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REPUBLIQUE ALGERIENNE DEMOCRATIQUE ET POPULAIRE
MINISTRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA
RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE
UNIVERSITE DE BISKRA
FACULTE DES LETTRES ET DES SCIENCES HUMAINES
DEPARTEMENT D'ANGLAIS

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THEME:

*AN ANALYSIS OF SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS
LEADING TO FAILURE IN DEVELOPING THE
LEARNER'S ORAL PROFICIENCY*

The case of study: 2nd year students in the department of English at Biskra University.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the Magister degree in language and civilization

Student: KHERIBET SOUHILA

Supervised by: Dr GHOUAR AMOR

Dedication

To my parents: Ahcene and Hafidha

To my brothers :Fouzi, Mouhammed and Badice

To my sister.: Romaissa

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to highlight the relationship existing between language acquisition/learning and the psychological status of the learner. We will try to investigate how would the learner's psyche influence positively or negatively the development of the learner's oral proficiency.

This paper is divided into two parts, the first of which includes four chapters. The first three chapters deal respectively with a psychological, psycho-pedagogical and psycholinguistic interpretations of learning. The fourth chapter, however, is primarily related to the identification of some of those psychological factors that hamper the acquisition process.

The second part basically includes the questionnaire's answers analysis due to which we would confirm our hypothesis and discover, explain and illustrate the already stated relationship between students' psyche and their Acquisition/learning process.

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Introduction :

Learning a foreign language requires knowledge of every little detail related to the grammatical, social and cultural standards by virtue of which the learner is able to produce correct utterances in the target language. Since the practical function of any language is to communicate, its oral aspect should be given a more attention and consideration. We believe that the fact of speaking a language fluently implies that all the other linguistic domains (aspects) of that same language (phonetics, grammar and semantics) have been mastered by the learner, and proves that he/she is able to use them adequately in real life situations.

What is remarked in that field is that second year students in the department of English at Biskra University show a serious lack of fluency in speaking English. One would think that this is obviously due to some factors, most of them are social, cultural, or psychological, and which contribute to failure in the process of developing the learner's oral proficiency. In other words, the learner is not prepared to interact in the target language.

The objective of that survey is to identify these hampering and deffective factors behind such a failure, try to propose solutions to the problem, and give suggestions that converge to meet on one central point leading to fruitful results.

Nevertheless, throughout this dissertation, It will be delt mainly with the

psychological factors. This is not to say that the other ones are of no significance, but the purpose is to highlight an attempt to show the extent to which the psychological factors, among so many others, may have a great impact on the process of learning a foreign language in general, and developing the learner's oral performance in particular.

The notions of introversión, extroversión, field dependence, field independence, inhibition, motivation, anxiety, empathy, apathy and aversion will also be dealt with in a more detailed way; something that implies the mentioning of a number of recent theories dealing with the psychological factors behind learning. The intention is to theoretically discuss them and single out these elements commonly stated as most reasons of failure.

We believe that other researchers discussed this same issue taking into account other factors and dimensions, but we keep holding the idea that the ones investigated by the authors meet most variables targeted to be more explained by the present study.

When discussing this topic, questions like: what are the psychological factors that hamper the development of the individual's oral proficiency?, and on what consists the educators' role in helping the learner to get rid of these obstacles, will inevitably come to our minds, and answering them means

opening new horizons towards an easiest and a more efficient way to deal with the learner, and promoting the individual's oral proficiency development .This will inevitably lead us to succeed in the teaching and learning process and reaching our targeted objective.

Research methodology:

1- the method:

The method that will be used to discuss these issues is descriptive, since the study intends to provide a whole description of the phenomenon , bearing in mind that we have no previously set experiment to test . In addition to the nature of the problem itself which requires first a diagnostic study to describe the situation and the context that these learners are evolving in.

2- the population:

The concerned population would be 2nd year students in the department of English at Biskra University. They are 200 students and are believed to be the ones for whom this issue is more significant. Being relatively new comers to the university, they have already illustrated the targeted symptoms and concepts held in this dissertation especially through their shyness, or the isolation of the subject himself during the oral expression courses.

3- Sampling:

Sampling would be done randomly, for it is necessary to make sure that each

member of the population under study has an equal chance of being selected.

4-Data gathering:

The means of data collection used are questionnaires, self reports, and if necessary interviews will be added. Observation also is of relevant importance, since for this study, it is the best tool that allows the detection of these psychological factors through watching the learner's behavior.

