## 1. Students' Questionnaire

### 1.1. Description of the questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed for second year LMD students at the department of KasdiMerbah University of the academic year 2018 – 2019. About 67 students were selected randomly for the purpose of investigating the difficulties that face them during the oral expression sessions. This questionnaire contains both “closed” questions, in which the students have to answer by “yes” or “no”, or tick the right answers from a list of suggested options, and “open-ended” questions in which they could give their personal opinions or background knowledge about subjects, or add justifications for their choice. The questionnaire is a set of eighteen questions which are classified under three sections:

#### Section one

It contains four questions which help gather information about the participants of the questionnaire.

#### Section two

It deals with students in their oral sessions, problems, preferences to make the session better for them. It is the main section to study the difficulties that face them in their oral courses. It contains eleven questions.



### Section three

This section is about the students' different opinions about the teacher's choices and ways to master his sessions.

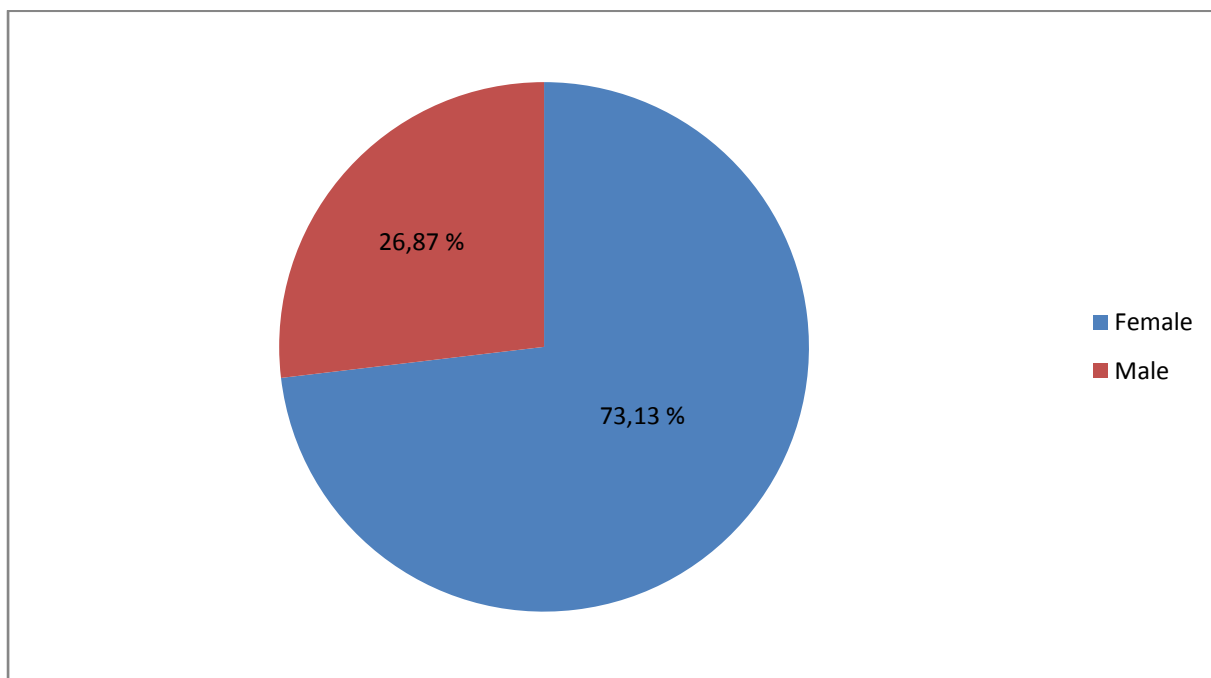
#### 1.2. Analysis of the results

##### 1.2.1. Section one: background information

##### 1. Gender

**Table 01:** Students' Gender

	Number	Percentage
Female	49	73.13%
Male	18	26.86%
Total	67	100%



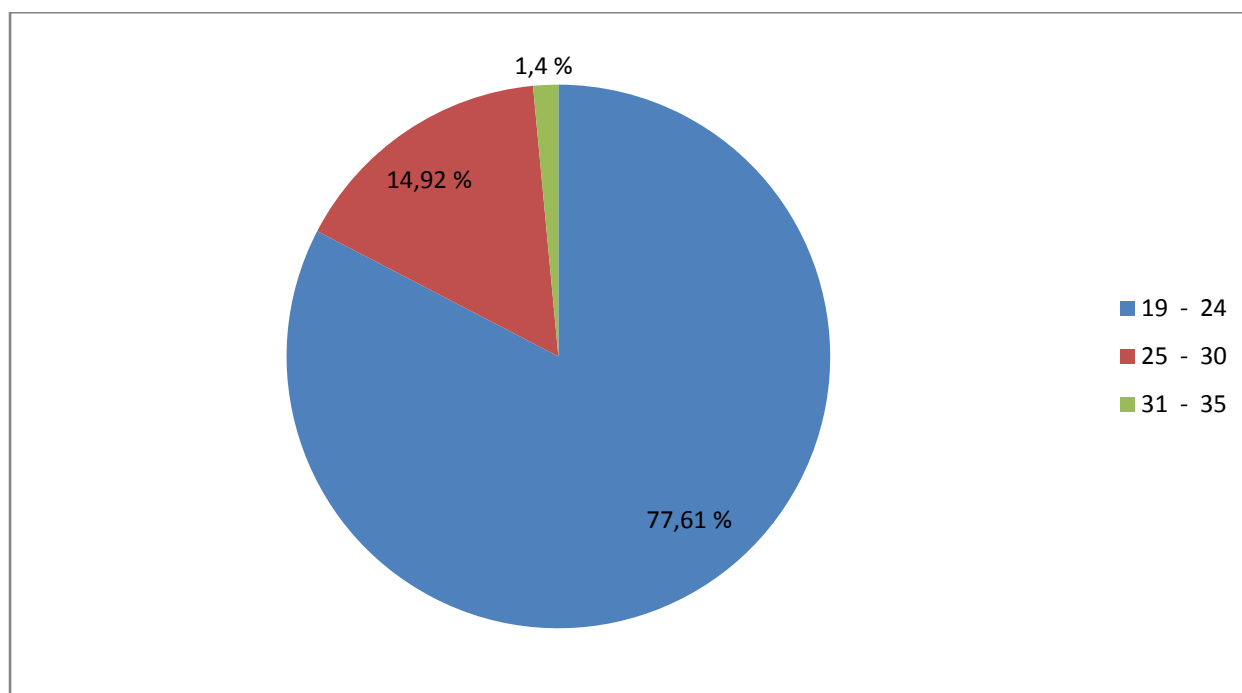
**Graph 01:** Students' Gender

The results show that the majority of the students are girls “73.13%”, who usually choose to study languages in general, and only “26.87%” are boys.

## 2. Age

**Table 02:** Students' Age

	Number	Percentage
19 - 24	52	77.61%
25 - 30	10	14.92%
31 - 35	5	7.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



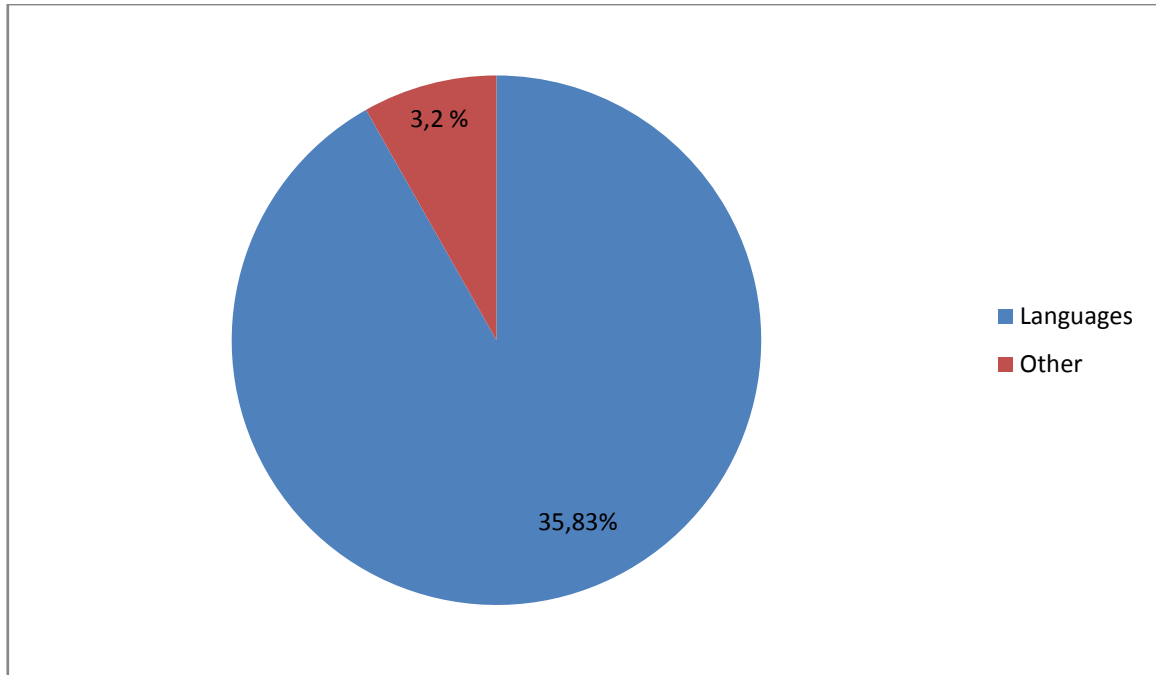
**Graph 02:** Students' Age

The results show that the majority of students are aged between 19 and 24 years old, which are logical, taking in consideration the level we are investigating in while a very small group represents students aged between 25 and 35 years old.

