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**The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on
Students' Academic Oral Proficiency**

The Case of Third Year Undergraduate LMD Students of English at
Ouargla University

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Dedication

To the memory of my sympathetic father;

To my thoughtful mother;

To my two lovely sisters;

To the person I want to share my life with;

To all those who care about me.

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List of Abbreviations

CLT Communicative Language Teaching

CL Cooperative Learning

ECA Extra-Curricular Activity

EC Extra-Curricular

EFL English as a Foreign Language

FL Foreign Language

L₂ Second Language

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Introduction

Overview

Foreign Language (FL) teaching by its very nature is an interactive process. It is very important for learners who are studying English in non-English speaking setting, to experience real communicative situations in which they will learn how to express their own views and opinions, and develop their oral fluency and accuracy (proficiency) which are very essential for the success of EFL communication.

Students spend a majority of their time outside of the classroom; the way they choose to spend their free time can affect their academic performance; it is not simply traditional in-class instruction that impacts academic achievement (Stephens & Schaben, 2002). For the majority of college and university students, involvement in extracurricular activities plays an integrant role in the collegiate experience. Students join in extracurricular activities not only for entertainment, social and enjoyment purposes, but most important, to gain and improve skills.

Extracurricular activities create then opportunities for the classroom community to engage in and interact in ways that allow developing knowledge and skills. As far as speaking is concerned, it is considered as the most desirable skill to be mastered by second language (L₂) learners because it is necessary for displaying language proficiency. Language clubs, language corners, events—all of these appear to have some sort of effect on students' academic performance and thus the way learners perform orally. Extracurricular activities as it seems, are necessary and useful as a way to enhance learning.

Based upon a literature review and analysis of best practices, several studies on this topic suggest that there is a positive correlation between student engagement in extracurricular activities and student learning and persistence.

Aim of the Study

Through the present research, we aim at investigating the relationship between the participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement of oral proficiency upon English university students. Thus, our main aim is to contribute to our understanding of how

and to what extent extracurricular participation could help the third year LMD students of English at Ouargla University to improve their level of oral proficiency.

Identification of the Problem

At Ouargla University, third year LMD students of English are struggling to improve and develop their English communicative skills, in particular speaking. Obviously, speaking is considered as the major skill to be developed for learning a L₂. We have noticed that students who are involved in extracurricular activities achieve better in oral proficiency in most cases than those who do not. Our University invests a great deal of money and manpower in support of extracurricular activities in an effort to foster student engagement; therefore it is also necessary to assess if such intervention actually enhances student academic performance. The problem we are confronted with in this research is the existing relationship between extracurricular participation and developing the academic oral proficiency.

Research Questions

The precise question is:

Does extracurricular participation lead eventually to a better achievement of students' oral proficiency?

Hypothesis

The extracurricular context in which students learn English gives a lot of opportunities for natural language use. It enables the students to interact and speak freely, where the majority of them can show their true oral capacities. This leads us to hypothesize that:

If students are actively involved in extracurricular activities, then their oral proficiency will develop.

We believe that promoting this vision to FL teaching in general and oral expression in particular will hopefully contribute to provide learners with extensive oral production and communication.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study have the potential to add to the existing literature regarding the value of extracurricular activities. Several research studies have been completed on younger students and the influence of some extracurricular activities on their growth and development. Very little research has been conducted on students at the university age level regarding their choices of university-based extracurricular activities as it relates to academic growth and achievement.

Student's and teacher's opinions toward extracurricular activities in University need to be studied to determine their contribution toward the learning process in general, and in my case to learning the speaking skill 'oral proficiency'. Once known, these opinions can give direction to needed changes within the existing out-of-class or extracurricular programs. The success or failure of any educational program is ascertained from the participants' acceptance of the program. For this reason, this study will seek to expose existing opinions toward out-of-class activities that until the present time have only been assumed.

Means of Research

The most important methods of collecting needs analysis data are interviews, observation and questionnaires. However, interviews and observation are more useful in helping to better understand students' needs, but more time consuming. In our case, we will use both questionnaire and interview to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture. In this sense, we would direct an interview for teachers, who have been teaching for a long time to make sure that their answers are the product of many years of observation of learners' performance, particularly teachers of oral expression module, to investigate their opinions about the usefulness of extracurricular activities as a way to enhance learners' oral proficiency. The students' questionnaire would be directed to third-year LMD students of English at the University of Ouargla to find out whether the learners give more importance and value to participation in extracurricular activities. It also aims at investigating the students' evaluation of their oral proficiency and the awareness of participating in extracurricular activities.

Structure of the Study

The present research is divided into two main parts; a descriptive theoretical part including two chapters about the review of the related literature, and an empirical part which includes one chapter, which is concerned with the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative responses, and discussions of the results obtained from students' questionnaire and teacher' interview.

Chapter One discusses some of the theoretical issues related to the nature of speaking and oral communication, namely, the importance of speaking in the FL. It also deals with the relationship between speaking and the other language skills. In this chapter, different techniques for developing oral proficiency, speaking difficulties, and some learners' strategies for oral communication are also considered.

Chapter Two provides a better understanding of the role of extracurricular activities in language learning and teaching. It includes an introduction to the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching as a framework theory to our research study followed by a review of the history of extracurricular activities, the concept of extracurricular activities and its relationship with academic achievement. It explains also the reported benefits of these activities and learners' attitudes towards extracurricular activities.

Chapter Three deals with methodology and data analysis. It provides a detailed analysis of both teacher's interview and students' questionnaire followed by tentative interpretations and some practical recommendations for EFL students and educators about organizing extracurricular activities in a way that would be most conducive to language learning. It will also help us to see whether or not the results go in the same direction of our hypothesis.

Chapter One : Developing Learners' Academic Oral Proficiency via Speaking

Introduction

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Introduction

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) requires learners' exposure to what is called the FL skills: reading, speaking, writing and listening. The first and the last aim of acquiring such language skills is to achieve a high development of abilities of receiving and producing the L₂ either in oral or written form, i.e. achieving a good mastery in the productive and receptive skills. As far as speaking is concerned, it is regarded as the major skill to be developed because it is necessary for displaying the language proficiency; learners are going to be put in situations where communication in English is needed, that is why the emphasis is mainly on speaking.

In this chapter, light will be shed on the speaking skill with more details, including the main characteristics of speaking performance, demonstrating the learners' oral communicative strategies, with some focus on speaking difficulties in FL learning, and finally some teaching techniques for oral proficiency.

1.1 What is Speaking?

1.1.1 Definition of Speaking

Speaking is a basic skill that language learners should master with other language skills.

It is defined as a complex process of sending and receiving messages through the use of verbal expressions, but it also involves non verbal symbols such as gestures and facial expressions. Hedge (2000: 261) defines speaking as "a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed." That is to say speaking is an important skill which deserves more attention in both first and L₂ because it reflects people's thoughts and personalities.

L₂ learners' speech is characterized by a number of errors and mistakes. Therefore, speaking is not a simple skill; its complete mastery requires some experience and practice. Hedge argues that "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop." The skill of speaking is quite different from writing in its typical grammatical, lexical and discourse patterns. Moreover, some of the processing skills needed in speaking differ from the ones involved in reading and writing. Also, second language speaking differs from first language speaking in terms of the lack of grammar and

vocabulary knowledge of learners, i.e., the process of building utterances accurately and retrieving words does not yet become automatic in L₂ speaking (Thornbury, 2005).

1.1.2 The Importance of Speaking

In the traditional approaches of language learning and teaching, the speaking skill was neglected in many classrooms where the emphasis was mainly on reading and writing. The Grammar-Translation Method is one example, Richards and Rodgers (2001) mention that reading and writing are the essential skills to be focused on, however, little or no attention is paid to the skill of speaking and listening.

In the Communicative Approach, speaking was given more importance since oral communication involves speech where learners are expected to interact verbally with other people. Moreover, the teachers' talk will be reduced; that is to say, learners are supported to talk more in the classroom. Ur (2000: 12) declares also 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."*

Today, many L₂ learners give the speaking skill priority in their learning because if they master this skill then they will be considered as if they have mastered all of the other skills. Furthermore, the main question often given to FL learners is "do you speak English?" or "do you speak French?", but not "do you write English?" We understand that most of people take speaking and knowing a language as synonyms. Celce-Murcia (2001: 103) argues 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."*

The importance of speaking is more revealed with the integration of the other language skills. For instance, speaking can help students to develop their vocabulary and grammar and then improving their writing skill. With speaking, learners can express their personal feelings, opinions or ideas; tell stories; inform or explain; request; converse and discuss, i.e. through speaking, we can display the different functions of language. Speaking is very important outside the classroom as well. Many companies and organizations look for people who speak English very well for the purpose of communicating with other people. So, speakers of foreign languages have more opportunities to get jobs in such companies. Baker and Westrup

(2003: 05) support that "a student who can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion."

1.1.3 The Nature of Oral Communication

According to Byrne (1976:08), oral communication is a "two ways process" between the speaker and the listener; it makes use of both speaking which is a "productive skill" and understanding (or listening with understanding) which is a "receptive skill".

Speaking does not just include both skills of speaking and listening, but rather integrates the four skills, namely, speaking, listening, writing, and reading as shown in the diagram:

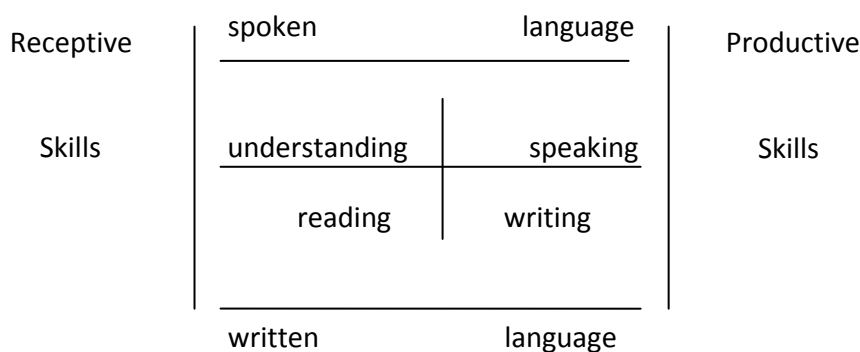


Figure 1.1. Inter - relationship of the Four Skills (Byrne, 1976)

The figure above reinforces the idea of teaching language skills in a communicative and active way since it suggests the integration of the four skills. In the process of communicating orally, both the speaker and the listener cooperate together: the role of the speaker is to change ordinary language into letters or symbols to transmit his message to the listener, (to encode), whereas the role of the listener is to find the real meaning of the spoken message which is in codes, (to decode). It is worth mentioning that the listener does not necessary follow each word the speaker says as it is common that speakers always add more than asked information, and include in their speech some prosodic features such as stress, intonation, their body language such as: facial expressions, movements and gestures which help the listener in addition to the words speaker says.

It is worth stating, as well, that the spoken language includes uncompleted sentences or incorrect grammar, false starts and many repetitions as opposed to the written one which requires structured, gathered and full sentences.

L₂ learners need to proceed listening before speaking and to be able to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transactions, such as the transfer of information and the maintenance of social relationships. We can make the distinction between motor-perspective skills, which involve perceiving, recalling and articulating the correct order of sounds and structures of the language, and interaction skills which involve making decisions about communication, what to say, how and where to say it.

One of the most important constraints under which the language is produced is time pressure which tends to affect communication in at least two main ways. On the one hand, speakers use some strategies in order to facilitate production, and, on the other hand, they often have to compensate for the difficulties they face while speaking. Speakers may facilitate the production of speech by simplifying structures and connecting sentences by the use of coordinating conjunctions, this is called parataxis by ellipsis, that is the omission of parts of sentences, the use of formulaic expressions: idioms, routines, or by using chunks of language which have been learnt as wholes. Learners usually use compensation features such as self-correction; false starts, repetitions, rephrasing and hesitation. In spoken interaction participants tend to say what they want to say in a way which the listener finds understandable. They may use routines and negotiate skills (the learners negotiate meaning in order to ensure understanding). Some communication strategies used are: paraphrasing, metaphor and the use of vocabulary to the degree of precision in communication.

Speakers need to know that the control of conversation may be negotiated through the agenda management, which covers the participants' right to choose the topic and how to develop it and through the business of handing turn taking. The development of the negotiations skills is very important for L₂ learners, so they should be practiced in communicative tasks. Activities which involve spontaneous pairs practice or group work, and simulations and role play should be focused on to develop fluency in the learners' speaking.

Brown and Yule (1983:13) refer to two main types of talk: "interactional" and "transactional". Interactional talk is concerned with maintaining social relationships, assumes shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener, and it is primarily listener-oriented.

A talk that is mainly transactional deals with the conveying of information; it is a message-oriented and often involves more specific vocabulary. The message must be spelt out clearly since the speaker assumes that much less information is shared with the listener.

Foreign students who learn spoken English outside English speaking environment are likely to acquire it for a transactional purpose; that is for disseminating information. They maintain that most foreign students need to be able to produce long transactional turns in the FL and to acquire the ability to sustain spoken discourse, that they usually have problems of achieving, they suggest, as a result of too much classroom concentration on short turns and focusing on mastering the language at the sentence level. This can be remedied if the teacher can support and develop the students' ability to use language communicatively over a range of situations and enable students to use the forms they know creatively and appropriately. (Brown and Yule, Ibid)

1.1.4 Listening and Speaking Relationship

FL teachers need to understand that a high proportion of class time should be devoted to developing oral productive skills. However, listening or understanding cannot be left to take care of itself. In their book on listening, Avery and Ehrlich (1992: 36) distinguish between reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening. The latter refers to tasks such as listening to the radio or formal lectures where the transfer of information is in one direction, only from the speaker to the listener. Reciprocal listening refers to those listening tasks where there is an opportunity for the listener to interact with the speaker and to negotiate the content of the interaction. They stress the active function of the listening. Byrne (1976: 8) states that the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill, because both the speaker and listener have a positive function to perform. Thus, what makes up the whole communication is the interrelationship between speaker and listener during face-to-face communication. Listening is essentially an active process. Nunan (1989:23) states that: *“We do not simply take language in like a tape-recorder, but interpret what we hear according to our purpose in listening and our background knowledge.”*

The listener has to identify and select those spoken signals from the surrounding sounds, to segment the signals into known words, to analyze syntax and extra meaning and then respond appropriately to what has been said. Usually, the listener's attention will

be focused on the meaning rather than the form. Listening processes involve two models: bottom-up and top-down model. Bottom-up models work on the incoming message itself, decoding sounds, words, clauses and sentences. Working one's way up from smaller to larger units to obtain meaning and to modify one's prior knowledge. Top-down models use background knowledge to assist in comprehending the message (Nunan, Ibid). Receptive but not passive, listening is an active skill because it requires from the listener not simply to hear utterances but to listen and to understand what has been said.