We continue believing, however, that other tools of data gathering might appear useful throughout the study and we will be, then , bound to use them.

Chapter I :

A Psychological interpretation of learning

The behavior associated with what is commonly called 'the emotional life' presents innumerable difficulties to the psychologist. The problems themselves are very elusive owing to the difficulty of studying them in laboratory conditions, There is great risk of getting caught in the quicksands of hypothesis..

C.I . Sandstrom

The psychology of children and adolescents

Introduction :

Learning a language requires training the subject in the different aspects of the language and make him master its varied rules, to be able to express himself adequately in the target language. We believe that the fact of realizing these two conditions will inevitably facilitate the process of learning a language in general and developing the learner's oral proficiency in particular. Yet, what is noticed is that, despite the fact of being acquainted with all these aspects and rules, some learners could not speak fluently in the target language. This is probably due to many factors of different aspects. For example, the cultural background of the learner, that in most of the time, contrasts with the native speaker's one. An other significant factor is the one related to the social status of the foreign language learner that is considered to have a great impact in the learning process. We have also the psychological status of the individual, which we believe will inevitably influence the communicative performance development.

This chapter focuses on the third point and shows the extent to which the psychological status may hamper and/ or develop the learner's oral proficiency.

To tackle this issue, many questions arise: what do we mean by the psychology of learning?, and what are the most significant factors that contribute in the process of developing the learner's oral proficiency? Are only few examples.

1-The Psychology of Learning:

The psychology of learning examines the learning process through watching the individual's behavior, to be able to explain the mental mechanisms involved in such a task. Bruner (1966), for instance, cited in Good and Brophy (1990), believes that learning happens through a discovery process i.e., the individual has a latent capacity which requires external stimuli to be actualized in order to reach an already set objective (discovery). Bruner, then, extends his theory when he argues that the child represents the knowledge he processes about the world through three different steps. The first of these steps, which generally happens in early childhood, is called the **inactive representation**. The child, at this level, tries to cope with the environment through rudimentary habitual actions.

Throughout time, the child gets more acquainted with the environment. This implies more active participation from his part. The infant begins to manipulate concrete objects like images and pictures. In other words, he knows the world by means of these objects. Bruner calls this second step **iconic mode knowledge**. When the child reaches adolescence, he is able to cope with the environment through abstract concepts. In other terms, the previous concrete images and actions are transformed into language. Here, Bruner argues that the adolescent uses a **symbolic mode knowledge**, which is believed, still according to him, to be the

third and last step of the discovery theory.

An other worth noting psychologist that has dealt with the same subject is Jean Piaget, whose field work was especially related to developmental psychology. He believes that people are “constantly striving to adapt to the environment, which requires learning to comprehend and control it through adaptive mechanisms”(Good & Brophy, 1990.p53). In other terms, learning is the individual’s physical and mental endeavour to adapt to the environment in order to be able to understand and control the involved adaptive mechanisms. Piaget went further when he assumed that learning is the logical outcome of adaptation which is “a continuous process of interacting with the environment and learning to predict and control it”(p.55).

Adaptation in its turn can be explained in terms of two processes:

assimilation which is “a process where by the child interprets reality in terms of his/ her internal model of the world constructed from previous knowledge” and accommodation, ”a complementary process of improving ones model of the world by adjusting it to external reality”.(Libert, et al.1974.p166).

What is meant by these three definitions is that the two latter contribute to the fulfilment of the former i.e, assimilation and accommodation are two processes by virtue of which the individual is able to adapt to his surrounding environment. To better illustrate this, Piaget posited four stages the person logically passes

through from infancy to adulthood to form enough knowledge about the world. Like Bruner, Piaget believes that in order to get acquainted with the environment and cope with it successfully, the child must experience each of these gradual phases during which he would develop the potential capacities. (Language is one example). The four stages Piaget proposes are: the sensory motor period (from 0 to 2 year), the pre-operational period (from 2 to 7 year), the period of concrete operation (from 7 to 11 year), and finally the period of formal operation (from 11 to adulthood).(William and Burden,1997).

During the sensory motor period , the new born infant uses his basic senses to cope with the world and explore the environment in which he lives Piaget, and many cognitivists believe that the infant is born with inherited reflexes that need to be actualized by some external factors, That's why, during the first months of life, the baby tries to develop his potential capacities through organized actions and thoughts.