## 3. What branch were you in in secondary school?

**Table 03:** Students' Branch in Secondary School

	Number	Percentage
Languages	24	35.83%
Other	43	64.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



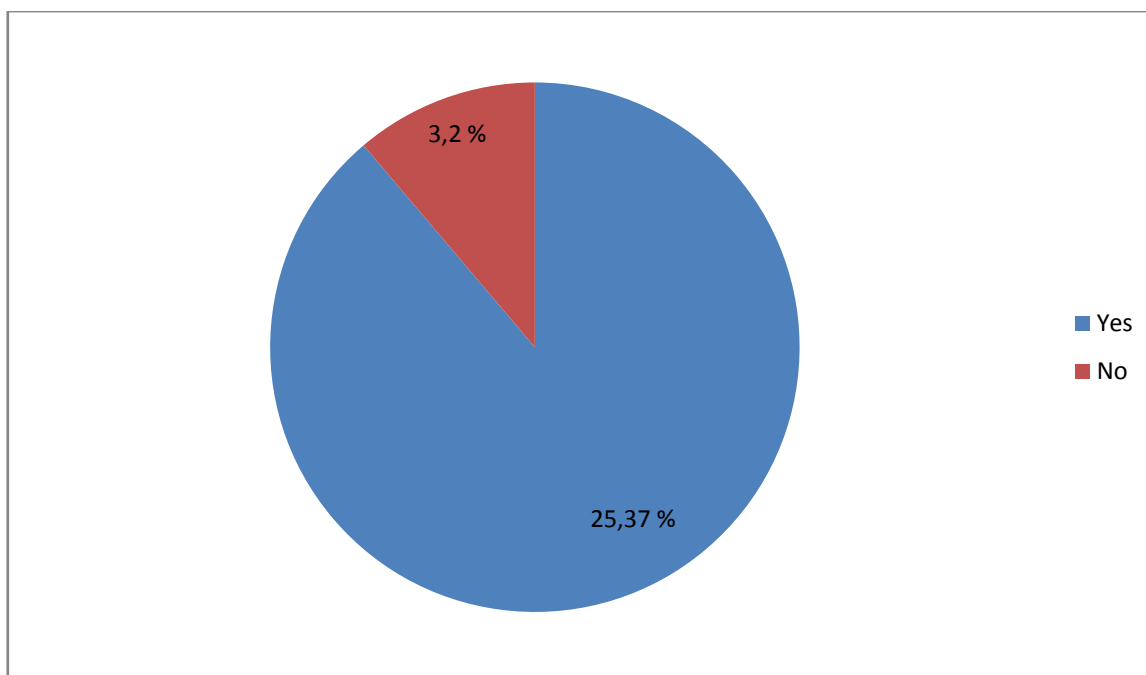
**Graph 03:** Students' Branch in Secondary School

These results indicate that the majority of the students “64.17%” were in other branches in secondary school which might mean that they perhaps did not choose to study English at the university unlike the rest, “35.83%” who were in the languages branch.

**4. Have you ever had extra courses to improve your English?**

**Table 04:** Students' Extra Courses

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25.37%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>74.63%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Graph 04:** Students' Extra Courses

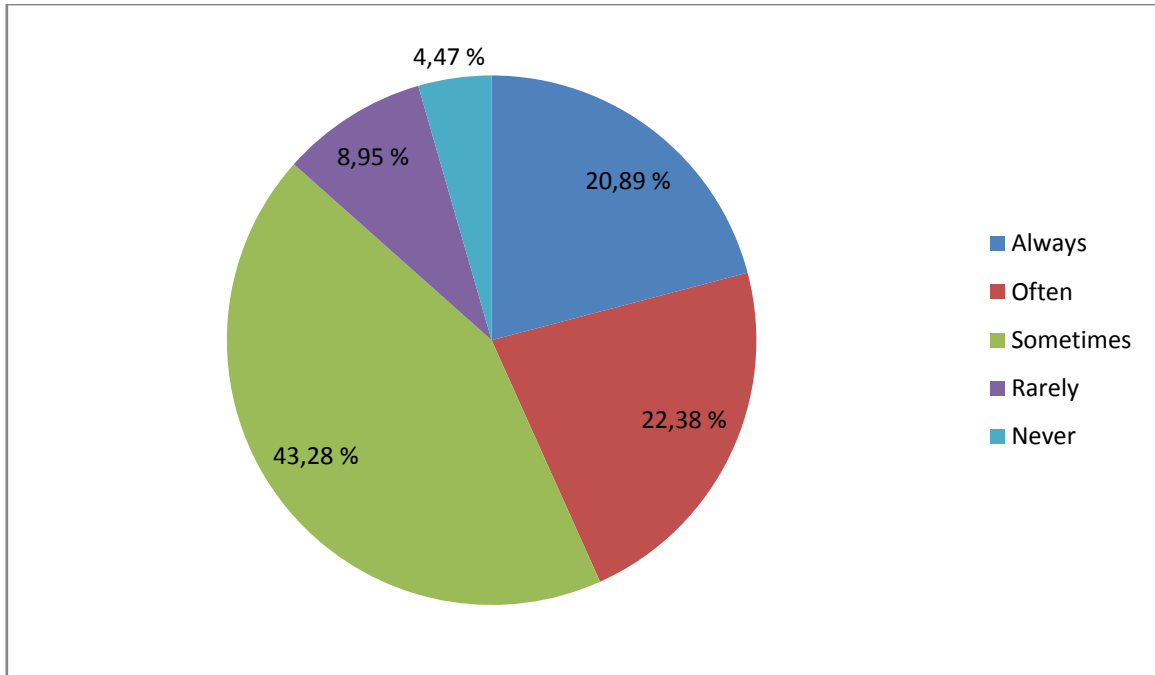
We noticed from the results that the majority of the respondents “64.63%” did not take extra courses to improve their English which is related somehow to the possibility that most of them did not choose to study English; however, “25.37%” showed interest in learning the language.

### 1.2.2. Section two: Oral Course

#### 5. How often do you participate in class?

**Table 05:** Students' Participation in Class

	Number	Percentage
Always	14	20.89%
Often	15	22.38%
Sometimes	29	43.28%
Rarely	6	8.95%
Never	3	4.47%
Total	67	100%



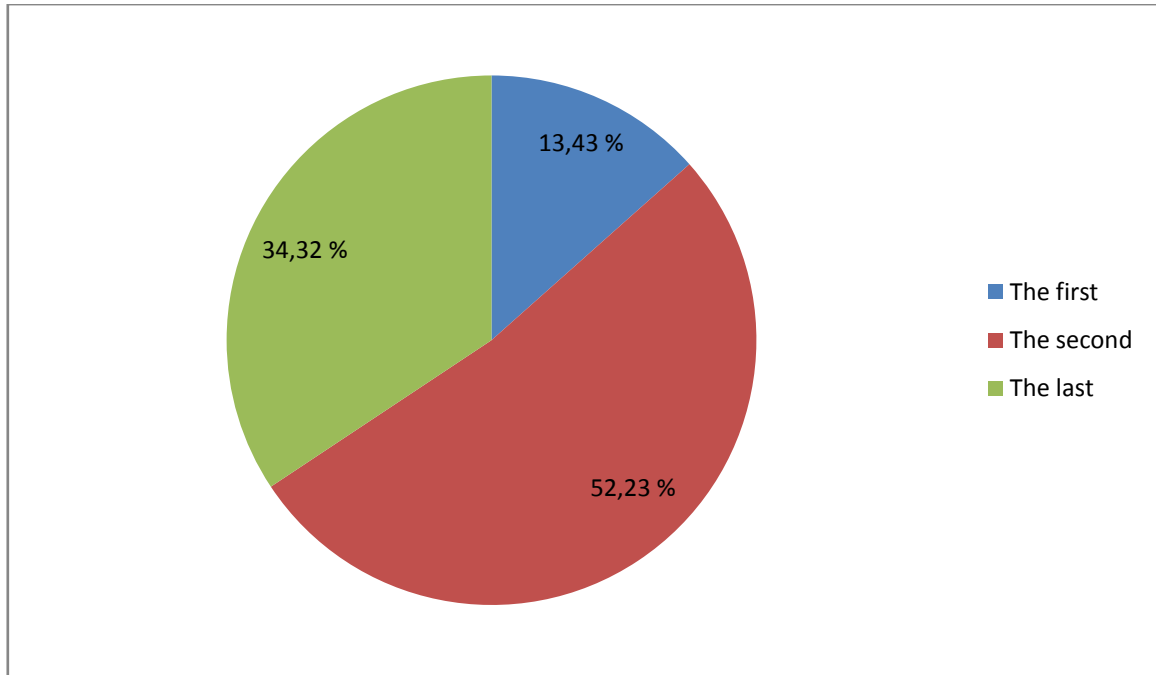
**Graph 05:** Students' Participation in Class

The results indicate that most of the students participate “sometimes” in the oral session, which is a positive result, whereas answered with “always” and “often” have nearly the same percentage with “20.89%” and “22.38%” respectively. At last comes “rarely” and “never”, which scored the lowest percentage with “8.95%” and “4.47%” respectively.

**6. In an oral task, do you usually like to volunteer?**

**Table 06:** Students' Willingness to volunteer in an oral task

	Number	Percentage
<b>The first</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13.43%</b>
<b>The second</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>52.23%</b>
<b>The last</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34.32%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



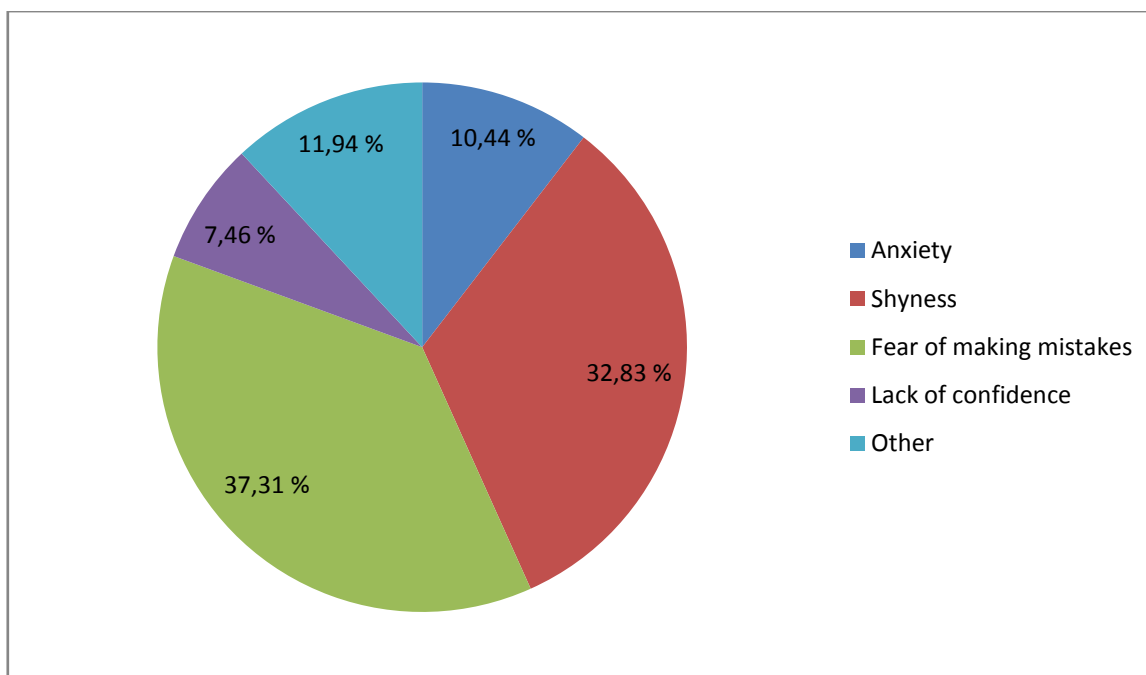
**Graph 06:** Students Willingness to volunteer in an oral task

We noticed that “52.23%” of the students choose to be at the second place when it comes to volunteering in an oral task, which is usually because of the fear of being the first volunteer, “34.32%” choose to be at last staying in their comfort zone. And only few, “13.43%” showed willingness to volunteer as the first.