However, we can learn from the mother tongue experience. The scope of listening comprehension should be treated as an integral part of the speaking skill. Consider what will happen when the learners try to use the target language outside the classroom and where they are exposed to natural speech. Understanding breaks down almost immediately. In addition, poor understanding often results in nervousness which will probably in turn inhibit speech. The reason behind this is simply not sufficient to expose the learners to those samples of spoken language (dialogue or teacher talk) in order to provide the students with models of oral production. Byrne (1976: 9) gives two main reasons why this is inadequate. First, the learners' ability to understand need to be considerably extensive in order to be comfortable in a FL and therefore to communicate effectively. Thus, the teacher has to provide learners with a broad receptive base. Second, the learners need suitably varied models of natural speech. Thus, the listeners have to be taught to listen as well as to speak.

In the communicative movement, both the listening and the speaking skills receive a special attention. To sum up, the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill because to communicate face to face has to be developed in tandem.

1.1.5 Contrasting Spoken to Written Language

Brown and Yule (1983) begin their discussion on the nature of speaking by distinguishing between spoken and written language. They point out that for most of its history; language teaching has been concerned with the teaching of written language. This language is characterized by well formed sentences which are integrated into highly structured paragraphs. Spoken language, on the other hand, consists of short, often fragmentary utterances, in a range of pronunciation. There is often a great deal of repetition and overlap between one speaker and another.

A major difference between speech and writing is that the speaker does not typically use full sentences when speaking. In this case we can use the term utterance rather than sentence. They are short phrases and clauses connected with "and", "or", "but" or "that", or not joined by any conjunctions at all but simply spoken next to each other, with possibly a short pause between them. The spoken language of idea units is simpler than written language with its long sentences and dependent and subordinate clauses. Written English is organized into paragraphs, pages, chapters and complete texts. There is also a situation where speakers use less specific vocabulary than written language. Examples of this include the use of 'things', 'it' and 'this'. They usually use syntax in a loosely organized manner and a set of fillers such as 'well', 'oh' and 'uh uh' make spoken language feel less conceptually dense than other types of language such as expository prose.

Harmer (2005) finds it important to define some differences between speaking and writing for better understanding of their nature. He claims that because the audience to whom we are writing is not always present and most of the cases are unknown audience. When we write, all the information has to be on the page. The reader cannot stop and ask a question to make things clearer. Whereas in speaking, we have the advantage of interacting with "co-participants", whether we know them or not. This is, of course, highly beneficial because the speaker may modify her/his speech according to her/his co-participant reactions. Another important difference between the two productive skills lies in the concept of durability. Writing is more durable. However, when we speak, our words just live for a few moments. When we write, our words may live for years or even centuries. For this reason, writing is used to provide a record of events.

There are also similarities between writing and speaking. Lindsay and Knight (2006) state that we speak differently depending on whom we are speaking to and for what reason. Similarly with written language, the type of writing varies depending on whom it is written for and why.

To conclude, we should not think of spoken language as something unimportant or inferior. In fact, it is a very important element of language learning.

1.2 Characteristics of Speaking Performance

In recent teaching context, a lot of attention has been paid to design activities which focus more on tasks that are balanced between the need to achieve fluency and accuracy. These criteria are also based upon in the assessment of the oral skills.

Within the Communicative Approach, fluency and accuracy are of the main characteristics of this approach, and they are seen as complementary in accomplishing a given task. Although Richards and Rodgers (2001: 157) mention that "fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context", and this is an obvious point since the emphasis of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is on the communicative process between learners or teachers-learners, rather than mastery of the language forms.

Many questions have been raised about the role of accuracy in CLT theory. Hedge (2000: 61) makes the important point that "The Communicative Approach somehow excuses teachers and learners from a consideration of how to develop high levels of accuracy in the use of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary." Learners then should develop a communicative competence through classroom practice; however, simultaneously they should know how the language system works in a correct and appropriate way.

1.2.1 Fluency

The main goal teachers wish to achieve in teaching the productive skill of speaking is oral fluency being the main characteristic of the speaker performance. Hughes (2002) defines fluency as the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate way without too much hesitation; otherwise the communication will break down because listeners will lose their interest. Hedge (2000: 54) adds also that: "*The term fluency relates to the production and it is normally reserved for speech. It is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain, inappropriate shyness, or undue hesitation.*"

One can say, it is the ability to respond in a coherent way through linking the words and phrases effectively, pronounce the sounds clearly, using stress and intonation, i.e. doing all of these quickly. Hughes (2002) supports also that fluency and coherence refer to the ability to speak in a normal level of continuity, rate and effort in addition to link the ideas together in a coherent way. Speech rate and speech continuity are the key indicators of coherence.

Many of L₂ speakers think of fluency as the ability to speak fast, that's why they start speaking rapidly without pauses. Thornbury, (2005) argues that speed is an important factor in fluency and pausing too, because speakers need to take breath. Native speakers also need to pause from time to time in order to let the interlocutors catch what they said. However, a frequent pausing is an indication that the speaker has problems of speaking. In such cases Thornbury suggests what is called 'tricks' or production strategies, i.e. the ability to fill the pauses. The most common pause fillers are "uh" and "um", vagueness expressions such as "short of" and "I mean". Another device for filling the pauses is the repetition of one word when there is a pause.

1.2.2 Accuracy

Most L₂ teachers nowadays emphasize the term of accuracy in their teaching because learners seek more to be fluent and they forget about being accurate. Without structuring accurate speech, speakers will not be understood and their interlocutors will lose interest if they perform incorrect utterances each time. Therefore, paying attention to correctness and completeness of language form is of more importance for oral proficiency. (Skehan 1996 b: 23 cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005: 139) define accuracy as referring *“to how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language.”* Therefore, learners should focus on a number of things in their production of the spoken language, mainly, pronunciation, vocabulary, and the grammatical structure.

1.2.2.1 Pronunciation

English language has been long considered by either native speakers or non native speakers as a difficult language because of its pronunciation. Learners, then who want to develop their speaking skill in English should practice pronunciation overall. They should be aware of the different sounds and their features and where they are made in one's mouth; they have also to be aware of where the words should be stressed, when to use raising intonation and when to use a falling one. All these issues give them extra information about how to speak English effectively and help to achieve the goal of a better understanding of spoken English. Redmond argues that: *“It is imperative that you use the correct word in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation. Pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood.”* However, if the pronunciation is not correct, speakers then will not be understood and therefore accuracy is not achieved.

1.2.2.2 Vocabulary

Achieving accuracy in terms of vocabulary refers to the appropriate selection of words during speaking. Students often find difficulties when they try to express what they want to say, they lack the appropriate vocabulary, and they sometimes use words incorrectly like in the case of synonyms which do not carry the same meaning in all contexts. Students then, have to be able to use words and expressions accurately. According to Harmer (2001), the knowledge of the word classes also allows speakers to perform well formed utterances.

1.2.2.3 Grammar

According to (IELTS, 2001: 15 cited in Hughes 2002), the grammatical accuracy refers to the range and the appropriate use of the learners' grammatical structure that involves the length and the complexity of the utterances in addition to the ability to use the subordinating clauses. The grammar of speech differs of that of writing. Thornbury (2005) lists the following features of spoken grammar. First, the clause is the basic unit of construction and clauses are usually added (co-ordinate). Also, direct speech is favoured, a lot of ellipsis and many question tags as well. Another key features of spoken grammar are the use of head-body- tail construction, and the use of performance effects (hesitation, repeats, false starts, incompleteness, syntactic blends).

1.3 Learners' Strategies for Oral Communication

The ultimate aim of learning a L₂ should probably be the acquisition of the oral communicative competence, i.e. the ability to speak appropriately and confidently. However, learners may find difficulties in taking parts in interactions. So, the best way to overcome these problems of communication is through using communicative strategies. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005: 170-71) define communicative strategies as “*Speakers-oriented; that is they are used by learners to compensate for lack of L₂ knowledge or their inability to access the L₂ knowledge they have.*” These strategies help learners to avoid the breakdown of the oral communication. Hughes (2002) also defines this term as the ability of the learners to manipulate a conversation and negotiate interaction in an effective way. Such strategies are particularly important where there are problems of expression and communication. Bygate (1987) classifies two main types of communicative strategies; first achievement strategies including guessing, paraphrasing and cooperative strategies; and second reduction strategies.

1.3.1 Achievement Strategies

The speaker uses the achievement strategies, whereby he or she fills in her/his missing words places in order to be able to transmit her/his real meaning successfully. These substituting words may be: guessing word, intuition, feeling or any expression that s/he remembers on the spot, or explains her/his missing words by comparing them to something else. For example:

"L: I came down from twenty degrees --- er I don't know how you say it was *twenty degrees hot* you know.

NS: m m.

NS: and I came up/er in Scotland to *twenty degrees freezing* so I got very sick just before Christmas". (Haastrup and Philipson 1983: 149. cited in Bygate 1987:43)

In this example, the italic expressions of the person L are used instead of saying plus twenty/ minus twenty or twenty above/ below zero. Here, the speaker used other expressions that replace words with which s/he found difficulties to express, therefore, s/he successfully compensated the gap in her/his speech and conveyed her/his message to her/his listener.

1.3.1.1 Guessing Strategies

This type of strategies is a very widespread used strategy in oral expression. They are used by the speaker to replace some words that he or she does not know or s/he is not sure if they are right with other ones s/he thinks that her/his listeners will get.

There are many types of guessing strategies the speaker might use. He or she can foreignize her/his mother tongue word and pronounce it as if it belongs to the target language like a Frenchman who is speaking English and who uses the word 'manoeuvre' as it is an English word to convey her/his speech to an English listener. A speaker might also borrow a word from her/his mother tongue without changing it hoping that the interlocutor will understand it, for example an English speaker saying: 'il y a deux *candles* sur la cheminée'. (Bialystok 1983: 105. cited in Bygate 1987:44)

Another type of guessing strategies is when the speaker translates a word from her/his mother tongue literally in order to cope with the difficulty in her/his speech. For example a

Portuguese speaker may say 'feast' instead of 'party' or 'holiday' translated from her/his mother tongue 'festa'. A last procedure can be used to coin a word, whereby a speaker invents a new target language word on the basis of her/his knowledge of the source language, such as using 'air ball' for 'bolloon' (Torone, 1983:62. cited in Bygate 1987:42).

1.3.1.2 Paraphrasing Strategies

This mainly involves looking for an alternative to the word or the expression that the speaker needs in the target language. He or she might use a synonym or a more general word; that is called substitution strategy. The speaker can explain a concept or a word by making some sort of phrases to express her/his meaning, this is also called circumlocution. For example, a mixing of beige and brown: light brown.

1.3.1.3 Co-operative Strategies

In this type of strategies, the speaker gets help from her/his interlocutor i.e. this latter co-operates with him to say a word. The speaker may ask for a word through using it in her/his mother tongue or through indicating something that s/he does not know its name in the target language or s/he may make, also, sentences out of words or phrases to make the listener provides her/him with the word s/he needs.

1.3.2 Reduction Strategies (Avoidance Strategies)

When speakers feel unable to compensate through achievement strategies, they may succeed in reduction strategies for solving their difficulty in their oral productions.

The learners often use such strategies to avoid various kinds of trouble they can have. They may want to avoid some particular sound sequence, for example, 'th' in English or repeated 'r' in French. Some learners wish to avoid the conditional in English, and others like to avoid words whose gender is unknown or unsure for them. In using this kind of strategies, the learners may sacrifice part of their intended meaning. Finally, students may face some difficulties in expressing opinions too, because of the lack of vocabulary, so, they avoid some of the message content and look for something else to talk about or simply they keep silent.

Also, the speaker may reduce her/his message intelligently without avoiding saying it. For example, a woman may say that she ate a *pleasant meal* instead of attempting to say that she *liked* the meal and failed to mention its name.

Finally, we can say that strategies for oral communication are very widely used by learners in order to cover the impediments that face them in the FL speaking, and it depends on the situation and the learner's character that which method can be used for each problem.

1.4 Speaking Difficulties in Foreign Language Learning

Practicing the speaking skill of the foreign language is not as knowing about this language. Echevarria et al. (2008) support that the difference between the knowledge of how things must be done and the ability to do these things is crucial in the learning process. Learners often find some difficulties when practicing the speaking skill, even those who know about the system of the FL. Parrott (1993) asserts that teachers must perform a series of tasks that aim at providing learners with the confidence and the skills required to take advantages of the classroom opportunities in order to speak English effectively.

According to Ur (2000), there are four main problems in getting students speak in the FL in the classroom.

1.4.1 Inhibition

This problem reveals more when learners try to participate in the classroom but many factors stop them to do so. Littlewood (1999) argues that “it is too easy for a FL classroom *to create inhibition and anxiety.*” Such factors refer to the feeling of shyness and fear of making mistakes and these are due to the ill development of communicative skills and the feeling of linguistic inferiority. Students fear to make mistakes especially if they will speak to critical audience. Ur (2000) states that: “*Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about, making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.*”

This view is supported also by Bowman et al. (1989) who argue that in teaching speaking you are asking your learners to express themselves in front of the whole class, so this leads many of them to experience the stress when doing speaking activities. To end, stress and anxiety are two factors that also can stop the students from speaking confidently in front of their classmates.

1.4.2 Nothing to Say

The common expressions L₂ learners use when they are imposed to participate in a given topic is 'I have nothing to talk about', 'I don't know', 'no comment' or they keep silent. These expressions are due to the lack of motivation in expressing themselves or the chosen topic they should discuss or talk about. Rivers (1968: 192) says that: "*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.*"

Moreover, the poor practice of the L₂ can contribute to create this problem. Backer and Westrup (2003) support that many students find it difficult to answer when teachers ask them to say anything in the target language. The learners may have only some ideas to talk about; they may not know how to use some vocabulary or they are not sure of the grammatical correctness. Also, students could not carry out the discussion on topics that are not interesting to them.

1.4.3 Low Uneven Participation

This problem refers to the amount of each student's time of talking. Rivers (1968) claims that some personality factors can affect participation in a FL class and teachers then should recognize them. There are some students who tend to be dominant and take almost the whole students' talk time. However, others prefer to speak only if they ensure that what they will say is correct, and some others keep silent, show no interest or participation all along the course. Harmer (2001) suggests streaming weak participators in groups and letting them work together. In such cases they will not hide behind the strong participators, and the teacher can achieve a high level of participation. Another factor that can create problem of participation is the classroom arrangement that may not help students to perform some speaking activities. Bowman et al. (1989: 40) support the idea by saying that "traditional classroom seating arrangements often work against you in your interactive *teaching*."