The next stage is the intuitive or pre-operational period. At this level, the child has already developed his rudimentary capacities and is now ready to engage in more complex activities. As an example, during this second stage, the child develops language, the ability to think and solve problems (Good and Brophy,1990). At the same time, Piaget argues that the child's thinking is

egocentric, for he (the child) believes that other people perceive things the way he does and conceive them from his own perspective. Memory also progresses during this same period because Piaget shares with Bruner the idea that, at this level, the child begins to use images and pictures to represent the world (symbolic representation as put by Bruner). And in order to retain them for future use, memory is needed so that the child would be able to conceive the previous knowledge in relation to the world surrounding him. A third characteristic of the pre-operational child is centration i.e., the child focuses on one single detail of a given problem and subsequently is unable to move to an other detail to solve that same problem. (Libert, et al.1974).

The third stage of the individual's intellectual development according to Piaget's theory is the concrete operational period. During this phase, the child starts to realize and achieve what has already been conceptualized in the preceding periods. What characterizes the concrete operation period is that the child achieves what Piaget calls conservation concepts i.e., the ability of distinguishing between the whole entity and its different parts. Also he is able to recognize the order of objects from least to most in length , weight or quantity; something that Piaget dubs seriation. Negation also is a criterion of the concrete operational child because he is able to acknowledge that an action can be negated or reversed to go back to the opposite situation.(Good § Brophy.1990).The last phase with which we

are concerned is the formal operational period. As its name suggests, at this level, the individual's thinking is more logical. His thinking process is more likely sophisticated and abstract. It enables him to cope with the environment (which is already known by him) successfully and at ease. (Williams and Burden, 1997).

At the end of these stages, Piaget came with the assumption that to each stage corresponds a particular behavior, which must be taken into consideration in the fields of education and psychology, especially when designing the curricula of individuals of different ages living in different environments.

An other equally important insight that must be mentioned when dealing with Piaget's theory of cognitive development is maturation. Piaget asserts the fact that the intellectual ability differs according to age. (Pavli, 1997) For example, the infant finds difficulties in adapting himself to the environment, that's why he just gets acquainted with what surrounds him through a passive adaptation. Yet, during the last phase of the individual's adaptation, generally the preoperational and concrete operational periods, the latter process is rather active. Piaget relates this to maturation. He believes that at this level, the individual is intellectually mature enough to engage in more complex activities.

The focus of the following section is on the fundamental questions that are now asked: what is meant by maturation? and what is its impact on the learning

process?.

2-Maturation vs Learning :

Before tackling the subject of maturation and its impact on learning, it would be better to define these two terms. Learning is viewed to be ***“the relatively permanent change in the individual’s behavior or behavior potential(or capability)as a result of experience or practice”***.(Huitt .1997)

(<http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/intro/whyedpsy.html>). Maturation on the other hand is also a relatively permanent change ***that results from biological growth and development.(Idem)***. What is remarked is that both maturation and learning are changes that occur in the individual’s behaviour, the former is the outcome of intellectual development and the latter the result of biological growth. Thus, our assumption about the two processes is that they are complementary as put by Duric(1989):”

“ the processes of maturation seem to proceed with a view in future learning processes . The processes of maturation then prepare the ground for learning processes, and the learning processes condition further maturation”.(p.36).

What is understood from the above statement is that each process serves the other positively, and that effective learning occurs only if the individual is mature enough. Hence, maturation is a prerequisite that enhances and develop the learning process.

Dealing with Erikson's maturational theory is the best way to understand what has been said about maturation. This theory is based on what Erikson calls *epigenetic principle*.(Williams & Burden,1997). He suggests that every individual proceeds to eight stages during which many new challenges are introduced to him. The individual is supposed to face and tackle these challenges; In case he succeeds, he will be in a strong position to meet the next stage; in case he does not, this will hamper his psychological maturation and will impose difficulties to deal with the following stages.(idem).

Here, it is easy to guess that the kind of maturation we are dealing with through Erikson's theory is purely psychological. The first stage the theorist posited is early infancy. The central conflict that happens during that period is about trust and mistrust. Erikson (1968) believes that a child at this level depends on others to meet his primary needs (food as an example). Trust is established when the child feels that he is well looked after and that all his needs are met. In case when the opposite happens, the child will develop a kind of mistrust towards others. The challenge lies in the fact that whether the infant is able to learn how to establish a trusty relationship with the others or not. Erikson believes that the fact of developing trust is considered to be the first stepping stone towards the next stage, toddlerhood, whose major conflict is autonomy vs. shame and doubt. Erikson urges that during this period ,the infant is

no more dependent and subsequently he starts to develop a kind of autonomy and self reliance. According to the same author, here should interfere the parents' role, their demands should be directed to meet the child's needs so that when he replies to these demands, he would not lose his proper autonomy. If the parents make so many demands, the child will do everything he can to meet these unfavourable needs. In case he fails, a feeling of shame and doubt will be developed; something that is believed to be as a hampering factor in the maturation process. (Good and Brophy, 1990).