**7. What are the main reasons preventing you from participating in oral session?**

**Table 07:** Reasons Preventing Students from Speaking in Oral Session

	Number	Percentage
<b>Anxiety</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10.44%</b>
<b>Shyness</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32.83%</b>
<b>Fear of making mistakes</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>37.31%</b>
<b>Lack of confidence</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7.46%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11.94%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



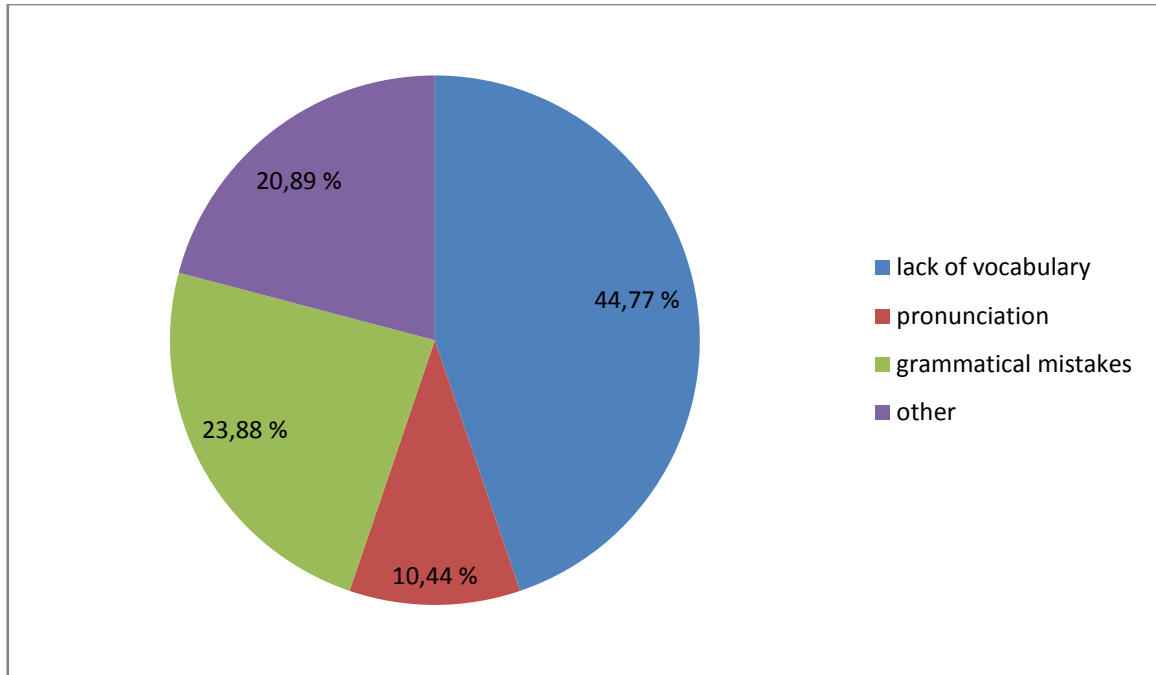
**Graph 07:** Reasons Preventing Students from Speaking in Oral Session

Results show that the most common reason preventing students from participating in their oral sessions is the fear of making mistakes with “37.31%”, along sided with shyness as the second most chosen choice with “32.83%”. The “other” response “11.94%” was mostly a combination of two or three or even all choices together. Anxiety comes before last with “10.44%” of students, and the lack of confidence came last with only “7.46%”.

#### **8. Related to language aspects, which problems do you encounter in speaking?**

**Table 08:** Students’ Problems in Speaking

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Lack of vocabulary</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>44.77%</b>
<b>Pronunciation</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10.44%</b>
<b>Grammatical mistakes</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23.88%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20.89%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Graph 08:** Students' Problems in Speaking

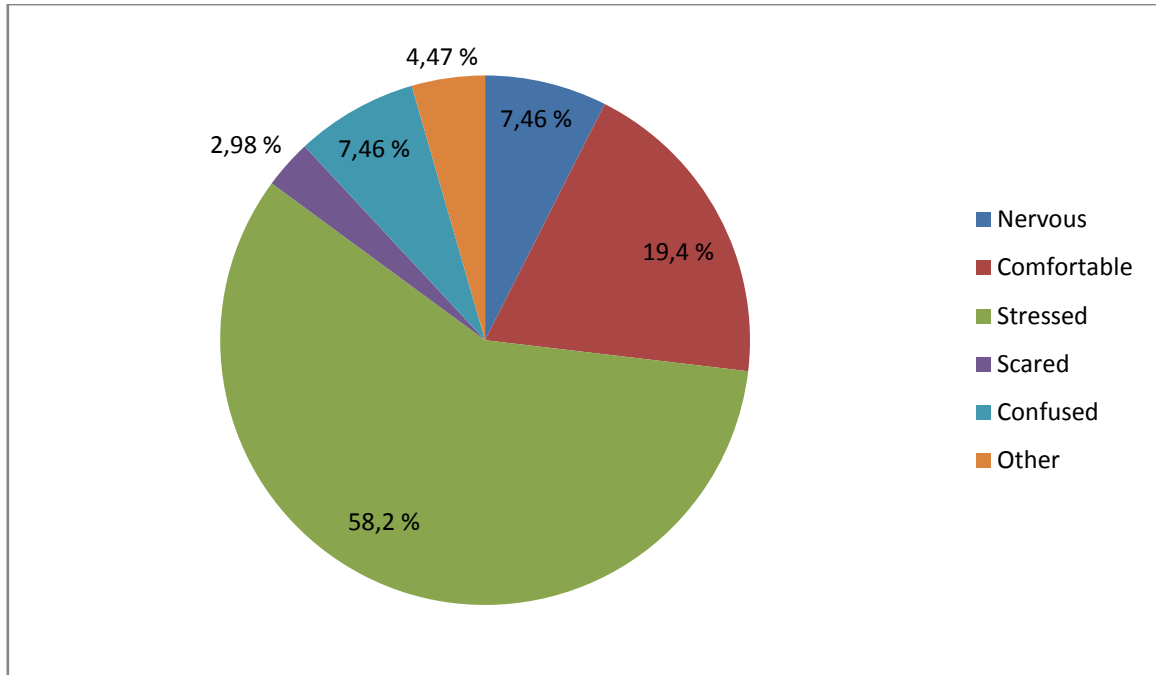
The results point out that the lack of vocabulary, “44.77%” is the biggest problem these students face during oral sessions followed by grammatical mistakes with “23.88%”, and then the lack of vocabulary and grammatical mistakes combined with “20.89%”. Pronunciation comes last with “10.44%”.

**9. How would you feel if you are assigned an oral task?**

**Table 09:** Students' Feelings when assigned an oral task

	Number	Percentage
Nervous	5	7.46%
Comfortable	13	19.40%
Stressed	39	58.20%
Scared	2	2.98%
Confused	5	7.46%
Other	3	4.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>





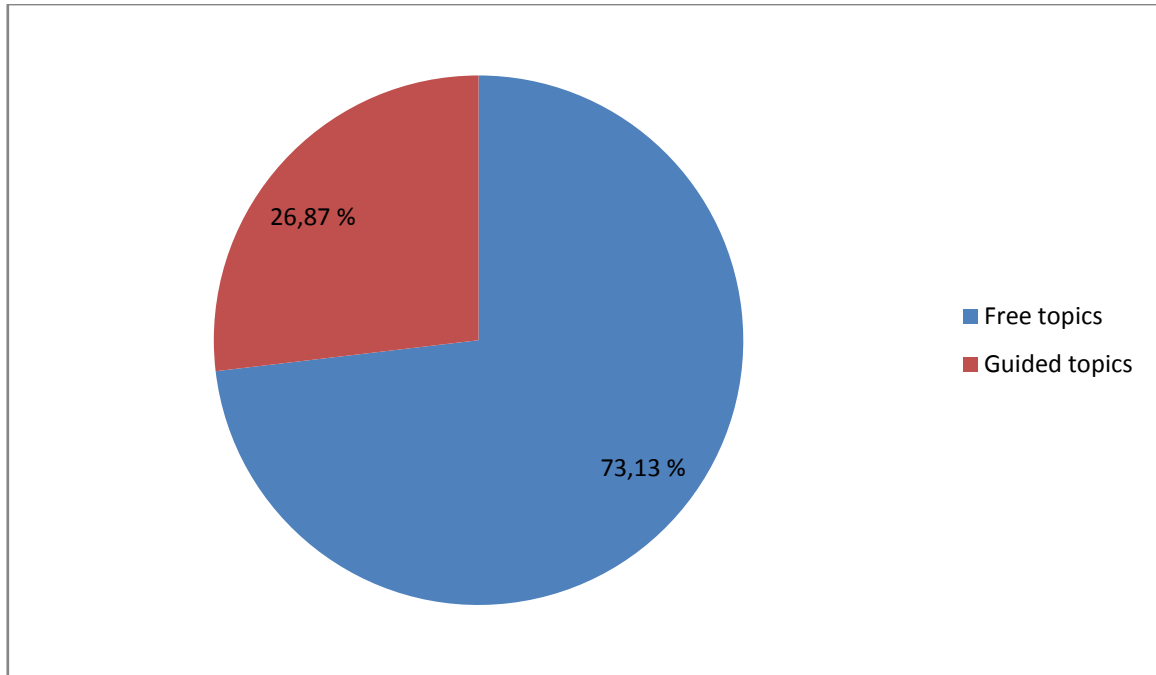
**Graph 09:** Students' Feelings when assigned an oral task

A large amount of the participants “58.20%” are stressed when assigned an oral task. Positively, at the second position, “19.40%” of them are comfortable when asked so. Nervousness and confusion come at the third position with “7.46%” each, and at last comes combinations of stress and confusion, or nervousness and stress, and fear with “4.47%” and “2.98%”.