Low participation is due to the ignorance of teacher's motivation too. If the teacher does not motivate her/his learners, the talkative ones also will show no interest. So, increasing and directing student motivation is one of the teacher's responsibilities.

1.4.4 Mother Tongue Use

L₂ students of the same mother tongue tend to use it outside and even inside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. 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.” Therefore, the learners will not be able to use the FL correctly if they keep on being influenced by the use of their mother tongue. Lack of the vocabulary of the target language usually leads learners to borrow words from their native language.

1.5 Teaching Techniques for Oral Proficiency

1.5.1 Group Work

Despite the need for whole-class teaching and individual work, or 'seat work' in language classroom, the use of group work has been emphasized as another interactional dynamics of language classroom. A group work is a classroom situation where students are working within smaller units or groups. Through interacting with each other in groups, students can be given the opportunity to oral exchange. Indeed, it is through this kind of tasks that researchers believe many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence are developed (Bright & McGregor, 1970).

Oral interaction, in group, is based on a real attempt to find a collective solution to problems. Group work is a meaningful activity because the students need to focus on meaningful negotiation and information exchange. For this reason, students should be familiar with the discussion topic. The main concern of the teacher is, of course to get the students to talk and to stimulate their interest and imagination.

While group work has many advantages, some benefits for L₂ learners include: it reduces the dominance of the teacher's talk over the class (Mackay & Tom, 1999: 26). It also increases the opportunities for students to practice and to use new features of the target language as it increases the opportunities for authentic negotiation. Group work promotes collaboration among students; they do not simply throw words to each other; they interact orally with a purpose.

To conclude, group work involving communicative tasks is essential to develop oral proficiency because it demands maximum student's participation in an orally purposeful activity.

1.5.2 Role Play

Many students derive a great benefit from role play. It can be used either to encourage general oral proficiency or to train students for specific situations especially where they are studying English for specific purposes. Role play is an authentic technique because it involves language use in real interactive contexts. It provides a format for using elements of real life conversation and communication.

Students usually find role playing enjoyable, for example, they might be given the role of an angry father awaiting the late return of his middle school son from football game. Another student could be given the role of the son. Therefore, students have to prepare a dialogue for their presentation. Because role play imitates real life, the range of language functions that might be used expands considerably. The role relationships among students call for practicing and developing sociolinguistic competence to use the language skills that are appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

Role play went through a period of relative unpopularity; yet this pity since it has distinct advantages. Role play can be a direct interactive method. It is an authentic technique for language use in interactive contexts to train students for specific interactive skills of arguing, information, persuading, discussing, or complaining ...etc. It promotes spontaneous oral exchanges between participants instead of reciting already memorized stretches. Indeed, as Dickson (1981: 382) puts it: "Learners say what they want to say and not what someone has told them to say."

Role play is an effective technique when it is open-ended so that different people would have different views of what the outcome should be and consensus has to be reached. There is a dynamic movement as the role play progresses with students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels. To succeed with role play, the teacher has to give each student who does not play her/his role appropriately a card that describes the person or the role played. The teacher needs not only to identify the situation which will stimulate the discussion but also give them the role that matches the requirements of their personalities. Topics for role play should be taken from students'

current interest and anticipated experiences. This will contribute to increase the students' self-confidence as speakers and their motivation to participate more.

1.5.3 Problem Solving

Barker and Gaut (2002: 160) defined problem solving as follow: "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". The label has been used to group together a range of activities which require the learners to find solutions to problems of different kinds. Duff (1986; in Nunan, 1989) discovered that problem solving tasks prompted more interaction than debating tasks.

The problem tasks range from the imaginary to the more realistic. The latter involves processes which have some kind of realistic application in which the students become involved in an effort to achieve a goal. In problem solving, students are involved in pooling information to solve a problem through oral expression and negotiation of meaning. For instance, the teacher describes the task to the students: 'you are stranded on a desert island a long way from anywhere. There is a fresh water spring on the island, and there are banana trees and coconut palms. The climate is mild. Make a list of eight to twelve things which you think are necessary for survival. Apart from the activities focusing on the likes and dislikes of individual learners, which therefore need an initial phase where each student works on her/his own, most of the problem-solving tasks require pair or group work throughout. Thus, students can be asked to solve the problem individually or collectively. The latter is calling for cooperative negotiation. Problem solving activities demand that the learners themselves make suggestions, give reasons, accept, modify or reject suggestions and reasons given by others.

1.5.4 Discussion and Debates

Discussion is any exchange of ideas and opinions either on a class basis with the teacher's role as a mediator and to some extent as participator, or within the context of a group, with the students talking among themselves. It may last for just a few minutes or it may continue for a whole lesson (in case of advanced learners who have a good command of

foreign language). It may be an end in itself; a technique for developing oral expression through exchange of ideas, opinions, arguments and points of views. We can say that this technique is student-directed and teacher-guided discussion (Hill and Ruptic 1949; in Byrne, 1976).

While discussion has many advantages, some benefits for L₂ learners include: increased comprehension levels; opportunities to improve listening skills and develop spoken language proficiency; increased participation of quiet and shy students and more time for teacher observation of students learning.

Through well-prepared discussion, the teacher's role is not to force her/his opinions on the students but rather to encourage them to express theirs. The teacher's opinion, if offered at all, should only serve to stimulate further ideas on the part of the students, not to inhibit them. Secondly, the teacher should appear more interested in the ideas at least in the beginning. Sometimes, of course, the teacher may have to help students to get their message across, or make their meaning clear. The teacher also has to keep the channels of communication open not of course by doing all the talking herself/himself, but by stimulating students talks through questions which server as stimuli for discussion as long as they generate controversial opinions amongst the students.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have focused on the fact that for teaching speaking, learners should be put with effective oral practice where a wide range of techniques and procedures are presented through of which oral proficiency can develop. Such techniques should also involve learners into real-life communication.

The next chapter will devote to the role of extracurricular participation in language learning and their impact on students' academic performance in a FL class.

Chapter Two: Extracurricular Activities within a CLT Framework

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Introduction

In the field of applied linguistics and education, there is a general agreement to encourage extracurricular activities (ECA) in university programs for students of different majors, because ECA help them to develop important skills, such as leadership, socializing, academic skills, and others. Based upon a literature review and analysis of best practices, several studies on this topic suggest that there is a positive correlation between student engagement and student learning and persistence.

This chapter provides a better understanding of the role of extracurricular activities in language learning and teaching. It includes an introduction to the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching as a framework theory to our research study, followed by a review of the history of extracurricular activities, the concept of extracurricular activities and its relationship with academic achievement. It explains also the reported benefits of these activities and learners' attitudes towards extracurricular activities.

2.1 Communicative Approach to Language Teaching 'CLT'

As many scholars, Hymes agreed on the fact that learning a L₂ is not only a matter of knowing its rules, but also it is a matter of knowing how to communicate using those rules. He noted that communicative competence is "the aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts."

2.1.1 Principles of Communicative Language Teaching

Brown was among several theorists who defined Communicative Language Teaching in terms of characteristics for the sake of directness and simplicity. Here are the characteristics of CLT as identified by Brown (2007):

"Classroom goals are focused on all the components; grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic of the communicative competence" i.e. students should not only learn the grammatical rules and lists of vocabulary, but also learning how to use them in appropriate situations.

"Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes" i.e. the various exercises, activities, or

tasks used in the language classroom help getting the learners use the language for meaningful purposes.

"Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use"; i.e. teachers focus more on fluency; since the primary goal of CLT is getting students communicate meaningfully, teachers give more importance to fluency and tolerate the students' errors. They believe that the students' errors are due to a natural outcome of the development of communication skills.

"Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom"; i.e. the tasks used in the classroom should provide the students with the skills needed to communicate in real world contexts.

"Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.", and finally that the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator and a guide.

These characteristics reveal the focal points of Communicative Language Teaching. In short, CLT enables students to communicate in the FL using the different types of communicative competence. However, the language techniques encourage them to use the target language purposefully in different situations. Besides, the use of the authentic material pushes students to make use of the language in real world contexts.

2.1.2 Cooperative Learning as a Type of CLT Frameworks

Cooperative Learning started developing within the framework of CLT and it is defined as an approach which encourages and promotes the maximum use of cooperative activities based on pair work and group work of learners in the classroom (Johnson, Johnson and Smith 1989). Olsen and Kagan (1992) state that cooperative learning is: "*A group learning activity which is organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is responsible for his own learning, and is motivated to enhance the learning of others*". Other theorists (Fathman and Kessler 1993; Richards and Rodgers 2001) claim that cooperative learning is group work structured in such a way as to enable student interaction, the exchange of information, as well

as cooperation rather than competition in learning. As cooperative learning emerged from CLT, it encourages the development of critical thinking skills and communicative competences, by means of carefully structured activities of social interaction. The incorporation of CLT into cooperative learning was not a novelty, since cooperative learning applied many CLT techniques (Richards 1992). As a matter of fact, cooperative learning and CLT were a natural match in FL teaching.

2.1.3 Characteristics of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning (CL) represents the systematic and carefully planned use of group-based procedures. It seeks to overcome some of the weaknesses of traditional group work. It was typically informal, unstructured, and only used on rare occasions. Olsen and Kagan (1992; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 196) propose the following characteristics for the success of group based learning in CL.

2.1.3.1 Positive Interdependence

The essence of the cooperative group is the development and maintenance of positive interdependence among group members. Richards & Rodgers (ibid), state that: "Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member hurts all." (p.196). It means each group member depends on each other to accomplish a shared goal. Without the help of one member, the group is not able to reach the desired goal. For cooperative groups to be effective, group members should engage in team building activities that deal explicitly with the development of mutual support within the group. Students need access to activities in which they learn from each other as they ask for help and receive help one from another.

2.1.3.2 Promotive Interaction

Although positive interdependence is an important factor influencing cooperative learning, it alone does not create CL. After establishing positive interdependence, the teacher must ensure *promotive interaction*, i.e. that students interact to help each other accomplish the task, produce in order to reach the group's goals and promote each other's success (Johnson and Johnson 1989). Promotive and positive interdependence is achieved by various strategies and occurs when students: give help and assistance; exchange resources and information; give and receive feedback on taskwork and teamwork behaviour in order to

improve further performance; advocate increased efforts to complete tasks and achieve mutual goals; mutually influence each other's behaviour (e.g. if a member has a better way to complete the task, group mates usually quickly adopt it); engage in the interpersonal and small group skills needed for effective teamwork, and process how effectively group members are working together and how the group's effectiveness can be improved (Johnson and Johnson, Ibid).

2.1.3.3 Individual Accountability

It implies that each team member is responsible for their share of the work and that they make contribution to the group. If students are individually accountable, they know that they cannot "hitch-hike" on the work of the others (Johnson and Johnson 1989: 70). In order to assess the performance of each individual student and what the group has accomplished, the teacher can use a number of ways: random selection of papers if each student is doing work within the group, random calling on individual students to present their group's answer, random oral quizzes of students, written quizzes or examinations. The most common way to structure individual accountability is by requiring each person to learn and teach a small portion of conceptual material to other group members.

2.1.3.4 Teamwork Skills

The student does not know how to interact effectively with his classmates. Teamwork or social skills like other skills should be taught and reinforced, because it determines how students should interact with each other as teammates. Larsen-Freeman (2000: 164) states that "in cooperative learning, teachers teach students collaborative skills so that they can work together more effectively". Usually some explicit instruction in social skills is needed to ensure successful interaction. In cooperative tasks, students need to develop "skills in negotiating (clarifying seeking clarification, checking for comprehension, problem for more information) as well interaction skills in turn taking, listing, encouraging, helping, disagreeing" (ibid).

2.1.3.5 Group Processing

The purpose of processing is to achieve the group's goals, link current material with what they have provisionally learned, facilitate the learning of cooperative skills and maintain effective working relationships by clarifying and receiving feedback on how the effectiveness

of members contributes to the collaborative efforts of the group (Johnson and Johnson 1989). In order to successfully interact and exchange communication, students need to be clustered in small groups, facing each other, while teachers are supposed to allow students enough time for successful processing to take place and to keep students involved in processing. The role of teachers is also crucial to the quality of group processing: they are supposed to observe the groups, analyze the problems the students come across working together, and give feedback to each group on how well they are cooperating. Not only should teachers serve as monitors in group processing, but they should also remind students to use their teamwork skills during processing and ensure that clear expectations have been communicated.

2.2 Extracurricular Activities ‘ECA’

2.2.1 Definition

Extracurricular activities are those activities that fall outside the realm of the normal curriculum of school or university education, performed by students. ECAs exist at all levels of education, from the primary school to university. Such activities are generally voluntary, i.e. they are not part of the regular school curriculum, as opposed to mandatory, non-paying, social, and often involve others of the same age. Students often organize and direct these activities under faculty sponsorship, although, student-led initiatives such as independent newspapers, are common. “Extracurricular activity” includes the students clubs, associations, and organizations that conduct those activities. It does not include athletic competitions or practices or athletic teams or organizations (Marsh and Kleitman, 2002). Extracurricular activities also known as Co-curricular activities are activities that educational organizations in some parts of the world create for students. ECA may often believe for students as a means to enhance social interaction, leadership, healthy recreation, self-discipline and self-confidence.

At higher levels of education, ECA participation may even translate into academic points. Although several studies have been conducted to assess the impact of ECAs for all round development of students (Broh, 2002; Darling et al, 2005; Marsh and Kleitman, 2002; etc.), however, no systematic effort has yet been made to look into the role of ECAs on various dimensions of achievement of students in a comprehensive manner.

2.2.2 ECA: an Overview

The history of extracurricular activities began in the United States in the nineteenth century. First, as Casinger described, they were an additional part to the normal academic year schedule. It complemented the curriculum as much as subverted it. The students found in it a kind of laboratory for practical and vocational interests. Literary societies were the first associations that became popular at Harvard University and Yale University. Then various debate clubs appeared and different fraternities and sororities were organized.

Casinger (2010) told how students initiated the emergence of the first athletic clubs in American colleges and stimulated the elaboration of the first athletic programs at university campuses. At that time, literary societies were on the decline by the turn of the twentieth century, and some educators felt that less desirable ECA were now distracting students from their curricular responsibilities. Intercollegiate athletics soon became the dominant element of ECA in most American colleges and high schools. However, he pointed out that there remained one more important part of student life in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth century: the school newspaper. It began following the Civil War and has carried through to today in high school and college community activities in order to develop well-rounded citizens.