The third stage is early childhood. At this level, the parent's reinforcement and encouragement is needed to foster and stimulate the children to initiate or even take risks when tackling a problem. Erikson believes that during this stage, the child shows a kind of *development of interest in one's self and one's capacities*. Thus, children looked after with affection and tenderness are likely to develop enough confidence and security, which will allow them to take further risks and initiatives. If it is the opposite, the child's motivation will be inhibited to take these risks and initiatives; a task that is believed to be a serious drawback in the individual's psychological maturation.(Williams and Burden,1997).

Middle childhood is the fourth phase in Erikson's theory whose central conflict is industry and inferiority. What is meant by industry is the fact of being

able to establish a sense of cooperation with others. In case of a child belonging to this stage, effective learning should occur within groups so that he could be able to share with others their different rudimentary conceptions about the world surrounding them. If the child feels that he is lost and is unable to grasp everything like others, he will develop a sense of inferiority especially when comparing himself to his classmates. The fifth stage is adolescence. During this period, the individual is no longer a child but rather a person who is looking for creating his own personality. The problems the child faces here are usually related to finding his identity. At this level, the individual must have already taken for granted so many beliefs , attitudes, values and even traditions. Everything was developed previously without any thought or consideration from his part.

Now, when creating his own universe and developing a kind of Independence and self reliance, the adolescent begins to consider again what suits his tendencies and rejects what does not please him. Here, he will inevitably discover so many personal traits which were unknown for him before leading to finding his own identity. In case the young individual is unable to distinguish between what he likes and what he dislikes, and is all the time in a permanent dilemma and doubt about his proper choice, identity confusion will emerge as a result of this unbalanced situation.

Intimacy and isolation are two criteria that characterizes young adulthood period, which is, still according to Erikson, the sixth stage of the maturational theory. He believes that young adults usually have the tendency to isolate themselves in order to think about their intimate world, especially about their relations with the opposite gender. Erikson urges that if the preceding stages have been successfully achieved ,i.e., if the individual has developed trust in others, enough autonomy and self esteem and is able to make initiatives, he is going to find no difficulty in establishing intimate relationships with others.

Adulthood is the seventh phase whose central conflict is generativity and stagnation. At this level, the individual is mature enough to evaluate his social status, subsequently, he can be satisfied or dissatisfied. When he is well committed with his family and work in particular, and society in general, he inevitably will feel a kind of satisfaction and self acceptance, because he has achieved what he was expecting to do. Yet, when the individual notices that he is rejected and is unable to integrate within the different social groups, this will create resentment from his part and a total self dislike; something that is generally referred to as life crisis or stagnation.

At the end, Erikson wrote about integrity and despair that generally happens to the aged. At this level, these latter should accept their oldness with satisfaction and no regret of the past. They even must try to adjust to this

new situation with readiness to what is awaiting them. If old people are unable to adjust to these conditions, they will develop a sense of despair and hopelessness about everything. They become pessimistic and less interested in what surrounds them; a thing that the majority of the aged can not cope with successfully.

The purpose of mentioning Erikson's maturational theory is to highlight the procedure of any Person's psychic development and to stress on the importance of maturation in general in the individual's learning process. This will enable us to know what learners of different ages want ; that will help the educator to adjust to their tendencies in order to facilitate the process of learning and help them to develop their potential capacities (language for example) successfully.

3-The individual's psychic and biological development and its influence in promoting or hampering the learner's oral proficiency

In the previous section, we have explained the processes of biological and intellectual /psychic development, and dealt in a more detailed way with Erikson's maturational theory (that is primarily related to the Person's psyche development). In other terms, we have showed the impact of maturation on

the process of learning in general. Now, we are going to focus particularly on the learner's oral proficiency and the influence of these same process (biological and intellectual/psychological maturation) in promoting the individual's communicative performance.