**10. In an oral session, would you prefer**

**Table 10:** Students' Choice of the Topic

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Free topics</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>73.13%</b>
<b>Guided topics</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26.87%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



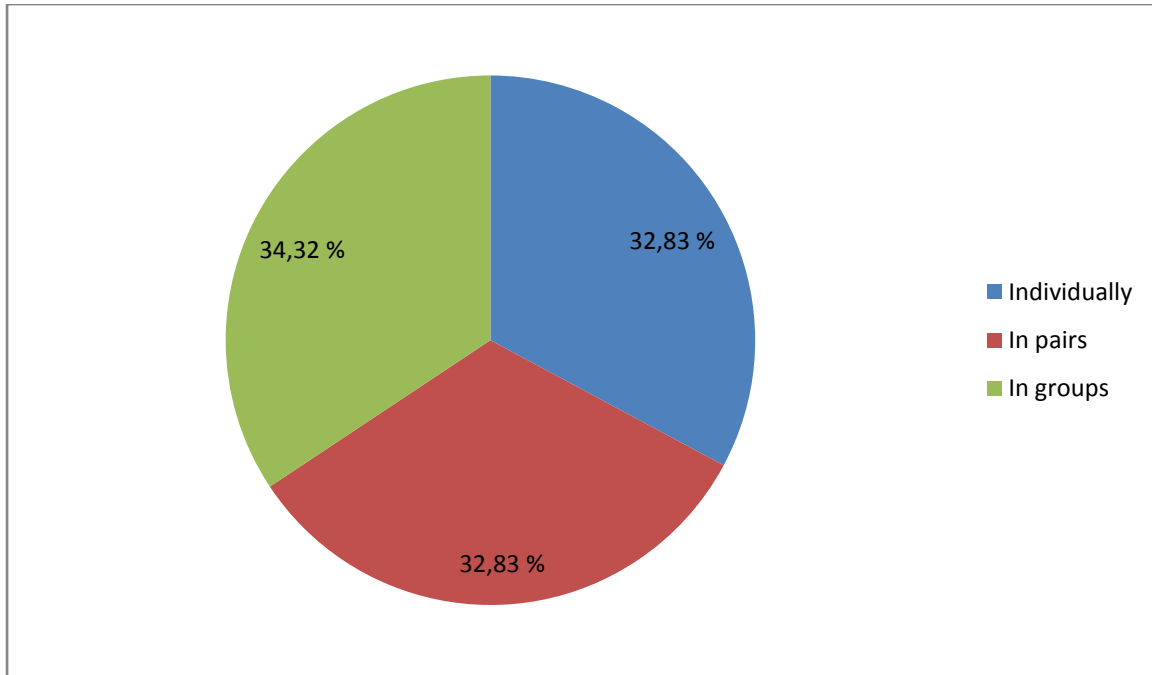
**Graph 10:** Students' Choice of the Topic

We noticed that the result is exactly as we expected it to be. “73.13%” of the students chose the free topic and justified that with that freedom, they feel more at ease and confident to express their ideas and opinions, and also feel motivated to share information about the topic they wanted. The rest chose guided topics and mentioned that the choice of the teacher is well thought of and it takes in consideration all students' levels in the language, and that it is time saving.

**11. In Oral Session, Would you prefer to work**

**Table 11:** Students' Preferences in Working during an Oral Session

	Number	Percentage
<b>Individually</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32.83%</b>
<b>In pairs</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32.83%</b>
<b>In groups</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34.32%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



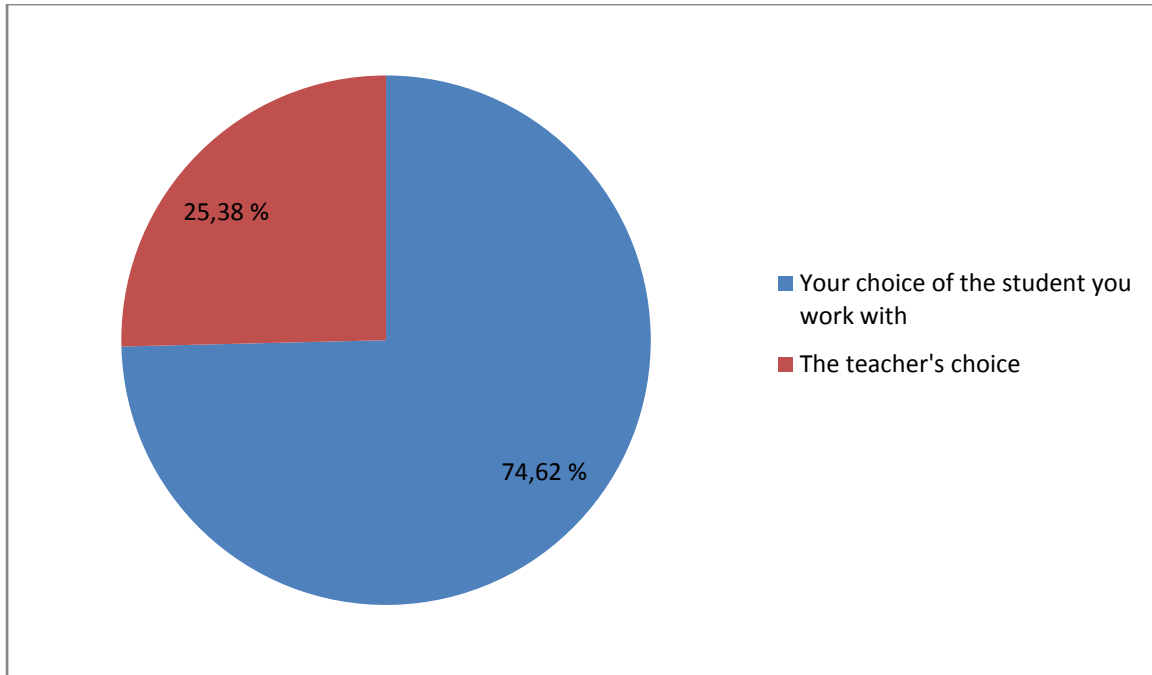
**Graph 11:** Students' Preferences in Working During an Oral Session

The results were very close in this case. Working individually and in pairs was equal with “32.83%” each, and working in groups was the choice of the larger part with “34.32%”. All justified with students comfort on how to work.

**12. If you are assigned to work in pairs or in groups, would you prefer**

**Table 12:** Students' Choice of their Work Partners

	Number	Percentage
Your choice of the students you work with	50	74.62%
The teacher's choice	17	25.38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



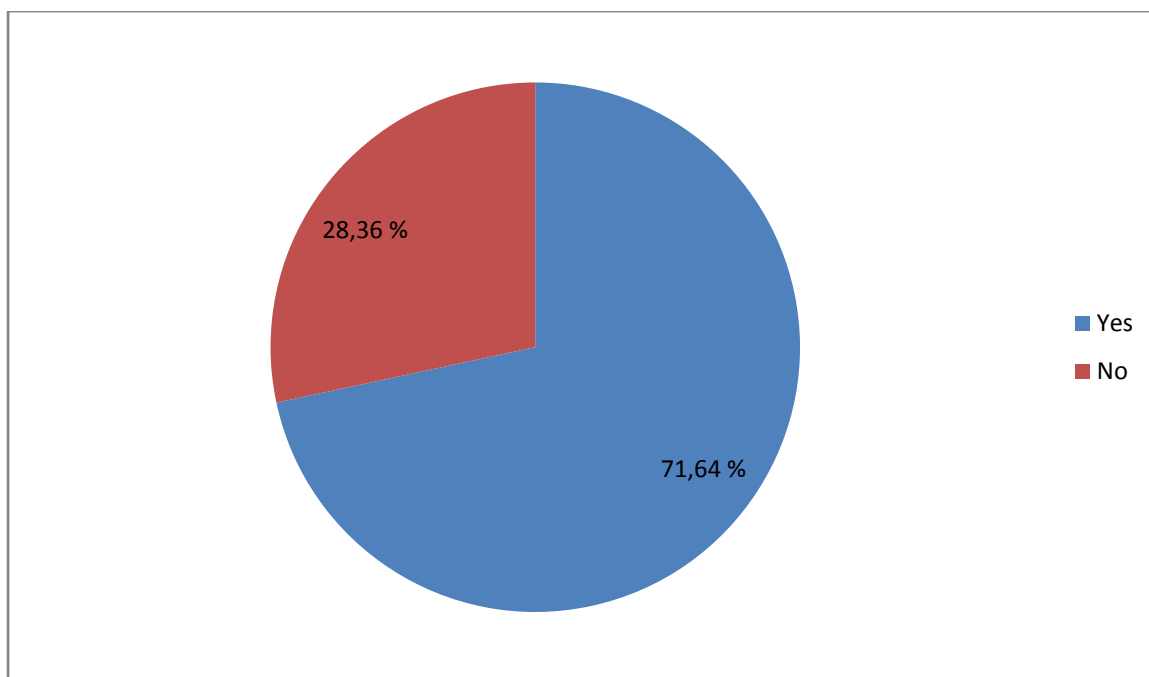
**Graph 12:** Students' Choice of their Work Partners

Results point out that “74.62%” of the participants choose to personally select the students they work with justifying that it suits them better, and feel more willing to work with familiar faces. They also stated that it is more fun to do so. On the other hand, the other “25.38%” of them said that they are fine with the teacher’s choice because what is important to them is to deliver the work but not the person they are working with.