Millard (1930) noted the early development of ECA was slow, with many seeing it simply as a fad that would pass and quickly fade out of style. One of the early philosophies behind ECA was that they should, wherever at all possible, “grow out of curricular activities and return to curricular activities to enrich them” (Millard, 1930, p. 12). Eventually people, including educators, began to see the benefits of ECA, but it took time embrace them. In fact, Marsh and Kleitman (2002) stated that before the twentieth century, educators were skeptical of participation in ECA, believing that “school should focus solely on narrowly defined academic outcomes. Non-academic activities were viewed as being primarily recreational and therefore were detrimental to academic achievement, and consequently were discouraged”.

Deam and Bear (2006) stated, “Extracurricular activities supplement and extend those contacts and experiences found in the more formal part of the program of the school day”. It was not until recently, as Marsh and Kleitman (2002) pointed out, that “educational practitioners and researchers have taken a more positive perspective, arguing that ECA may have positive effects on life skills and may also benefit academic accomplishments”. They

also stated that it is obvious that ECA had an impact on academic performance and education for many years.

2.2.3 ECA within Foreign Language Learning

In the twentieth century, a lot of researchers focused on the impact of ECA on students' performance in class and other skills important for everyday life (Tchibozo, 2007). In particular, it was observed that ECAs eliminate the chances of dropping out of school for some categories of students (Mahoney and Cairns, 2000). The findings proved that the ECAs were just as necessary for building academic and social skills as the regular classes (Druzhinina, 2009; Eccles, 2003; Marsh and Kleitman, 2002; Tenhouse, 2003; Astin, 1993; Darling, Caldwell, and Smith, 2005).

Later on extracurricular activities have become an inseparable part of the context of L₂ teaching and learning in university and college environments (Housen and Beardsmore, 1987). In the second part of the twentieth century, many researchers focused on comparing L₂ learning in formal and informal environments (Krashen, 1981). Oates and Hawley in 1983 suggested involving the local native speakers of the target language in delivering ECAs, such as meetings, videotaped interviews, role playing, evening get-togethers, skits, individual presentations, newspapers and language weekends.

The role of ECA very strongly depended on the method employed in language teaching. In the last hundred years, hundreds of language teaching methods and approaches sprung to life, such as the Direct Method, Audiolingual Method (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), Lexical Approach, Neurolinguistic Programming, Competency-Based Language Teaching, Community Language Teaching and others. Although ECA were completely discarded in most of the descriptions of language teaching approaches and methods, I will describe below some methods that are in my opinion conducive of ECA.

For example, in the Direct Method, language learners are exposed to ungraded foreign speech and are supposed to pick it up naturally. This method therefore favorably views many types of ECA including meeting native speakers or language retreats, where students have to speak foreign language at all times.

The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching originated in the 1920s-1930s in the works of British linguists Palmer and Hornby. In this approach, lexical and grammatical

materials were specifically chosen for the lessons and the language items were first presented orally, and later in the written form; only the target language was spoken in the classroom; new language material was presented in situational context; lesson planning was emphasized, and different techniques were used to present and practice the lesson. (Nunan, 2004) ECA fits well with this approach, as ECA activities can be organized to follow the material studied in class.

However the Oral Approach was gradually replaced by CLT in the late sixties with the subsequent modification of CLT in the eighties into Task-Based Instruction. The basis for Task-Based Teaching is Experiential Learning. The personal background and experience of a student are involved in language acquisition (Nunan, Ibid), and the knowledge is not just given from a teacher to students, but transformed within the learner (Kohonen, 1992). This approach emphasizes the process of learning, teaches students how to learn, encourages them to participate in discussions and share what they know, direct themselves. This approach also promoted intrinsic motivation (Kohonen et al. 2000). All these characteristics are supportive of the development of ECA. An important theoretical basis for Task-Based Language Teaching is the concept of Experiential Learning (Nunan, 2004).

Experiential Learning started in the eighties with the works of David Kolb and developed in the nineties by Kohonen and his followers (Nunan, 2004). In the classroom, Experiential Learning is seen as transformation of knowledge within the learner rather than from the teacher to the learner; learners are encouraged to work in small groups and pairs; a holistic attitude to subject matter is encouraged; intrinsic motivation is promoted; focus on process rather than on product (Nunan, 1999; 2004). In experiential learning, the teacher acts as a facilitator, and students get to manage their own learning, and with this awareness, they are given some autonomy. Some recent works in this area developed the idea that the goal of language learning is reaching a communicative competence that achieve a desirable goal via engaging in intercultural communication, with the balance between external (learning environment) and internal (language learner and his beliefs, concepts, preferences, etc.) factors in language learning (Kohonen et al. 2000). All these characteristics make Task-Based CLT and Experiential Learning ideal platforms for the promotion of ECA.

2.2.3 Relationships between ECAs and Academic Achievement

Researchers have studied the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance. Darling, Caldwell, and Smith (2005) conducted a longitudinal study concerning ECAs and their effect on various aspects of development, including academic performance. The results showed that the students who participated in school-based ECAs had higher grades, higher academic aspirations, and more positive academic attitudes than those who were not involved in ECAs at all.

VanDuyne (2004) examines the relationship between student participation in ECAs and student academic achievement when differences in learning levels, socioeconomic status, and gender are controlled. Vandyke's sample is the entire sophomore class of one Indiana school. This study looked at the types of activities, levels of involvement in each type, total participation hours, and the relationship each has with student achievement. An understanding of the relationship will allow school leaders to make sound choices on the proper use of resources to improve student achievement. The results confirmed a positive correlation between ECAs and academic achievement after controls for learning levels, gender and socioeconomic status. On a per hour basis, academic activities were found to be the most beneficial. Service/ leadership/ recreational activities were second most beneficial. Physical activities were all shown to have a positive relationship with academic achievement, but at a lower level. The number of hours of involvement was shown to make a significant difference.

Sebald (2010) set out to measure the level of student participation in ECAs, adolescent development, and academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the level of student participation in ECAs and academic achievement. Further, this study examined the relationship among three variables of adolescent development (self-concept, academic self-concept, and problem behavior) and determined the effect they had on academic achievement. Significant differences were found between students who did participate in ECAs and those students who did not. The students who participated were more likely to have higher academic achievement, higher self-concept, higher academic self-concept, and lower frequencies of problem behavior.

Broh (2002) acknowledged the numerous studies that have been conducted concerning the relationship between ECAs and academic achievement. He emphasized that participation

in ECAs have a broad range of positive impact. Total EC participation (TEAP), or participation in ECAs in general, is associated with a higher grade point average, greater educational aspirations, increased college attendance, and reduced absenteeism.

Guest and Schneider (2003), in looking at the previous research on this subject, said, “Researchers have found positive associations between extracurricular participation and academic achievement” (p. 76). They also went on to say that although researchers agree that ECAs do, in fact, influence academic performance, the specific effect that various activities produce is debated. One study, conducted by the Nord, Zill, and Loomis (1995), found that participation in specific activities improves achievement.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school associations. The NFHS in 2011, and throughout its history, has proclaimed that music, parental involvement, and sports have an influence on how children perform academically. The way children choose to spend their free time can affect their school performance; it is not simply traditional in-class instruction that impacts academic achievement. Stephens and Schaben (2002) referenced a study by the U.S. Department of Education that revealed students who participate in co-curricular activities are “three times more likely to have a grade point average of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale” (p. 35) than students who do not participate in co-curricular activities. In addition to co-curricular or extracurricular activities, “analyses revealed that regardless of students’ background and prior achievement, various parenting, volunteering, and home learning activities positively influenced student grades” (as cited in Stephens & Schaben, 2002, p. 4). Numerous studies, Simon (1996) declared, have examined the factors influencing students’ academic achievement, and these same activities were found to have a significant influence.

Elder and Conger (2000), and Marsh and Kleitman (2002) reported participation in these ECAs and service learning activities has also been linked to increases in interpersonal competence, self-concept, school engagement, and educational aspirations. They have also been linked to higher educational achievement, better job quality, more active participation in the political process and other types of volunteer activities, continued sport engagement, and better mental health during young adulthood.

Fioriello (2009) said that when participating in activities, students get the chance of learning group and individual responsibilities, earning eligibility to participate by keeping a minimum grade point average, applying academic skills in actual world context, building physical stamina and patience, and having intrinsically well determined will, good self-esteem and relationship abilities. These activities boost students' sense of attachment to their school and decrease the possibility of school failure.

2.3 The Role of ECA in Language Teaching

The reported advantages of extra-curricular activities for language acquisition include: improvement of student-teacher relationship as well as of student-student relationship, improvement of school morale, improvement of school-community relationship, decrease in the need for disciplinary control, and increase in the school's holding power. ECAs have been shown to foster effective teamwork between students, school staff, teachers and the principal (Anderson, 1963). Some other demonstrated benefits of ECA include enhancing social interaction, leadership, healthy recreation, self-discipline, and confidence (Astin, 1993), as well as an overall improvement of the academic performance (Marsh and Kleitman, 2002; Darling, Caldwell and Smith, 2005). It is therefore not surprising that language-oriented ECAs have been successfully organized in most schools and universities all around the world, and proved to be an effective form of language instruction. It appears that the benefits of ECAs are particularly apparent in the following areas of language learning: learner motivation, materials development, cultural awareness and language exposure.

2.3.1 ECA and Learner's Motivation

Motivation is a valuable condition for learning, and students' interest is the way to secure motivation (Anderson, 1963). Maintaining a high level of motivation in language learning is one of the strongest factors in successful language acquisition (Dornyei, 2001). According to some educators, one of the purposes of employing ECA in language teaching is to develop both social and intellectual motives for learning. In linguistics, sociolinguistics and psychology, a number of language learner motivation models have been postulated. These different models can inform the development of ECAs. For example, according to Gardner (2001), language learning motivation is comprised of three elements: first, efforts to learn the language; second, the motivated individual is eager to achieve a goal; and finally, he or she enjoys learning the language. From this perspective, different language-related activities

provide learners with additional opportunities to boost all the three components of motivation: to learn the language, achieve their learning goals and enjoy the language learning experience.

Extracurricular activities can also contribute to integrative motivation, since positive attitudes towards the country and people of the target language have a positive impact on language learning. ECAs can also play a role in building instrumental motivation, i.e., the aim to obtain something practical and useful for future career or personal life. Social skills development along with language skills enhancement in the process of ECAs can help the participants to change their lives, or get better chances to succeed in life. (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Hudson, 2000)

Book clubs, movie nights and other types of ECAs provide the learners with a chance to select media that matches their immediate interests, and not those of curriculum planners. Already in fifties, it was suggested that one of the ways to motivate younger learners was to employ in language learning not only classical literature, but modern bestsellers popular with youth. The same applies to watching films, reading authentic magazine articles and listening to music: materials of higher relevance to learners are more motivating to them, and ECAs give the opportunity to reflect the interests of the learners, since the learners are in most cases responsible for organizing ECAs.

2.3.2 ECA and Authentic Language Materials

Extracurricular activities offer a lot of opportunities for creating situations where real language is used, for example, with the help of authentic materials (Avdeyeva, et al 2005) defined as materials that were not originally created for teaching purposes (Nunan, 1988; Nuttall, 1989; Morrow, 1977).

Using authentic materials is one of the mainstays of an imaginative and motivating higher level course, usually neglected at levels lower than intermediate. There are several reasons for this reluctance to use authentic materials in class: firstly, a teacher's fear that students may panic when faced with language that is largely unfamiliar. To prevent this, many teachers believe that language learning materials should be edited to the students' level. This fear is shown in some sources to be unjustified, as using authentic materials can be rewarding and stimulating for both teacher and students (Shepherd, 2004).

2.3.3 ECA and Cultural Knowledge

Interacting with others in the target language involves more than knowing the appropriate syntax and lexicon. Another important area of language competence is sociocultural knowledge, and thus L₂ instruction has to address cultural issues at least to some extent. Kramsch (1993) states that integration of ECAs into the L₂ curriculum is supported in the context of culturally oriented communicative second language teaching. A central goal of language education in the global context, according to Ingram and O'Neill (1999), is the fostering of favorable intercultural attitudes. Ingram refers to cultural competence as 'the knowledge of the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country' and states that 'it is a indisputably an integral part of FL learning'.

Extracurricular activities provide language instructors and students with multiple opportunities for creating the target language environment, and exploring different cultural issues of the country of the target language. It is very important for L₂/ FL learners to adjust to the target culture, a new way of thinking and seeing the world. Cultural values, social norms and etiquette are reflected in and through the language, and therefore have to be reflected in the process of FL acquisition (Harklau, 1999). As the result of deepening into the target cultures in the ECAs, the learners develop their inter-cultural competence, i.e., they raise their awareness of their own and target cultures, they develop social skills, tolerance and patience required for intercultural communication.

2.3.4 ECA and Language Exposure

Limitations on the number of contact hours in language classes give language instructors very little time to provide students with opportunities to develop and practice all the language, socio-cultural and communication skills. ECAs provide a necessary supplement to the contact class hours, but not just an extension of the contact hours. It provides the learners with a different kind of learning. According to Krashen (1981), the success of language acquisition depends on two kinds of language exposure - outside the formal environment of the classroom and sheltered curricular exposure within the classroom. ECAs provide the necessary experiential language exposure outside the classroom. The significance of informal environment for language learning by adults has been further confirmed in Carroll, 1967.

2.4 Learners' Attitudes to Extracurricular Activities

Very little research is available on the learners' attitudes to ECAs and their direct impact on language learning. One study conducted in Russia showed that language-related EC work in university environment increased communicative skills of students and had a positive effect on their self-confidence. Another study claimed that ECAs do not guarantee high level of language proficiency for their participants, but, conversely, many students notice that experiences obtained in out-of-class language environments were being more meaningful and educative than those obtained in the classroom. (Druzhinina, 2009)

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the role of ECA participation in language learning. It explained the reported benefits of extracurricular activities on students' academic achievement. It appeared also that extracurricular work demonstrates approximately all the essential set of principles of CLT and uses wide variety of cooperative methods to promote academic achievement and give more opportunities for EFL communication.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

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Conclusion

Introduction

So far, we have presented a review of related literature to speaking and role of extracurricular activities in language learning. The next step of any research design is to move to something more practical. As long as our research is concerned, the most suitable method is the descriptive one. As Burns and Grove (2001, 248) state that a descriptive design helps us to identify problems in current practice with an aim to solve them.