**13. Is the classroom atmosphere helpful to you to be able to speak in class?**

**Table 13:** Classroom Atmosphere’s Impact on Students

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>71.64%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28.36%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



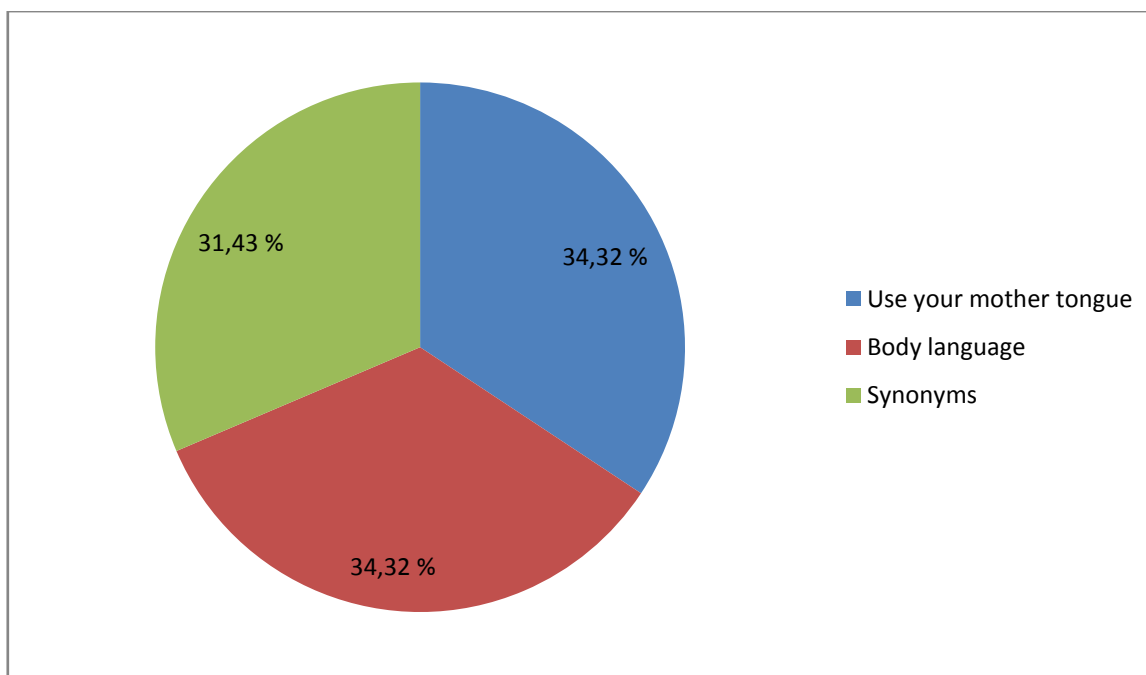
**Graph 13:** Classroom Atmosphere’s Impact on Students

“71.64%” of the students chose “yes” for an answer and followed their choice with arguments such as, their classmates are their friends who make them feel good and comfortable with each other, and their teacher makes sure they are learning and having fun at the same time. The rest “28.36%” felt that the talking during the session was not organized; therefore, it was more or much like noise and that disturbed them, also, some of them complained that their teacher was making the oral session seem more like a writing or grammar session, which made the classroom atmosphere boring to them.

**14. What do you do if you cannot express your ideas in English in oral session?**

**Table 14:** Students’ Substitution Plan to Cover the Missing Target Words

	Number	Percentage
Use your mother tongue	23	34.32%
Gestures and body language	23	34.32%
Find synonyms or paraphrase the idea	21	31.34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



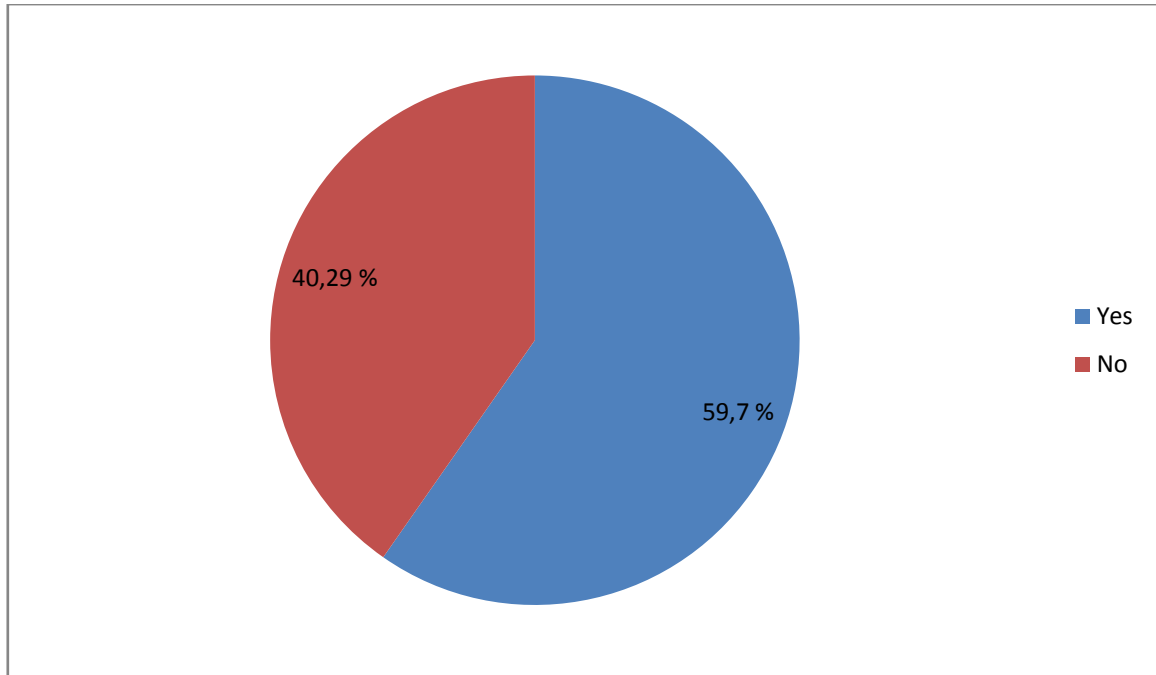
**Graph 14:** Students' Substitution Plan to Cover the Missing Target Words

The results denote that “31.43%” of the students prefer to use or look for synonyms or paraphrasing when they cannot find the exact words to express a specific idea, and that is, according to them, because they are here to study English and they try their best to always speak English. While “34.32%” said they try to use gestures and body language to help themselves express their ideas. The other, “34.32%” choose to use their mother tongue (Arabic), justifying that its use is easier when they lack the needed vocabulary, they, also, stated that they feel shy and embarrassed knowing that their level in English is low, so, they tend to just use Arabic. Other students mentioned that it is a habitual thing to get back to their mother tongue.

**15. Is the oral session's timing programmed in a way that suits you?**

**Table 15:** Students and the Session's Timing

	Number	Percentage
<b>Yes</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>59.70%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>40.29%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Graph 15:** Students and the Session’s Timing

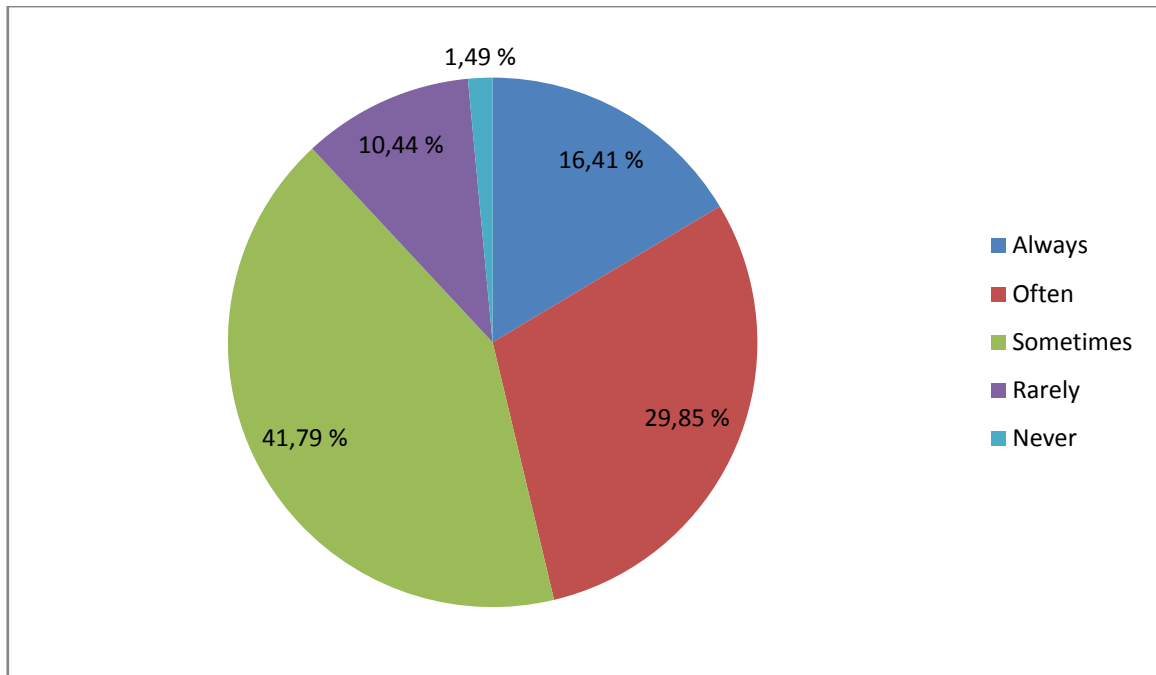
A large amount of the participants “59.70%” said that the sessions are programmed in a very logical and suitable way because they are in the early morning, which according to them, is a time where they are motivated and energetic; therefore, their goal of learning is successfully achieved. The others, “40.29%”, stated that their sessions are programmed in a very bad way, two different sessions in the same day, very late during the day. They stated that they are mostly tired, hungry, or sleepy during their oral sessions because of the failure of timing. Some of them, from both who answered “yes” and “no” even pointed out that two sessions in a week are not enough to them for acquiring better oral performance.

**1.2.3. Section three: students and the teacher’s ways during the oral session**

**16. How often are you given opportunity to speak in class?**

**Table 16:** Students’ Opportunity to Speak in Class

	Number	Percentage
Always	11	16.41%
Often	20	29.88%
Sometimes	28	41.79%
Rarely	7	10.44%
Never	1	1.49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Graph 16:** Students' Opportunity to Speak in Class

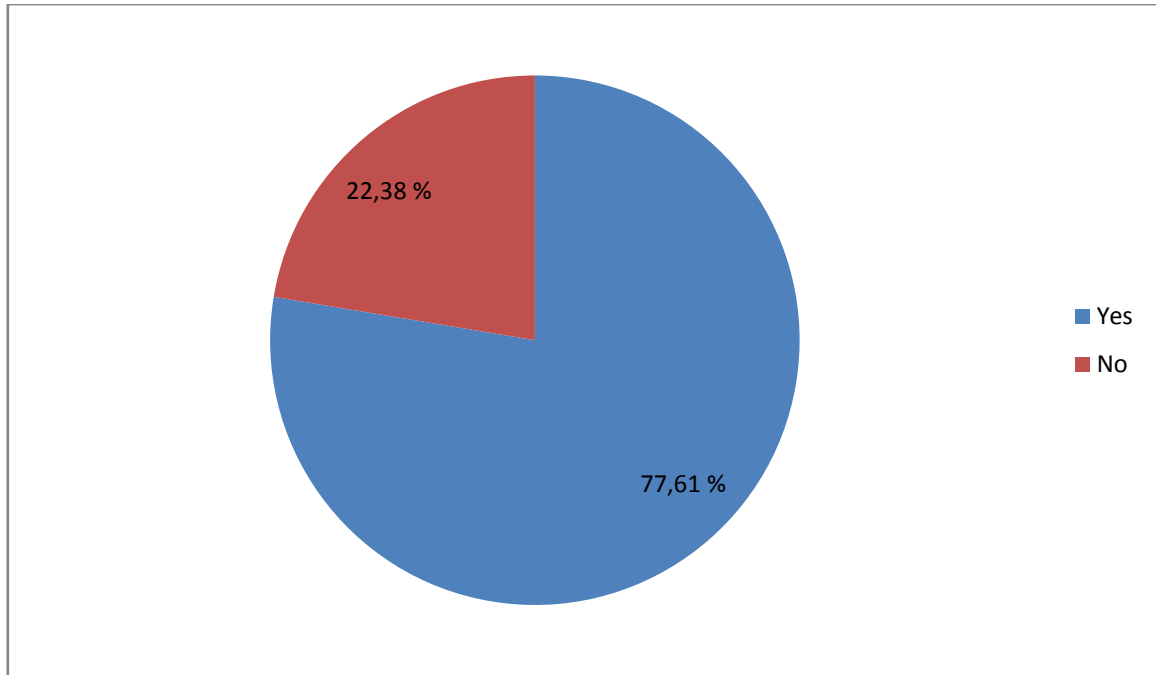
Even though the “often” and “sometimes” answers are dominant with “29.85%” and “41.79%” respectively, it is noticed that “rarely” and “never” still hold an important amount of them, which is a negative outcome. For those who chose “always”, “16.41%”, they are usually the ones who the teachers work with the most and likely neglect some other students in his classroom.

**17. Is the teacher’s feedback motivating you to speak in oral sessions?**

**Table 17:** Students' Reaction to the Teacher's Feedback

	Number	Percentage
<b>Yes</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>77.61%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22.38%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>





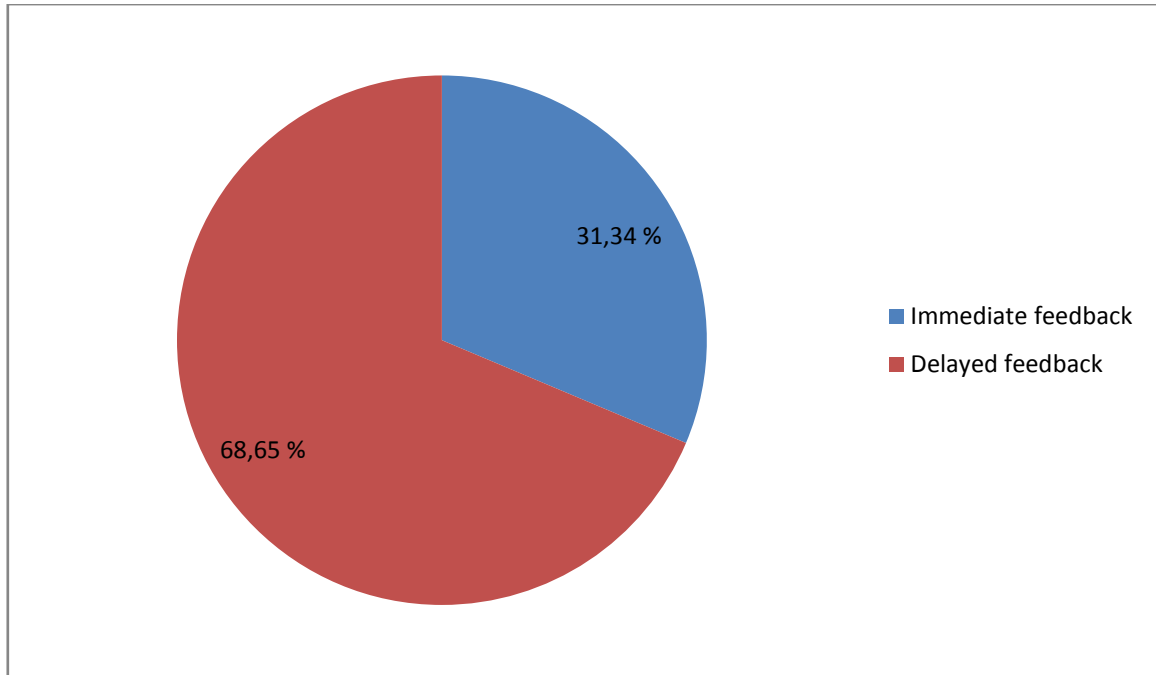
**Graph 17:** Students' Reaction to the Teacher's Feedback

We notice from these results that most of the students “77.61%” are highly motivated by the teacher’s feedback and it is preferable to them to get reactions for their oral performances to be willing to make progress. On the other hand, “22.38%” of them feel confident enough and seem to not need any feedback from their teacher.

**18. What type of feedback would you prefer?**

**Table 18:** Students' Feedback Preferences

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Immediate feedback</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>31.34%</b>
<b>Delayed feedback</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>68.65%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



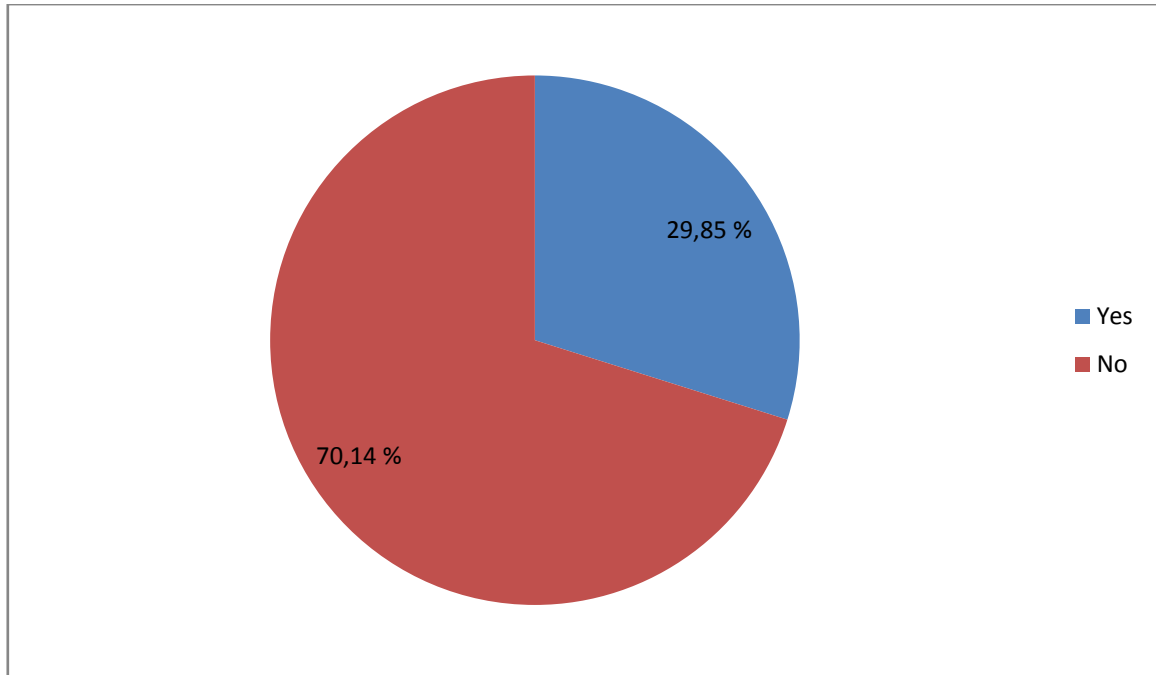
**Graph 18:** Students' Feedback Preferences

“68.65%” of the participants expectedly chose the delayed feedback over the immediate one, saying that they feel confused and unsure about their oral performance. They mentioned that it makes them lose their flow of thoughts; therefore, it consequences an awkward silence. The rest chose the immediate feedback and stated that they prefer it because they feel that the teacher is paying attention to their performance, and that encourages them to produce better oral performances.