After investigating the possibilities for student involvement in ECAs at the Department of English in Ouargla University, it was determined that students had some choices as the English Language Club (ELC), the American Corner, the Career Center, the Zone Group, or not to participate in any of these above mentioned programs. It was also necessary first to track the academic background of English LMD students since it appears as though a majority of them began participating in these activities during their second year at university. Third year LMD students were finally selected as subject population for this study, this based on the criteria that they have a minimum extracurricular participation (experience) of two years. This chapter, then, describes and justifies the methods chosen to conduct our research paper that looked at *the Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Students' Academic Oral Proficiency*. Moreover, it also contains the analysis of the results, tentative interpretations, with some practical recommendations and conclusions.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Students' Questionnaire

A self-completion questionnaire was selected as a method for investigating the views of third year LMD students of English at Kasdi Merbah University - Ouargla. The choice of this method was determined by the following reasons. First, within the limited time framework of the study, the questionnaire survey method allows the researcher to gather more data than would be possible in a one-to-one interview (Dornyei, 2010). Second, the questionnaire survey helps to validate the research study and to make it more reliable. Finally, the questionnaire method also allows the use of computer software (SPSS – “Statistical Package for the Social Sciences”) which contributes to cost-effectiveness of the method (Ibid).

3.1.1.1 Sample Population

A total of forty two (42) completed surveys constituted the data pool in the study. The fifty (50) participants who responded to the questionnaire have been chosen randomly among the total number of the third year LMD students' population, that is almost four hundred (400) students, enrolled at the Department of English, University of Kasdi Merbah – Ouargla.

3.1.1.2 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is composed of twenty three (23) questions dispersed over three parts. The first part contains background information about the students; their gender and level of English in general. The second part involves ten (10) questions about the students' perception and level of motivation toward speaking English in the classroom. Part three, consisting of eleven (11) questions, deals with students' different views and opinions towards extracurricular activities, their role in language learning, and their specific effect on students' academic oral performance. Moreover, Data collected from this questionnaire survey are either of closed-form type with some need justification, Lickert scale or open-ended questions.

3.1.1.3 Administration of the Questionnaire

The students' self-completion questionnaire was administered to three groups gathered together in the amphitheater, making up almost one hundred (100) students (for the study, only fifty (50) subjects were randomly selected). Students were given identical instructions, before they complete the questionnaire, on how to do so and for what reason it was designed. They were notified that: a) it is not a test, b) it is an important component in our study, c) their participation is going to be really appreciated, d) what matters is their opinions (no true or false answers), and e) the answers they will provide would remain completely confidential (even though they were not asked to write their names). The questionnaire took the students nearly 40 minutes of their time; they were very kind and interested enough to answer. With what mentioned above, we do believe that our questionnaire was administered in good and safe conditions.

3.1.2 Teacher' Interview

Another procedure is used here in the sake of providing more support and in-depth descriptions for our variables hypothesized at the beginning of this work; which is a structured interview that is held with one teacher at Kasdi Merbah University – Ouargla.

3.1.2.1 Sample Population

The sample consists of one teacher who used to give her LMD students oral expression courses in the FL class, at the Department of English, University of Kasdi Merbah – Ouargla. The selection of such sample was based on the consideration that teachers of oral expression will benefit us more since they teach essentially students how to develop their oral skills, which are our concern.

3.1.2.2 Description of the Interview

This interview consists of fifteen (15) questions divided into three main sections. The first section devotes to get background information about the chosen sample of teachers. The second section entitled “Teaching Speaking” contains a number of open-ended questions about teachers’ perceptions for their students’ oral proficiency. Throughout the third section, the teacher is required to judge the extent to which extracurricular activities can improve students’ academic oral proficiency.

3.1.2.3 Administration of the Interview

Since teachers are familiar with this type of studies, all that we can say is that this interview was administered to our sample selected randomly. The interview took place in a free classroom at the Department of English, University of Kasdi Merbah – Ouargla. Our interviewee was kind and has cooperated so much with us.

3.2 Analysis of Results and Tentative Interpretations

3.2.1 The Questionnaire Results' Analysis

Section One: Background Information

Question 1: Specify your gender

<i>Options</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	6	36	42
<i>%</i>	14.28	85.71	100

Table 3.1: Students Gender

A quick glance at Table 3.1 will reveal that female students outnumber males. In fact, we have recorded just (6) six male subjects out of total (42) forty two, whereas the rest, that is (36) thirty six, are female subjects. This adds nothing to our work except that girls are expected to be more collaborating.

Question 2: How would say you speak English?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Very well</i>	<i>Well</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Not well</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	5	18	13	6	42
<i>%</i>	11.90	42.85	30.95	14.82	100

Table 3.2: Students' Proficiency Level in English

Subjects, here, are asked to say how well they speak English. 42.85% of the respondents believe they speak English 'well', about 11.90% said it is "very well", against 30.95% who assume their level is average and only 14.82% find it 'not well'.

Since speaking is the most basic means of *human communication*, people usually relate their level or *knowing* of a language to their speaking ability in that language (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Most students consider having a level from average to well, however, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are really good speakers or rather speaking is easy, this is first. Second, those who claim they are not well might represent the proportion of students who find some difficulties when communicate in the class or it can be due to the fact they have not yet built a communicative competence because of their need for more opportunities for interaction and language use in and outside the class.

Section Two: Students' Perception of their Academic Oral Proficiency

Question 3: Which of the four language skills you need to develop most?

<i>Options</i>	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>
<i>Listening</i>	28,57%	23,80%	26,19%	21,42%
<i>Speaking</i>	52,38%	23,80%	11,90%	11,90%
<i>Reading</i>	33,33%	21,42%	26,19%	19,04%
<i>Writing</i>	21,42%	21,42%	28,57%	28,57%

Table 3.3: Emphasis in Learning the Language Skills

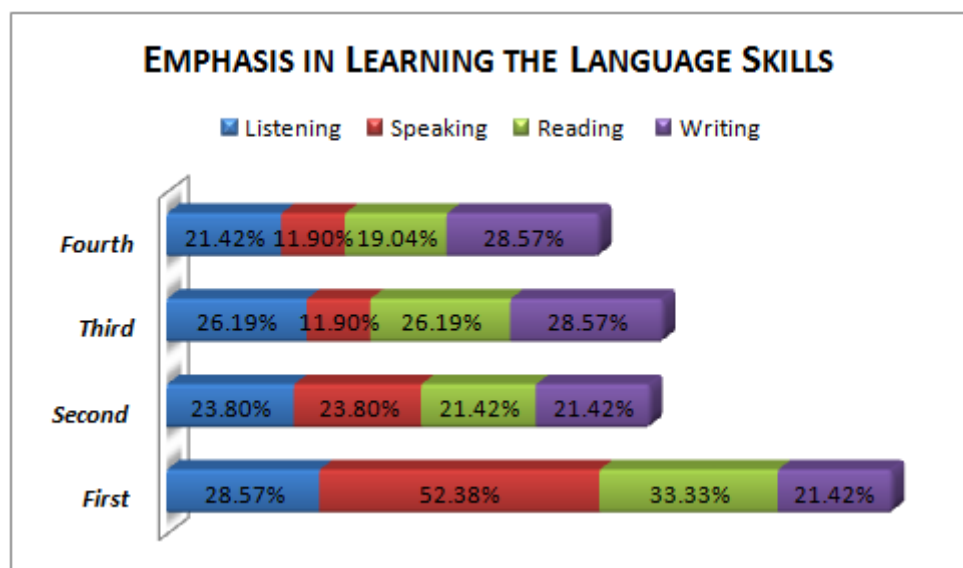


Figure 3.3: Emphasis in Learning the Language Skills

The aim of this question was to determine the subjects' needs to the different language skills. Therefore, we have asked the subjects to pick the most needed skill, and then explain their choices. The majority of the respondents (52.38%) picked the speaking skill first, while 33.33% of the respondents put the reading skill the first. It is followed then by the listening skill (28.57%) and writing skill (21.42%) in last position. The final classification we get from Table 3.3 is the following: the speaking skill first, the reading second, the listening and the writing skills are third and fourth respectively.

Students' Justifications

In the different students' feedbacks to this question, we notice that most students need the skill of speaking most; they see, it is first speaking that helps them to communicate in the different situations They explain; in the classroom they cannot feel always confident to

interact in front of teachers, they rather want to exchange ideas and opinions and practice language in a free way using simple, spontaneous language that is somehow fluent. They also report that, as they are about to complete their degree course this year and think of job and future career, an EFL user must be, first of all, good in speaking as they need special communication abilities to succeed their daily conversations in work, and thus, communicating effectively.

As for the reading skill, and unlike speaking, 14 respondents believe reading is most needed; these form (33.33%). They believe that reading provides them with a large supply of vocabulary items for future use; some complain that they feel bored when they read, so, their concern is how to enhance their reading styles and strategies.

In so far as listening is concerned, about 12 respondents see it to be first developed, this translates into (28.57%). Those who opted for this choice believe that one has to receive language first before any oral production takes place. They reported as well, they need to solve problems like missing attention and listening to teachers' rapid speech.

Last, but in no way least, only 9 respondents (*i.e.* 21.42%) have put the writing skill in the first position. These students believe that one should be at least able to write simple but coherent and well-organized passages; they complain mostly about their poor writing style.

Question 4: Which of the following best describes your level of oral performance in English?

<i>Options</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	6	16	14	6	0	42
<i>%</i>	14.28	38.09	33.33	14.28	0	100

Table 3.4: Students' Evaluation of their Level in Oral Proficiency

This question acts as a support to the one just preceding (Which of the four language skills you need to develop most?). Subjects are asked to describe their oral performance in the language class. In answer to this, they are exposed to rank themselves from high to low.

As shown in Table 3.4, 38.09% of the respondents state their oral performance's level as above average, about 14.28% claim it is high, against 33.33% who assume their level to be average, and 14.28% respond with less than average, but none said to have low level.

Question 5: What kind of activities did you enjoy most in class?

<i>Students' answers</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>1. Discussions and debates</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>23.80</i>
<i>2. Vocabulary activities</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>9.52</i>
<i>3. Grammar activities</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>9.52</i>
<i>4. Speaking and oral expression</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>23.80</i>
<i>5. Reading and telling stories</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>14.28</i>
<i>6. Games</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>19.04</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 3.5: Students' Preferences to In-class Activities

As shown in Table 3.5, almost the half of respondents to this item (47.60%) state they enjoy communicative activities (discussions and speaking), about 19.04% report they enjoy games most, while only 9.52% opt each for vocabulary and grammar activities. We have recorded also a rate of 14.28% who opted for reading and telling stories.

As noticed above, the majority of students showed that vocabulary and grammar exercises are their least favorite. Interestingly, students mostly enjoy communicative activities (debates and speaking).

Question 6: To what extent did the oral expression courses help you improve your oral performance?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Very much</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Not very much</i>	<i>None at all</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>%</i>	<i>47.61</i>	<i>33.33</i>	<i>2.38</i>	<i>16.66</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 3.6: Students' Attitudes toward Oral Expression Courses

Almost the half of respondents (47.61%) indicate that oral expression courses helped them very much improving their oral performance, whereas (33.33%) of subjects said they improved somewhat their oral performance. In the reverse side, just a few number of subjects (about 16.66%) declare they do not actually find their teachers' oral courses helpful,

however, none stated that oral courses are not helpful at all. We have recorded also one subject (2.38%) who opted for don't know.

Question 7: What kind of speaking activities do you use most in the classroom?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Group work</i>	<i>Role play</i>	<i>Problem solving</i>	<i>Debates</i>	<i>Oral reports</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	13	3	4	12	10	0	42
<i>%</i>	30.95	7.14	9.52	28.57	23.80	0	100

Table 3.7: Activities Most Used in the Classroom

Table 3.7 summarizes the most frequent techniques that teachers can use in order to carry out a speaking activity. As it can be noticed above, there is no major difference between rates of group work, debates and oral reports. Group work comes in the first place with 30.95%, students in favor of this type of technique may have their reasons such as the speaking is a social act in which two or more students are involved in oral exchange of information, and students feel more confident in themselves to speak. The next two categories of activities that follow are debates and oral reports with 28.57% and 23.80% respectively. Not surprising, we have recorded as well 4 cases of subjects who consider problem solving as the best technique and only 3 answers opt for role play. Outwardly, no one has preference for other particular kind of speaking activities.

In sum, students are aware of many techniques used to teach speaking in the classroom; also, teachers do actually break the routine and use different activities to bring variety into their oral classes so as to preserve the students' motivation.

Question 8: Do teachers give you the opportunity to evaluate your oral production?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	8	23	11	42
<i>%</i>	19.04	54.76	26.19	100

Table 3.8: Students' Right to Evaluation

Evaluating students' oral production is recognized as an essential feature of effective teaching. Subjects were asked if they are given the opportunity to evaluate their oral production. Table 3.8 shows that a percentage of (19.04%) of respondents confess to be given

always the opportunity to get feedback on their oral productions, against 26.19% who report they have never been evaluated in the oral class.

In all likelihood, still more effort is needed from the part of teachers to stimulate students' participation in the teaching process. Self-evaluation can be useful technique in which students feel more responsible and thus more independent in their learning.

Question 9: Do teachers provide comprehensible input (materials) that is suitable to your need?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	4	29	9	42
<i>%</i>	9.52	69.04	21.42	100

Table 3.9: Teacher's Comprehensible Input

Regarding students' answers, 21.42% claim that their teachers never provide them comprehensible input that matches to their needs, while the majority (69.04%) state that their teachers do so sometimes. The remaining 9.52% of students confess that teachers do always present comprehensible input that is suitable to their needs.

Question 10: Do you feel satisfied in the different speaking activities you perform in class?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Somehow</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	15	16	11	42
<i>%</i>	35.71	38.09	26.19	100

Table 3.10: Students' Opinions about Classroom Speaking Activities

In this item, subjects are invited to say their opinions about the speaking activities performed in the class. The table above shows that 35.71% of the respondents feel totally satisfied. About 38.09% of subjects respond by 'sometimes'. Eleven subjects, however, opt for 'no' which translates to 26.19%.

Students' Justifications

The first category of respondents, who answer 'yes', justify their answers by saying that speaking activities performed in class are interesting to a great deal, the thing that enable them to communicate with their peers, exchange ideas and opinions. In addition, these

activities help them to practice whatever they learn, use the language, and improve knowledge.

The second category, who said ‘no’, expressed that these activities are not enough due to many factors for instance; students haven’t had an equal chance to speak, time is not enough. Some feel not motivated in class and less comfortable, topics are not interesting, while others complain about the lack of communication between peers inside class.

All in all, the fact that these students feel not satisfied about the way to develop their oral communicative competence and to use language in the classroom can show the need for more opportunities to perform speaking outside the class.

Question 11: To what extent do you feel improving in the speaking over the semester?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
A great deal	8	19.04
A sufficient amount to deal with the course work	14	33.33
Not enough	18	42.85
None at all	0	0
Already have a satisfactory level	2	4.76
Total	42	100

Table 3.11: Students’ Speaking Ability as a Result of Classroom Instruction

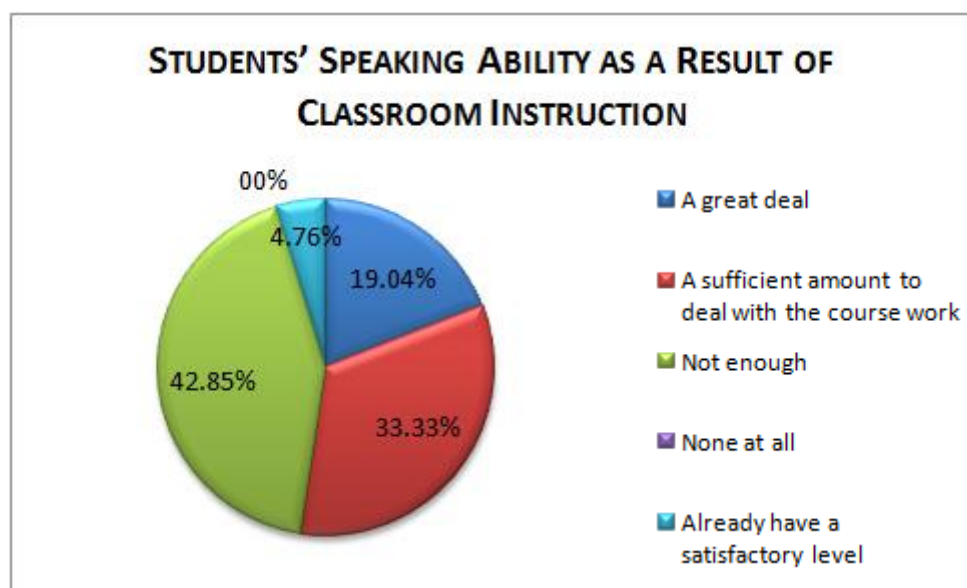


Figure 3.11: Students’ Speaking Ability as a Result of Classroom Instruction

The answers tabulated above reveals that while 33.33% and 19.04% of the students evaluate their speaking ability as a result of classroom instruction as being *sufficient* and *well* respectively. More than 42% state that their speaking level is *not enough*. Whereas the remaining 4.76% state they *already have a satisfactory level*. None claim that classroom instruction does *not at all* improve one's speaking level.

Question 12: Do you think that in-class instruction is sufficient for your English acquisition?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	12	30	42
<i>%</i>	28.57	71.42	100

Table 3.12: Students' Opinions about Different Types of In-class Activities

Table 3.12 shows obviously that the majority of students (*about 71.42%*) do actually agree that classroom instruction is not enough, whereas the remaining 28.57% of subjects see in-class instruction as sufficient for their English acquisition progress.

Students' Justifications

Students' complaining about the way to develop their oral communicative competence and to use language in the classroom must show constantly the need for more opportunities to perform speaking outside the class.

Section Three: Students' Opinions about Extracurricular Activities

Question 13: Are you trying to improve your level of English outside the classroom?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	35	7	42
<i>%</i>	83.33	16.66	100

Table 3.13: Outside Classroom Learning

It is obvious from the table above that most of students said 'yes' (*about 83.33%*), that is, they do actually try to improve their English level outside the classroom. The remaining 16.66% respond with 'no', this means they never try to improve their level outside the classroom.

Students' Justifications

Students explain that classroom instruction is not really enough; students should do extra-efforts to improve their English level. For them, classes do not provide the opportunity, because of time constraint in particular, to do everything about language; therefore, they need more opportunities for practice outside. Some find it even difficult to express themselves in the presence of their teachers; however, they can do so outside with peers. Moreover, they state some extracurricular activities helped them a lot in their learning like: Internet, home learning, online discussions, reading books, watching movies, talking to friends etc.

Question 14: Do you know any language-related extracurricular activities (ECAs) being organized at Ouargla University?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	17	25	42
<i>%</i>	40.47	59.52	100

Table 3.14: Students' Knowledge of ECAs

Students, who use English outside the classroom, are believed to be intrinsically motivated. The question above tries to ask students whether or not they are aware of any extracurricular activities used there in their University. Of the total respondents, 40.47% report they are aware of different EC activities conducted in their university; against 59.52% who said have no idea about any of such activities existing in Ouargla University.

Students, who know some of such activities, gave some examples like: English Language Club (ELC), Translation Club, the Zone Group and the American Corner. Those students look more likely to have a positive attitude toward these ECAs and this, no doubt, will affect their learning outcomes. On the other hand, those students who tell they do not any of these activities seem either not willing to use all the chances they have to practice English, or they likely have lower awareness about the value of these extracurricular activities and its positive effects on their academics.

Question 15: What kind of extracurricular programs have you participated in, how often, and in what capacity?

Extracurricular program	How often have you participated?					In what capacity?		
	Yearly	Monthly	Every week	A few times	Once	Leader	Participant	Observer
The American Corner	5%			14%	5%			19%
The ELC	14%	5%	5%	24%		5%	24%	19%
The ZONE Group			5%	10%	5%			10%
The Career Center					5%		5%	

Table 3.15: Students’ Frequency and Level of EC Participation

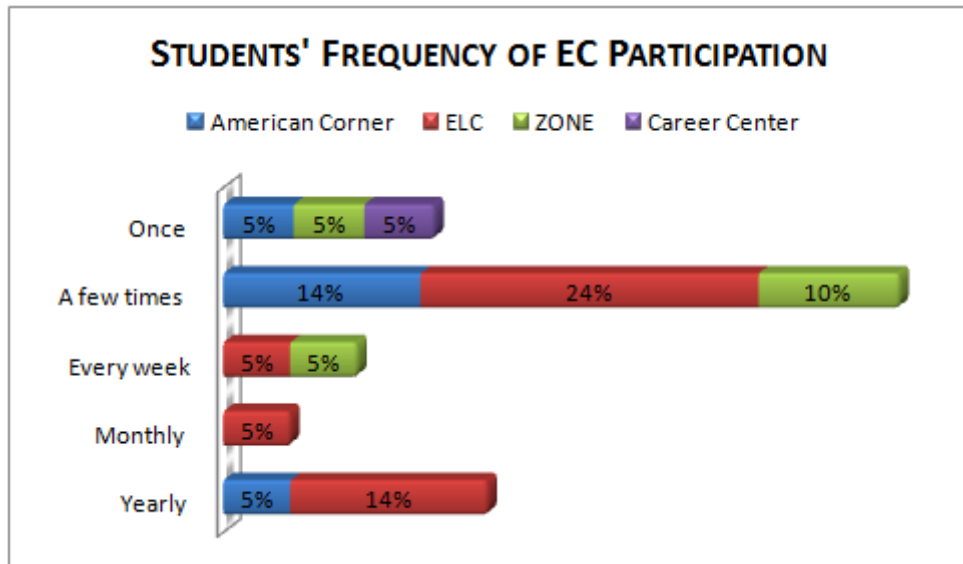


Figure 3.15.1: Students’ Frequency of EC Participation

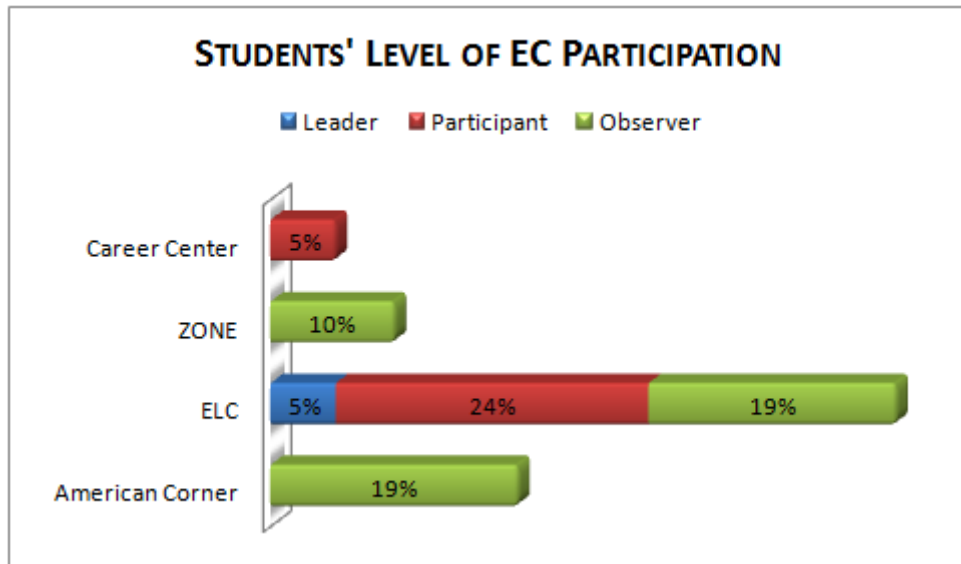


Figure 3.15.2: Students' Level of EC Participation

Students' answers to this item showed four main extracurricular programs that students have interest of and like to participate in, with different capacities; this includes the American Corner, English Language Club, the ZONE Group and the Career Center. The analysis of variables here showed that English Language Club membership provides students with the most opportunities to participate in ECA, and that this participation increases students' interest in further involvement in language-related ECAs and interest in taking more language classes. This suggests that participation in ECAs is a motivational factor in FL learning.

Question 16: What were your favourite activities in these programs, if any, and why?

	<i>Activity</i>	<i>What did you like about it?</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1	<i>Speakers' Corner</i>	Students have the chance to express their thoughts and ideas freely.	6	17.14
2	<i>Study days</i>	An opportunity to officially speak in public, I acquired presentations skills	7	20
3	<i>Public Speaking</i>	By which, students will get rid of public speaking stress.	6	17.14
4	<i>Free debates</i>	Good for practicing my English and exchanging our ideas.	7	20
5	<i>Competitions</i>	I gain team work spirit	5	14.28
6	<i>Games</i>	Learning in a funny way, I can help others to break the ice, Vocabulary builder.	4	11.42
	No answer		7	20
	<i>Total</i>		42	100

Table 3.16: Students' Favourite ECAs

In this question about students' preferences in extracurricular activities, analysis revealed that students generally like communicational activities such as: public speaking, debates and conferences.

Question 17: What did you dislike about these ECAs in general, in terms of timing, structure, topics or other factors?

<i>Students' answers</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>1. Timing is a big concern.</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>66.66</i>
<i>2. Topics are slightly interesting, some are even silly.</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>13.33</i>
<i>3. Activities are few and need to be renewed.</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>No answer</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 3.17: Students' Feelings towards ECAs

Subjects here are required to say what they dislike about extracurricular activities. As it can be noticed in Table 3.17, the majority of students (66.66%) reported the lack of time to organize and attend ECA as the major problem with ECAs. Leaders and active members, however, were less concerned for time than other participants because of their level of motivation to study English and willingness to spend more time on it.

Question 18: Do you think these ECAs would be useful for your English acquisition?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>%</i>	<i>73.80</i>	<i>9.52</i>	<i>16.66</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 3.18: Usefulness of ECAs

As shown in Table 3.18, almost all subjects who answered this question (*about 73.80%*) reported that ECAs are useful for their English learning, only (*9.52%*) of respondents said 'no'. whereas (*16.66%*) of them did answer by 'don't know'.

Question 19: Would you like to participate in any language-related ECAs in the future?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	37	1	4	42
<i>%</i>	88.09	2.38	9.52	100

Table 3.19: Students' EC Participation in Future

Of the students who did have knowledge about or experience of participating in the ECAs, 88.09% of them want to continue their involvement. Only one subject reports s/he is not interested in continuing with ECAs. However, about 4 respondents (*i.e.* 9.52%) did answer with 'don't know'.

Question 20: Have you noticed any impact of these ECAs on:

<i>Skills</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Language skills in general	35	83.34
Grammar	7	16.66
Vocabulary	10	23.80
Language fluency	14	33.33
Communication abilities	13	30.95
Motivation to study English	8	19.04
No answer	7	16.66
<i>Total</i>	42	100

Table 3.20: Impact of ECAs on English Acquisition

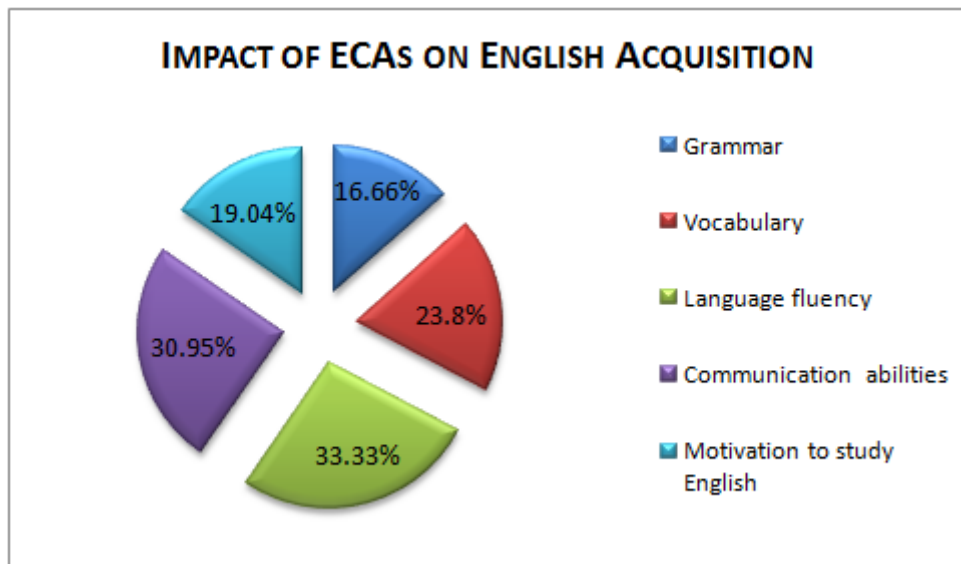


Figure 3.20: Impact of ECAs on English Acquisition

The question above addresses subjects to say the perceived impact of ECA on their English acquisition in general and on its specific aspects. As shown in Table 3.20, almost all subjects (83.34%) who answered this question reported that ECA had some impact on their language skills in general. However, about 16.66% of them did not answer this question. 16.66% of respondents found ECA useful for their knowledge of grammar. Almost the third (33.33%) report that ECA had an effect on their English fluency. While about 23.80% noticed some impact on their vocabulary, 30.95% reported that ECAs impact their communication skills. 19.04% found that their motivation towards studying English has been subject to ECA impact.