**19. Does the teacher provide you with tips for better oral performance?**

**Table 19:** Students and the Teacher's Help

	Number	Percentage
Yes	20	29.85%
No	47	70.14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



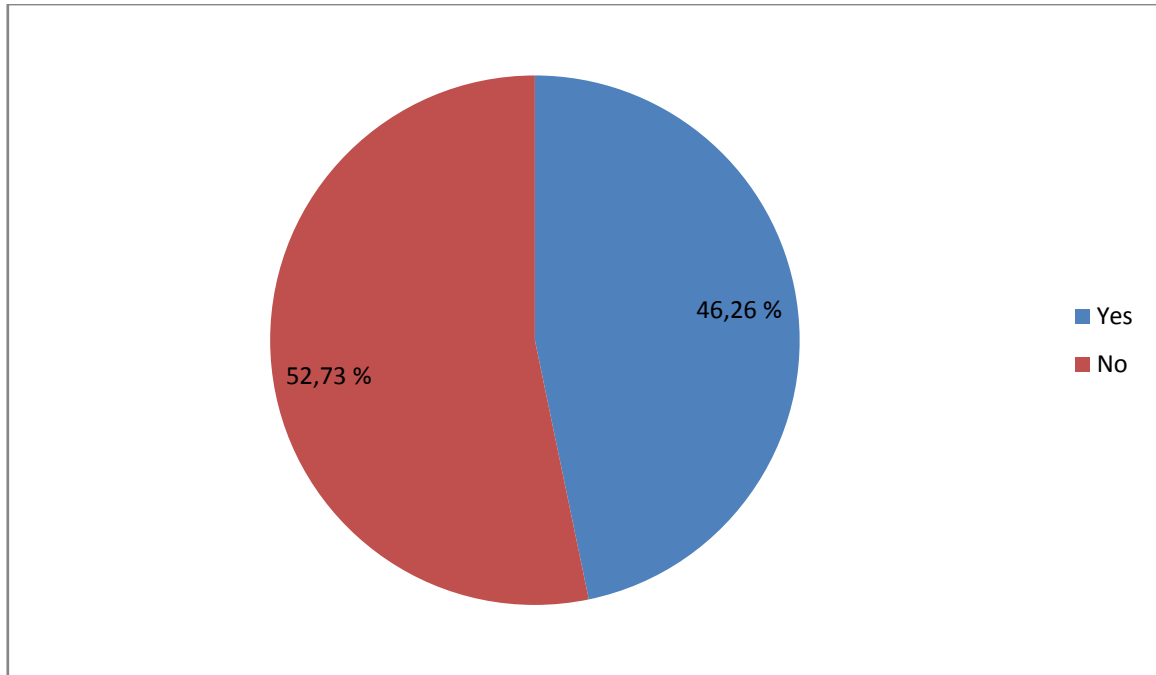
**Graph 19:** Students and the Teacher's Help

Although knowing the importance of providing tips to help the students' oral performance to improve, results seem to show that "70.14%" of the students do not get any boost from their teachers, which is neither logical nor professional of them. Few of the respondents, "29.85%", seem to get the help they need from their teacher.

**20. Does the teacher provide you with language help during the session?**

**Table 20:** Students and The teacher's Help During the Oral Session

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>46.26%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53.73%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Graph 20:** Students and the Teacher’s Help During the Oral Session

“53.73%” of the students chose “no” for answer, the students complained that without enough time to acquire the oral performance skill, the teacher not helping them during the session is even more destructive to them. The rest of them “46.26%” see to get the help they need from their teacher during the session.

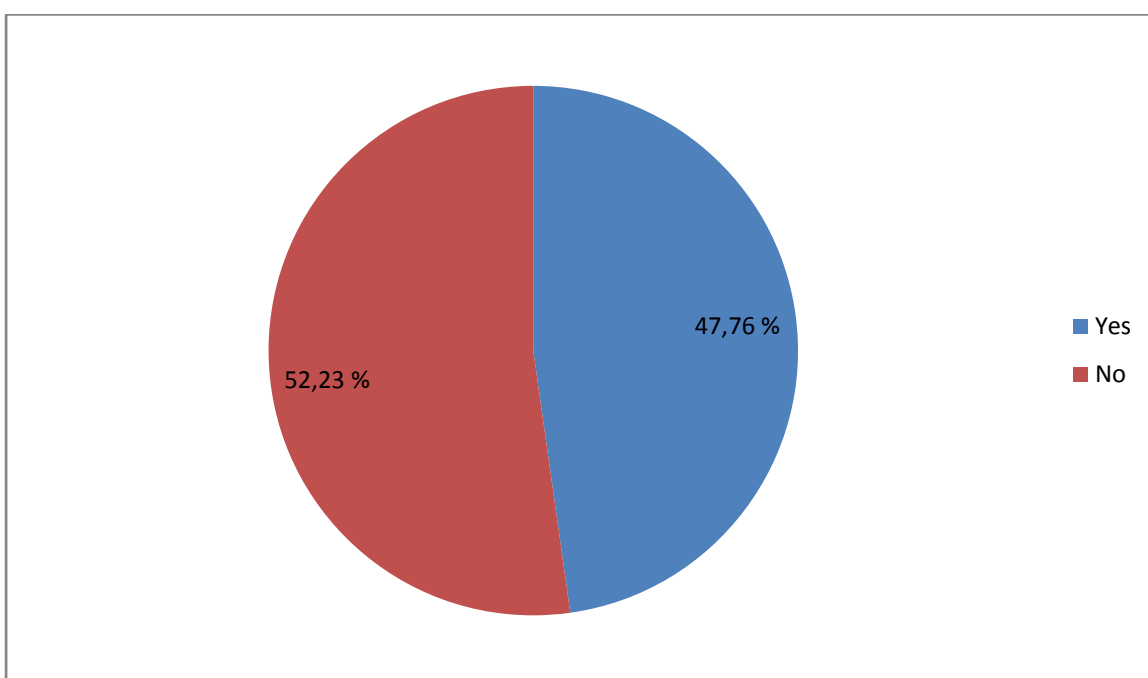
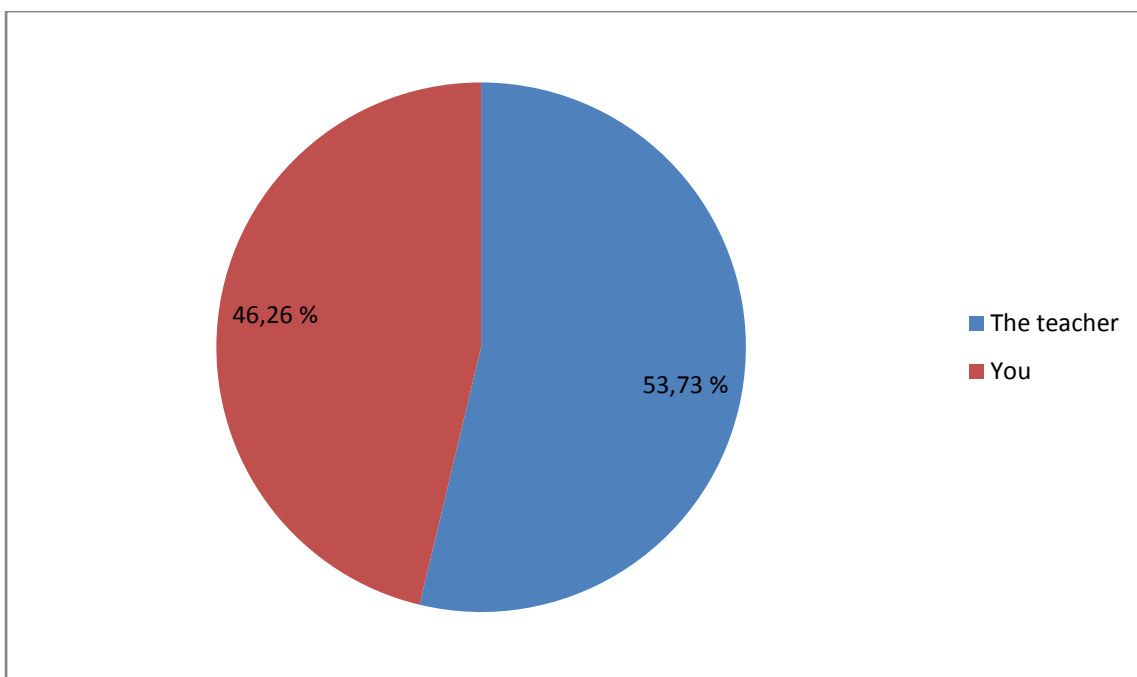
**21. In your oral performance sessions, who talks more?**

**Table 21 and 22:** Teacher’s and Students’ Amount of Speaking in Class

	Number	Percentage
The teacher	36	53.73%
You	31	46.26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

• **Does that suit you?**

	Number	Percentage
Yes	32	47.76%
No	35	52.23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Graph 21 and 22:** Teacher’s and Students’ Amount of Speaking in Class

The results indicate that the teacher is the one who talks more during the session to “53.73%” of the students, keeping in mind that it is an oral performance session. This result is not okay, and students are bothered of this case and claim that they need a chance to be more involved in the sessions to improve their oral performance skills. The others “46.26%” seem to have the chance to be the ones who talk more, and that is logical and suits them just fine.

## **2. Teacher's Interview**

We conducted this interview to find out what are the main difficulties of the second year LMD students from the teachers' point of view and which prevent the oral performance sessions to go smoothly and successfully. We interviewed two teachers out of three in the same level in the English department of KasdiMerbah University. This interview is a set of eight questions.

### **1. Were you trained to teach an oral performance course?**

Both teachers responded with a "no" answer, one of them even said that it is not one he teaches best, and he is more interested in teaching grammar or writing, and that it influences his way of teaching his assigned oral performance sessions.

### **2. Do you consider your students active in class?**

One of the two teachers answered that he does consider them active, and that he tries his best to make them so. The other teacher answered with a "sometimes yes", "sometimes no", depending on the session and activities and so on.

### **3. What activities do you think make your students more active in class?**

Both of the teachers suggested a lot of activities: plays, interviews, games, etc. They stated that, the more the atmosphere is fun; the better it is for the students. One of the teachers added that sometimes that doesn't work when they feel low and unmotivated.

### **4. How do you manage to keep your students interested each session?**

They pointed out that choosing the right activities and insisting on team work in the sessions motivates them to attend the sessions and enjoy them. Each student focuses in being in the winning team and does his best to achieve that.

### **5. According to your observation, what could be the reasons preventing your students from speaking in class?**

They denoted many reasons, lack of confidence, shyness, stress, fear of speaking in front of their classmates, but those could be fixed with little efforts and hard work to make the students feel comfortable during the session. And also time related problems, the time of the sessions specifically, were a huge problem for one teacher. He claimed that late programmed sessions are a bad decision that the administration should take care of as quickly as possible.

**6. Do you usually choose the topics, or let the students pick their own? Why?**

One of the teachers said he likes to choose the topics of his oral performance session because otherwise the sessions will be messy and noisy, with him choosing; the session is well organized. The other prefers to let the students choose, because, in his opinion, they will be more motivated and willing to speak and be active in class.

**7. Is the number of the students per group suitable for you?**

They both didn't hesitate one second to answer with a no, they said that the number is too large and it's preferable if it was less for the sake of both the teacher and the students, for a better experience in learning the oral performance skill.