Question 21: Which of the listed extracurricular activities seem most interesting to you?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Very interested</i>	<i>Interested</i>	<i>Slightly interested</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Not interested</i>
Speakers' Corner	33,33%	16,66%	20%	6,66%	16,66%
Study days	33,33%	16,66%	6,66%	16,66%	20%
Workshops	13,33%	33,33%	10%	20%	6,66%
Listening Circle	6,66%	30%	20%	16,66%	13,33%
Public Speaking	46,66%	20%	16,66%	3,33%	6,66%
Vocabulizer Activity	26,66%	33,33%	26,66%	10%	3,33%
Exhibitions/ parties	23,33%	13,33%	20%	20%	3,33%
Competitions/ Games	36,66%	30%	13,33%	6,66%	10%

Table 3.21: Students' Ratings of Different Types of ECAs

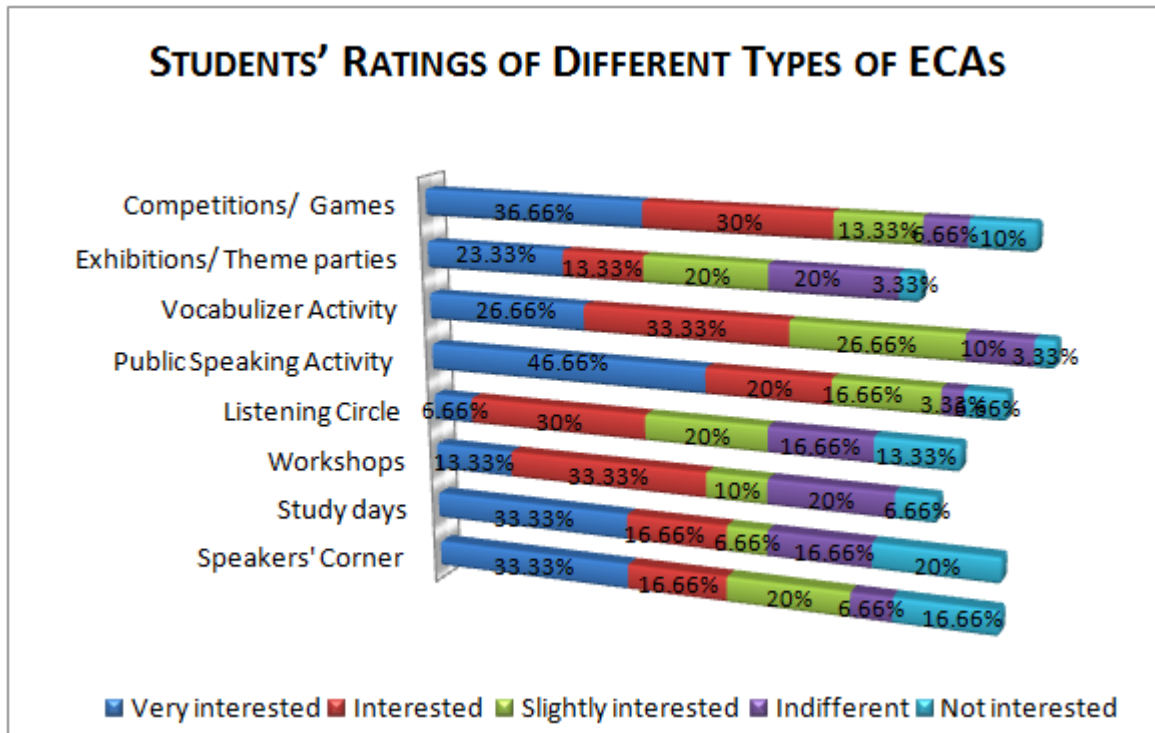


Figure 3.21: Students' Ratings of Different Types of ECAs

As shown above, almost all ECAs were positively evaluated by subjects as being interested or very interested. Most respondents rank 'Public Speaking Activity' as the very interested kind of ECAs (46.66%). The next most important and favoured ECAs are study days (33.33%), speaker corner (33.33%), competitions and games activities (36.66%).

Question 22: Does regular participation in ECAs help you to reduce your speaking difficulties?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	35	2	5	42
<i>%</i>	83.33	4.76	11.90	100

Table 3.22: Regular EC Participation as a Help to Reduce Speaking Difficulties

As Table 3.22 shows, 83.33% of the respondents find that regular participation in extracurricular activities may lead them to reduce their speaking difficulties; however, 4.76% of them say it does not. While the remaining subjects (11.9%) report they 'don't know'.

Question 23: After using these activities, I think I have improved my ability of speaking?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Very little</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>Quite</i>	<i>A lot</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number</i>	2	8	17	15	42
<i>%</i>	4.76	19.04	40.47	35.71	100

Table 3.23: Students' Speaking Ability as a Result of EC Participation

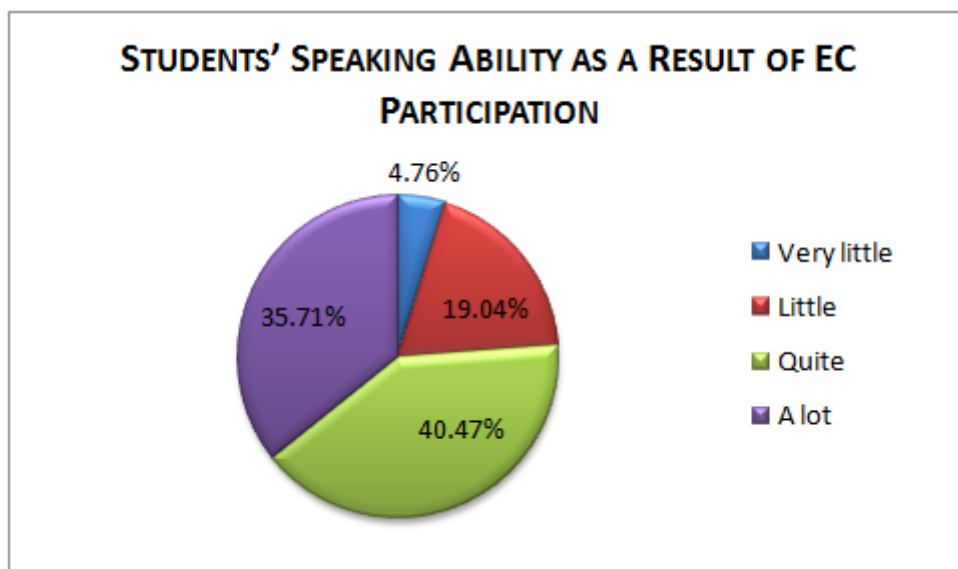


Figure 3.23: Students' Speaking Ability as a Result of EC Participation

In answer to the last question, a numerical minority of 10 respondents (23.80%) has indicated that extracurricular participation does help them little or very little to improve their speaking skill. In comparison, 32 respondents have opted for the opposite situation, which translates into (76.18%). This communicates a deep fact that a high portion of the sample recognizes the benefits of ECAs in improving their oral proficiency.

Students explain that their speaking improves when they use ECAs because: they feel they are able now for instance to participate in a group discussion without problems. In addition, they can discuss by now some points in seminars and study days since they are more self-confident now. They add: we can publically defend our research topic, we can take parts in debates and respect oral language features such as prosody, turn taking, and specific vocabulary.

3.2.2 Interpretation of the Questionnaire Results

On the basis of the analysis of the students' questionnaire, we note that the majority of the students think having a level of English from average to well as shown in question 2, those who claim they are not well might represent the proportion of students who find some difficulties with communication in the class. In response to question 3, more than half of the students (52.38%) express their wishes to master the speaking skill most; this is due to the fact that speaking a language is considered as a synonymous with knowing that language (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Concerning the other skills (i.e. reading, listening, and writing) students do not seem to understand that they are interrelated, thus, learning the speaking skill will reinforce the learning of the other skills.

In regards to in-class activities students most enjoy, the majority of students showed that vocabulary and grammar exercises are their least favourite, as indicated in response 5. Interestingly, students mostly enjoy communicative activities (discussions and speaking). Besides, in question 6, almost the half of students (47.61%) indicate that oral expression courses helped them a lot to improve their oral performance, however, still more efforts are needed from the part of teachers to stimulate students' verbal participation and communication. Also, if courses are motivating enough, students are seen struggling to express themselves and their ideas. As for teaching speaking, students seem to be good aware of different techniques used to teach speaking in the classroom. As it is shown in question 7, there is no major difference in rates of students' preferences to group work, debates and oral reports. This indicates that teachers do use different activities to bring variety into their oral classes and break the routine; however, students need more opportunities for communicative interaction and language use.

Evaluating students' oral production is recognized as an essential feature of effective teaching. A considerable number of respondents to question 8 confess they are likely to be given the opportunity to provide feedback on their oral productions. This indicates that teachers do really want to get their students involved in such type of interaction which in turns has an impact on their oral performance. Regarding students' answers to question 9, a small percentage of students (*only 9.52%*) confess that their teachers do always provide comprehensible input that is suitable to their need, against 21.42% who claim they never got a comprehensible input. In all likelihood, still more effort is needed from the part of instructors to maximize students' participation in the teaching process. Self-evaluation and comprehensible

input are at the core of any interactive activity whereby students feel more responsible and thus more independent in their learning.

Respondents to question 10, about (35.17%) of them, demonstrated their feeling of satisfaction towards the different speaking activities performed in English class, as this enables them to communicate with their peers, exchange ideas and opinions. In addition, these activities help them to practice whatever they learn, use the language, and improve knowledge. However, 26.19% of them expressed their dissatisfaction about in-class speaking activities due to many factors as: students haven't had an equal chance to speak, time is not enough. Some feel not motivated in class and less comfortable, topics are not always interesting and so on. This might show that students need to have more opportunities to communicate and practice language during in-class activities. Students also expressed their enthusiasm about practicing their English more during extracurricular activities. In question 11, a considerable rate of respondents (52.37%) confess they actually improve in terms of in-class speaking from sufficient amount to a great deal, against 42.85% who declare they do not. Later in question 12, the majority of them (71.42%) confirm that different types of in-class instruction are not enough. Their complaining about the way to develop their oral communicative competence and to use language in the classroom must show constantly the need for more opportunities to perform speaking outside the class.

Students, who use English outside the classroom, are believed to be intrinsically motivated. About 83.33% of respondents to question 13 tend to spend more time outside of class to improve their English language skills; this might be another sign that in-class hours are not enough at least for some students, thus, more contact time and practice is something they need for better English acquisition. The analysis of students' attitudes in questions 14 and 15 shows obviously that students, at the English Department in Ouargla University, have an exposure to an interesting array of language-related activities outside of class. Of the total respondents to question 14, about 40.47% expressed their knowledge of some kind of extracurricular activities conducted at their university. This includes language clubs, retreats, competitions, conferences, etc. On the other hand, the analysis also revealed that 59.52% of them reported have no idea about any of such activities existing there. This might indicate that either those students seem not willing to use all the chances they have to practice English, or they likely have lower awareness about the value of these extracurricular activities and its positive effects on their academics. The question about the frequency and level of EC participation showed four main extracurricular programs that students have interest of and

used to participate in with different capacities; this includes the American Corner, the English Language Club, the ZONE Group and the Career Center. The analysis of variables in question 15 showed also that English Language Club membership provides students with the most opportunities to participate in ECA, and that this participation increases students' interest in further involvement in language-related ECAs and interest in taking more language classes. This suggests that participation in ECAs is a motivational factor in foreign language learning.

In the next questions 16 and 21, about students' preferences in extracurricular activities, analysis revealed that students generally like communicational activities such as: public speaking, debates and conferences. Students express positive attitudes towards language-related ECA, they expect them to help learn new vocabulary, motivate them to learn more and give them a chance to actually immerse into the FL environment and practice language in a real conversational situation. Language instructors agree with the students about this point and share the common idea 'the more exposure, the better' (quoted from one of the questionnaires). However, in question 17, almost all students reported that lack of time to organize and attend ECA is the major problem with ECAs. Leaders and active members, however, were less concerned for time than other participants because of their level of motivation to study English and willingness to spend more time on it.

Of all respondents to question 18, 73.80% of students do agree that ECAs would be useful for their English language skills development. In next question, the majority of these students (88.09%), are eager to participate in ECAs in future time. According to students' reports in questions 20, 22 and 23, analysis showed that the majority of students believe in that ECAs do indeed provide some positive impact on students' English acquisition in a number of ways: they help build necessary skills for acquiring the English language, enhance their speaking and language fluency, reduce their speaking difficulties, motivate and inspire them, and help them building confidence, which is confirmed by previous research like (Kilzer, 1956; Melsness, 1964; Sherritt, 1964; Trump, 1953; Druzhinina, 2000; Eccles, 2003; Marsh and Kleitman, 2002; Tenhouse, 2003; Rombokas, 1995; Astin, 1993; Darling, Caldwell, and Smith, 2005; Neblette, 1940; Manhoney and Cairns, 2003) and provide opportunities for further development of these and other qualities.

3.2.3 The Interview Results' Analysis

Section One: Background Information

Question 1: Could you tell us for how many years have you been teaching English?

Answer: Our interviewee has been teaching English for eleven (11) years. This shows that she is familiar with different methods used in teaching, and she is able to talk about learners' requirements and needs for developing their language and communicative skills.

Question 2: Have you followed a particular approach?

Answer: Since our interviewee has experience in teaching English, she strongly believes in the eclectic method but she does focus more and more on the Communicative Approach.

Question 3: Do you give students opportunities to talk about their communicative needs?

Answer: Yes. This indicates that the teacher is seriously concerned with knowing what learners are able to do and to know about language since this information help teachers to put objectives of lessons and to provide the relevant materials. The teacher adds that the nature of the module, the class size, the class profile, and her teaching beliefs all dictate on her to consider the learners communicative needs. On the other hand, the LMD reform is shifting more and more towards learner-centered approach in which the learner is adult and has to be more active in her/his learning process so that s/he can link language skills to job skills in the future.

Section Two: Teaching Speaking

Question 4: What kind of speaking in-class activities you focus on most?

Answer: The teacher focuses most on communicative activities such as dialogues, oral presentations, debates, and role play. Teachers in favor of these activities may have their reasons such as the speaking is a social act in which two or more students are involved in oral exchange of information, and students feel more confident in themselves to speak.

Question 5: What are the speaking problems students most face in class?

Answer: Most L₂ learners have some problems with speaking like: shyness, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, and sometimes reluctance of pair and group work. So they show weak pronunciation, poor use of prosodic features, lack or misuse of vocabulary and so on.

Question 6: According to you, are students required to spend time outside of class for their English acquisition?

Answer: The teacher claims that it is sure. She explains that because of the little time allotted for each session (one to two sessions per week) and the large number of students in class, authentic use of language can be found more outside the classroom using real life situations and using language for relevant needs.

Question 7: Do you provide students with information about language-related extracurricular activities?

Answer: Yes. The aim of this item is to investigate whether or not teachers help their students see the value of extracurricular activities. The teacher's answer to this question implies that she is aware of the necessity of involving students in extracurricular work. In sum, raising students' awareness of the value of EC activities is of great benefits to students because this would encourage them to participate more in such activities. Thus, it would give better results.

Section Three: Teacher's Experience and Opinions about ECAs

Question 8: Do you personally organize or help organizing any language-related extracurricular activity?

Answer: Yes.

Question 9: Do you participate or did you participate in any language-related extracurricular activity organized by other teachers or students?

Answer: Yes, like study days, exhibitions.

Question 10: Have you got problems like: lack of spare time due to the busy schedules?

Answer: Sometimes.

Question 11: Do you think that extracurricular involvement enhances students' academic performance?

Answer: She states that it does to a great extent, but only if done for academic purposes i.e. not just to have fun or to show off or to monopolize the talk.

Question 12: To what extent do you agree that extracurricular activities help in improving:

a. Students' knowledge of grammar?

Answer: Not to a great extent, she states that students tend to not focus much more on aspects of grammar; they rather focus on the overall communicative competence. It is through

communicative activities that learners can control their grammatical structure and practice different forms of language. Thus, learners can develop both fluency and accuracy.

b. Students' English vocabulary?

Answer: To a great extent, she claims that the more students are exposed to authentic language, the more they enrich their vocabulary.

c. Students' English fluency?

Answer: To some extent. Practicing communicative activities is the key for developing fluency.

d. Students' communication abilities?

Answer: To a great extent.

e. Students' motivation toward studying English?

Answer: To a great extent.

Question 13: What kind of extracurricular activity do you consider most useful for students' English acquisition?

Answer: public speaking, projects, presentations.

Question 14: Do you think that extracurricular involvement enhances students' oral proficiency?

Answer: Yes, and that's what they do the most in deed.

Question 15: Do you have any suggestions for improving extracurricular activities for students?

Answer: She suggests that the better position of extracurricular activities is to be under the supervision of experts not only done by students.

3.2.4 Interpretation of the Interview Results

Analyzing the teacher's interview has revealed many facts on teachers' attitudes towards teaching speaking, their behaviour in the classroom, and their perception of the role of extracurricular activities in language learning. In fact, the teacher considers the aural/ oral and communicative skills as her major concern while teaching. This implies that the teacher is well aware of students' needs in terms of developing oral proficiency. For teaching speaking, and on the basis of the teacher's response to question 4, our interviewee opt for

communicative activities such as dialogues, oral presentations, debates, and role play; this may be due to the fact that the learners in such activities speak more freely through giving and receiving opinions, here learners also can learn some of the speaking techniques of how to initiate, take turn, interrupt and close the topic. As such, teachers are asked to provide students with appropriate language use and authentic input that help them in increasing their oral proficiency.

Most L₂ learners have some problems with speaking; the teacher claims, as indicated in question 5, that students have the problem of inhibition because of shyness, anxiety and stress. This may be due to the ill development of communicative skills and the feeling of linguistic inferiority. Other problems students most face are: lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, and sometimes reluctance of pair and group work. As a result, they show weak pronunciation, poor use of prosodic features, lack or misuse of vocabulary etc. In response to question 6, the teacher claims that students are required to spend time outside of class for their English acquisition. According to her, the little time allotted for each session i.e. oral expression course, and the large number of students in class show the need for more authentic use of language which can be found outside the classroom using real life situations and using language for relevant needs. In response to question 7, the teacher said ‘Yes’ she does. This indicates that she is aware of the necessity of involving students in extracurricular work. In fact, raising students’ awareness of the value of EC activities is of great benefits to students because this would encourage them to participate more. Thus, it would give better results.

In regards of the teacher’s experience with extracurricular activities and as it can be noticed from her sayings in questions 8 and 9, our interviewee said that she participated many times in such events as study days and exhibitions. She also expressed that she had even the chance to personally organize more than once some language-related extracurricular activities conducted in Ouragla University. As it can be shown above, the teacher has positive attitudes towards language-related ECA. In fact, language instructors do also agree with students about this point and share the common idea ‘the more exposure, the better’ (quoted from one of the questionnaires). In question 10, however, our interlocutor expresses that lack of time to organize and attend ECA is one major problem with ECAs because of the busy schedules of both teachers and students.

In question 11, the one about the teacher's evaluation of ECAs as an opportunity for improving students' academic performance, analysis revealed the teacher's recognition of the effectiveness of such space facilities as a way to help to enhance students' oral proficiency. "It does to a great extent, but only if done for academic purposes i.e. not just to have fun or to show off or to monopolize the talk". Quoted from the teacher's interview. In response to question 12, the interviewee expresses her positive attitudes towards language-related ECA, she expects them to help learn new vocabulary; the more students are exposed to authentic language, the more they enrich their vocabulary. ECAs also enhance the students' speaking and language fluency, motivate them to learn more and give them a chance to actually immerse into the FL environment and practice language in a real conversational situation. Concerning its impact on grammar, she states that it is not to a great extent. This might indicate that students tend to not focus much more on aspects of grammar; they rather focus on the overall communicative competence. It is through communicative activities that learners can control their grammatical structure and practice different forms of language. Thus, learners can develop both fluency and accuracy. Regarding the question 13, the one about the most useful kind of EC activities for students' English acquisition, analysis to the teacher's answer reveals that activities like public speaking, projects and oral presentations are seen to be the most beneficial for students studying EFL. In her response to the question 14, our interviewee restates again that extracurricular activities do actually enhance students' academic oral proficiency, as her words clearly show "Yes! and that's what they do the most indeed".

In the last, the teacher suggests that for improving extracurricular activities for students, the leading position of ECA should not be only under the supervision of students, experts can provide these activities with more success.

3.3 Practical Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are offered for both educators and students on how to organize language-related extracurricular activities:

1. Voluntary basis. Making extracurricular activities mandatory and not giving students a chance to choose activities will likely lower students' motivation towards EFL learning.
2. Involving a larger number of students in different activities. Providing students with a wide range of ECAs and more information about them will help to attract more students towards

ECA. In turn, an increase in students' involvement will have a positive effect on their language learning motivation.

3. Choosing age appropriate activities and materials. While this study only surveyed university-based ECAs, further studies should clarify the preferences for learners in different environments and from different age groups (e.g., elementary school, high school, etc).

4. Providing students with opportunities to express themselves and choose materials and activities according to their own preferences.

5. Organizing activities appropriate for students' language proficiency level. Activities should be challenging, but should also bring students a feeling of success and enjoyment.

6. Connecting the materials used in class to extracurricular activity content might be beneficial.

7. Promoting students' initiative and self-sufficiency throughout extracurricular work. Since there are usually no faculty members responsible for organizing extracurricular activities, it might be appropriate to select a student or a group of students who major in a FL to manage this work. This can give the designated student monitors an opportunity to practice some elements of language teaching before they graduate and thus stimulate them towards choosing the profession of a language teacher. For the rest of the ECA participants, student monitors would provide a role model and thus contribute to their language learning motivation.

Conclusion

Roughly all participants in this study, students or the teacher, consider ECA an important part of English language learning. They report the impact of these activities on all aspects of students' English acquisition and skills, and especially on their oral proficiency.

Interestingly, a comparison of students' vs. teacher's responses shows that both students and their teacher share the same preferences of in-class activities: they do not enjoy grammar or structural activities. Both students and their teacher believe that ECAs are particularly important for students' communicative competence and language fluency.

Conclusion

The present study has dealt with the effects of extracurricular activities on improving students' academic oral proficiency. It is mainly concerned with establishing a relaxed learning environment as an attempt to provide EFL learners with extensive language use in order to maximize their oral production.

This dissertation focuses on the belief that extracurricular activities play a vital role in academic achievement. As stated earlier that when participating in extracurricular activities, students get the chance of learning group and individual responsibilities, having relationship abilities, and applying academic skills in actual world context. (Fioriello, 2009)

Based on what has been studied theoretically, we came to the conclusion that different investigations and research projects in recent years have shown that there has been a growing interest in developing learners' ways of communicating in the FL. According to the results of this study, students should be involved in extracurricular activities as a way that helps them to improve to a large extent their academic oral performance and to overcome some speaking psychological problems.

All in all, the positive results revealed in this study concerning the influence of extracurricular activities on improving students' academic oral proficiency have confirmed our hypothesis. This means that there is a positive relationship between extracurricular involvement and oral proficiency. Findings also show that well-planned and organized ECA is an effective way for improving EFL learners oral production.

This study is useful not only for students to enhance their speaking and for teachers contributing to their understanding of the role and value of extracurricular activities in FL learning, further research should be done experimentally to test the applicability of these findings to a larger setting and population.

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Appendices

Appendix: A ‘Students’ Questionnaire’

Dear students,

We are conducting a research paper for the fulfillment of a Master degree in Applied Linguistics and English for Specific Purposes. Our research investigates *The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Students’ Academic Oral Proficiency*.

We would be thankful if you could answer the following questionnaire to help us in our research. As such, we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest.

Please circle (○) the appropriate option and make full statement whenever necessary.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Section One: Background Information

1. Specify your gender:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. How would say you speak English?
 - a. Very well
 - b. Well
 - c. Average
 - d. Not well

Section Two: Students’ Perception of their Academic Oral Proficiency

3. Which of the four language skills you need to develop most? (rank choices from 1 ‘most needed’ to 4 ‘least needed’)
 - a. Listening 1 2 3 4
 - b. Speaking 1 2 3 4
 - c. Reading 1 2 3 4
 - d. Writing 1 2 3 4

Why?

.....

4. Which of the following best describes your level of oral performance in English?
 - a. High
 - b. Above average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below average
 - e. Low
5. What kind of activities did you enjoy most in class?

.....
6. To what extent did the oral expression courses help you improve your oral performance?

- a. Very much
- b. Somewhat
- c. Don't know
- d. Not very much
- e. None at all

7. What kind of speaking activities do you use most in class?

- a. Group work
- b. Role-play
- c. Problem solving
- d. Debates
- e. Oral reports and presentations

Other, please specify

.....

8. Do teachers give you the opportunity to evaluate your oral production?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

9. Do teachers provide comprehensible input (materials) that is suitable to your need?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

10. Do you feel satisfied in the different speaking activities you perform in class?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Somehow

Whatever your answer is, please justify

.....

11. To what extent do you feel improving in the speaking over the semester?

- a. A great deal
- b. A sufficient amount to deal with the course work
- c. Not enough
- d. None at all
- e. Already have a satisfactory level

12. Do you think that in-class instruction is sufficient for your English acquisition?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Whatever your answer is, please justify

.....

Appendix: B ‘Teacher's Interview’

Dear teacher,

This interview is to further the investigation of *The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Students' Academic Oral Proficiency* from teachers' point of view.

We would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions to help us in our research for the fulfillment of a Master degree in Applied Linguistics and English for Specific Purposes. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Section One: Background Information

1. Could you tell us for how many years have you been teaching English?
2. Do you follow a particular approach?
3. Do you give students opportunities to talk about their communicative needs?

Section Two: Teaching Speaking

4. What kind of speaking in-class activities you focus on most?
5. What are the speaking problems students most face in class?
6. According to you, are students required to spend time outside of class for their English acquisition?
7. Do you provide students with information about language-related extracurricular activities?

Section Three: Teacher's Experience and Opinions about ECA

8. Do you personally organize or help organizing any language-related extracurricular activity?
9. Do you participate or did you participate in any language-related extracurricular activity organized by other teachers or students?
10. Have you got problems like: lack of spare time due to the busy schedules?
11. Do you think that extracurricular involvement enhances students' academic performance?
12. To what extent do you agree that extracurricular activities help in improving:
 - a. Students' knowledge of grammar?
 - b. Students' English vocabulary?
 - c. Students' English fluency?
 - d. Students' communication abilities?
 - e. Students' motivation toward studying English?
13. What kind of extracurricular activity do you consider most useful for students' English acquisition?
14. Do you think that extracurricular involvement enhances students' oral proficiency?
15. Do you have any suggestions for improving extracurricular activities for students?

Abstract

The present study aims at explore the effects of extracurricular activities on improving students' oral proficiency in university. The research study outlines an array of extracurricular activities offered for students in Ouargla University, and investigates the opinions of students and instructors regarding the perceived impact of these activities on students' academic oral performance.. It was hypothesized that students who are involved in extracurricular activities would develop their academic oral proficiency. Data were gathered through a self- completion questionnaire administered to third year LMD students, and via a structured interview delivered to their teacher of oral expression. The results have shown that there is a positive correlation between extracurricular involvement and oral proficiency. As expected, our hypothesis was confirmed in that students need to be provided with more opportunities to develop their oral performance and to create suitable situations where they can use and speak language without difficulties.

Key terms: *Communicative Approach, oral performance, extracurricular activities.*

ملخص الدراسة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز دور الأنشطة اللاصفية في تحسين مهارات الطلاب الشفهية وكذا التواصلية في اللغة الإنجليزية. هذا العمل معد أساسا من أجل توعية المربين وكل المعنيين الى مدى أهمية إنشاء بيئة وفضاء لاصفي مفيد لمتعلمي اللغات الأجنبية من أجل توفير مجال أوسع وأكثر راحة لاستخدام اللغة و زيادة الإنتاج الشفهي لديهم بالأخص. لقد إفترضنا أن مشاركة الطلاب في الأنشطة اللاصفية من شأنه أن يطور مهاراتهم الشفهية والاتصالية على المستوى الأكاديمي. لقد أظهرت النتائج المتوصل إليها أن هناك علاقة إيجابية بين مشاركة الطلبة في هاته الأنشطة اللاصفية وزيادة مستوى إستخدام اللغة و التحصيل الدراسي لديهم الذي ينعكس بدوره أيضا على الأداء الشفهي في اللغة الإنجليزية عند هؤلاء. كما هو متوقع تم تأكيد فرضيتنا والتوصل إلى أن دراسي اللغات الأجنبية بحاجة إلى المزيد من الفرص لتطوير مهاراتهم اللغوية خاصة الشفهية منها وإنشاء وضعيات تعليمية مناسبة تمكنهم من إستخدام اللغة بكون صعوبات .

الكلمات المفتاحية : المنهج التواصلية, الأداء الشفهي, الأنشطة اللاصفية.