**8. At last, is the programmed session's timing suitable for you? Why?**

They both agreed on that both the during and the number of sessions are definitely not enough to teach or master the oral performance skill, but the administration's programmed sessions, one teacher was satisfied, saying that his sessions are in two separate days both in the early morning, which is the perfect timing for teaching such module. The other unfortunately isn't, both his sessions are in one day, late that day. Most of the class is absent, the present students are tired, hungry, sleepy, everything but motivated to learn and focus with him, and he said he can't blame them for any of that. He blames the administration and states that it should be taken care of as quick as possible for the sake of both the learner and the teacher.

**3. Classroom observation**

The aim of classroom observations is to observe the students during their oral performance sessions our self, by being among them, we could remark some of the difficulties they have and also the way they operate in their classrooms. We attended 6 sessions as a whole, three in one group, two others in another group, and a last one in the last group. All second year LMD groups were included.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter allowed us to be in direct contact with the students and teachers, and that helped us to gather data about students' difficulties and the teachers' points of view about those problems. The chapter has for aim finding techniques and solutions that enhance their participation and their speaking abilities and resolve its problems.

To gather those pieces of information, a questionnaire was submitted to the second year LMD students of the English department of KasdiMerbah University, we attended 6 sessions as classroom observations, and an interview was conducted on two teachers of the same level.

The analysis of the results showed that the EFL students face many obstacles and barriers preventing them to advance and develop their oral performance skill and to be active in class as well. Which proves that our hypotheses right. The revealed data helped us find the right solutions to those suggested problems.



## Findings

The data we have collected from the questionnaire administered to the second year LMD students at the department of English at KasdiMerbah University, and the interview conducted on two teachers on the same level confirm our hypotheses. The tables and graphs above show that EFL students face many barriers during their oral performance sessions. The results also show that speaking is the main skill in the oral course to be developed, and it needs more care.

The findings from the questionnaire and interview analysis strengthen our hypotheses about the difficulties that face the students during their oral performance sessions. Most of the students face the same kind of problems varied from linguistic obstacles to psychological ones. The most common linguistic problems are the lack of vocabulary and grammatical mistakes, and the most common psychological ones are the fear of making mistakes and shyness, and with those obstacles combined, the student's development of the speaking skill is reduced.

In addition to that, the teachers have the responsibility of making the students feel comfortable during the oral session with a friendly atmosphere that he could create, and by giving enough opportunities to speak in class and the help and positive feedback needed to get better results. The teacher should also, according to the results, choose carefully his topics or leave the students the choice to assure that they are confident and motivated to speak.

Also, we found that the students tend to use their mother tongue when they lack the vocabulary needed, but that could be solved by pair and group work. Results show that when the students are paired or grouped appropriately, they are more confident and willing to work inside the classroom. With the help of the partners and the team spirit, pair and group work seem to be the remedy of both linguistic and psychological obstacles.

At last, timing, duration, and students' number per group are considered to be a problem for both students and teachers. They prevent the teacher from achieving his programmed goals for a successful course, and prevent the students' speaking skill development during the course. That led us to conclude that the administration has also an important role to result a successful oral course, that role consists of programming the right amount of sessions at the right time, and reducing the group number, along sided with choosing an appropriate and qualified teacher for that course.

# **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

Our research is based on exploring the difficulties that face the EFL students in oral performance. Our purpose from this humble work is to depict the oral performance obstacles that the second year LMD students face during their oral course, then, to suggest some solutions to solve those problems. To answer our question, we combined the descriptive and analytical methods. A questionnaire was submitted to the second year LMD students of the English department at KasdiMerbah University, and conducted an interview with two teachers at the same level of the academic year 2018-2019.

Our work was divided into a theoretical part and an analytical part. The first part is classified into two chapters. The first chapter started by an overview about the speaking skill as the main skill in the oral performance courses. In the same chapter, different difficulties that face EFL students in their oral performance were discussed.

The second chapter deals with the teacher's role as he could play a variety of roles according to the situation demands. Different solutions were suggested to could help erase the students' difficulties for a better learning experience. This chapter also deals with techniques that could be adopted in the classroom to enhance the students' confidence and motivation to develop their speaking skill.

The second part of our work is the field of investigation in which we analyzed the data gathered from the questionnaire distributed, and the interview conducted to prove our hypotheses right.

## Recommendations

To conclude and close our study which encounter the students' difficulties in oral performance, we suggest some recommendations which hopefully will be useful and helpful for a successful oral performance course and a better teaching and learning experience for both teachers and students.

- The timing, duration, group number should be chosen carefully.
- The Oral Session must be taught by a trained and qualified teacher.
- The teacher has to create a friendly atmosphere to make the students feel comfortable during his session.
- The teacher has to invite and encourage the students to speak by giving them positive feedback and helping them in need.
- Include more pair and group work activities to increase a cooperative learning experience through discussion of ideas and so.
- The choices of the right topic that interests the student or let him choose for a fun learning experience to him.
- To assign a competent and trained teachers to do the task of teaching that skill to the destined students.
- To program a suitable number of sessions per week in order to satisfy the learners' needs.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### The Students' Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to depict the difficulties of oral skill among students of second year licence. You have been selected as the best source of information to contribute to this study. You are kindly invited to answer this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is divided into two main sections, the first is about students' background and the second is about your oral session. It is designed to be answered in 10 minutes. Please, answer all questions as accurately as you can. Thank you in advance.

Instructions: put a (√) in each square and answer by short sentences if the question needs an explanation or a justification.

#### A. Students' background:

1. Age:

2. Gender:            Male                       Female

3. What branch were you in at secondary school?    languages                       Other

4. Have you ever taken extra courses to improve your English?    Yes                       No

#### B. Oral course:

5. How often do you participate in class?

Always             Often             Sometimes             Rarely  Never

6. In an oral task, do you usually like to volunteer :

The first  The second                       The last

Other:

.....

7. What are the main reasons preventing you from participating in class?

Anxiety  Shyness  Fear of making mistakes             lack of confidence

Other:.....

8. Related to language aspects, which problems do you encounter in speaking ?

Lack of vocabulary                       Pronunciation                       Grammatical mistakes



Others:

.....  
.....

9. How would you feel if you are assigned an oral task?

Nervous  comfortable       stressed  scared       confused

Others:

.....  
.....

10. In an oral session, would you prefer :

Free topic       Guided topic

Why?.....  
.....  
.....

11. In an oral session, would you prefer to work:

Individually       In pairs  In groups

Why?.....  
.....

12. If you are assigned to work in pairs or in a group, would you prefer:

Your choice of the students you work with  The teacher's

Why?.....  
.....  
.....

13. Is the classroom atmosphere helpful to you to be able to speak in class ?

Yes       No

How?.....  
.....

14. What do you do if you cannot express your ideas in English?

Use your mother tongue       Body language  Synonyms

15. Is the oral session's timing programmed in a way that suits you?

Yes       No

Why?.....  
.....

**C. Students and the teacher's ways during the oral session:**

16. How often are you given opportunity to speak in class?

Always       Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

17. Is the teacher's feedback motivating you to speak in class?

Yes       No

18. What type of feedback would you prefer?

Immediate feedback       Delayed feedback

Why?  
.....  
.....  
.....

19. Does the teacher provide you with tips for better oral performance?

Yes       No

20. Does the teacher provide you with language help during the session?

Yes       No

21. In your oral session, who talks more?

The teacher  You(the students)

Is that suitable for you?      Yes       No

Why?  
.....  
.....  
.....

## **Appendix B**

### **The Teachers' Interview**

Were you trained to teach an oral performance course?

Do you consider your students active in class ?

What activities do you think make your students more active in class?

How do you manage to keep your students interested each oral session ?

According to your observation, what could be the reasons preventing your students from speaking in class ?

Do you usually choose the topics or you let your students pick their own ? why?

Is the number of students per group suitable for you ?

At last, is the programmed sessions' timing suitable for you ? why?

## المخلص

تهدف الدراسة الى الكشف عن صعوبات الكلام و التي تؤثر في الاداء الشفوي لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة اجنبية و ذلك في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة. يفترض هذا البحث ان الطلبة يعانون من عدة صعوبات في مثل المشاكل اللسانية و النفسية وحتى ما يتعلق بمزاجهم اتجاه الموضوع. ان هذه الصعوبات تحول بينهم و بين تحسين اداءهم الشفهي. ومن اجل اثبات الفرضيات السابقة فقد اخترنا طلبة السنة الثانية ليسانس و اساتذة مقياس التعبير الشفهي لدراسة حالة و قد استخدمنا لذلك اكثر من اداة بحثية في مثل الاستبيان و المقابلة بالإضافة الى الملاحظة داخل القسم. وقد اظهرت النتائج المحصل عليها ان هناك عوامل تؤثر على الاداء الشفهي للطلبة في مقياس التعبير الشفهي. وكخطوة اخيره فان المعطيات تقترح بعض التقنيات و النشاطات التي قد تساعد بشكل فعال متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية حيث انها تمدهم ببعض النصائح سواء للطلبة او للأساتذة وذلك من اجل حصة تعبير شفهي ناجحة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** صعوبات الكلام، الأداء الشفوي، لغة انجليزية كلغة اجنبية، المشاكل اللسانية، المشاكل النفسية.

## Résumé

La présente étude a pour objectif de décrire les difficultés de langage qui affectent la performance orale des apprenants d'anglais comme langue étrangère au département d'anglais de l'université de Ouargla. Tout au long de cette étude, nous émettons l'hypothèse que les élèves se heurtent à un certain nombre d'obstacles, tels que des problèmes linguistiques, des problèmes psychologiques ou la mauvaise attitude des apprenants à l'égard du sujet, etc. Ces obstacles les empêchent d'améliorer leurs compétences orales. Afin de confirmer les hypothèses précédentes, nous avons enquêté sur le cas d'étudiants en licence de deuxième année et d'enseignants du module d'expression orale de même niveau au département d'anglais de l'université de Ouargla. Nous avons utilisé plus d'un outil de recherche; un questionnaire, une interview et une observation en classe. Les données obtenues à partir des outils de recherche indiquent que certains facteurs affectent la performance orale des étudiants dans les cours d'expression orale. Enfin, les données suggèrent certaines techniques et activités qui aident les étudiants d'anglais à faire face efficacement à leurs problèmes de parole, car elles fournissent des conseils aux apprenants et à l'enseignant d'anglais pour réussir sa session orale.

**Mots clés:** *Les Difficultés de Langage, La Performance Orale, Anglais comme Langue étrangère, problèmes linguistiques, Problèmes psychologiques.*