It is worldly acknowledged that speech is inherent. The proof is that babies in their first sixth months cry, coo and babble. These three phases are believed to be a stepping stone towards a more adequate acquisition of the mother tongue. What is agreed about is that babbling enables the maturation of our speech organs (Duric, 1989). Here, we can easily deduce the role of maturation in acquiring a language. Due to that process, our speech organs develop; something that facilitates the articulation of different utterances, hence acquiring the mother tongue and speaking it fluently within a short period. This is especially noticed with adults, who being mature enough, are able to communicate in their native language with ease.

Intellectual development also plays a vital role in developing the communicative performance of the individual, for, when he is intellectually mature enough, he is going to be able to identify, then use the different grammatical rules adequately and appropriately. Adults do not speak randomly; this usually happens with infants below six whose language lacks

grammar, but rather, they organize what they want to say before producing speech respecting the different standards that govern that same language(usually referred to as deep structure).(David Crystal,1982).

Now, if we consider second language learning, we find that the subject follows the same path children do when acquiring their first language (S, H.McDonough, 1986.), and that the only difference lies in the fact of consciousness and unconsciousness . While children procure the mother tongue unconsciously without being aware of the acquisition process , second language students learn the language consciously knowing exactly what happens during the process of acquiring a given language(Idem). second language learners generally face difficulties in speaking the target language. May be the main reason of that lies in the formality of the situation in which they find themselves. Their process of learning is generally guided and in most f the time lacks spontaneity.

Now, we are going to consecrate the following section to tackle an other factor that hampers the process of developing someone's oral proficiency, but which has no link to psychology. We believe it to be of great importance in promoting the language acquisition process and is complementary with the other factors that's why it is necessary to mention it. It is pragmatics. Psychopedagogy and psycholinguistics are also of equal significance

which two whole chapters are devoted to .

As it has already stated before, the other reason that prevents the individual's communicative performance development is the context in which he lives , something that is generally referred to as pragmatics. This latter is believed to be the study of invisible meaning(George yule,1996). In other words, it is the fact of being able to understand what the speaker intends to mean even when he does not say or write anything . What is agreed about is that an individual can better acquire or learn a language only if he is put in the society in which the target language is being used. For, in addition to the grammatical rules the learner should be acquainted with, he must know the different social characteristics of the language like the fact of being able to distinguish between its standard and non standard aspects , knowing its different dialects, registers...etc.(Mckay and Hornberger.1996)

Summary

In this chapter, we first discussed what is meant by the psychology of learning, talked about Piaget's developmental psychology theory, Bruner's discovery theory and Erikson's maturational theory. We outlined their influence in learning a given language in general. Finally, we provided a brief overview of the role of maturation (psychic and biological) in the process of developing the individual's communicative performance. We have consecrated a part in this chapter to sociolinguistics, for, we believe that, in addition to the intellectual and biological development, pragmatics play a significant role in the language process of acquisition. Of course psycholinguistic and psychopedagogy are also of a same relevance that's why a whole chapter is devoted to each discipline.

In this section, we aim at pulling out together the different issues related to the psychology of learning a language and identify the role of both maturation and society in hampering or developing the individual's oral proficiency.

Chapter II :

A Psychopedagogical interpretation of learning

“The teacher cannot tell students what concepts to construct or how to construct them, but judicious Use of language they can be prevented from Constructing in directions which the teacher considers futile but which, as he knows from experience, are likely to be tried.”

(Von Glasersfeld. 1995)

Introduction :

In the previous chapter, we presented some key issues about learning a language from a purely psychological point of view and came with the assumption that the psychological status of the learner is of a great significance in the acquisition process. In this chapter, we continue our overview of the same subject but from the point of view of an other equally important discipline that is closely related to teaching. It is educational psychology or psycho-pedagogy.

We believe that communication or interaction is the practical function of any language. This implies that its oral aspect should be given a more attention and consideration. Yet what is remarked is that, in learning a foreign language, the individual shows a serious lack of fluency. Of course, the aim of this dissertation is to prove that the lack of fluency is due to some psychological factors (see chapter 04). Nevertheless, it is necessary to explain the procedure of learning a foreign language in order to be able to sort out the different obstacles that may hamper the process of acquiring its oral aspect, thus developing the learner's communicative performance. This will be achieved only if we expose the different learning theories that have already treated the same subject like: behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism and humanism.

In this chapter, our purpose is to get acquainted with the different principles of each theory, show their advantages and drawbacks, then explain their implications in developing the learner's oral proficiency.

I-Theories of learning and their implication in developing the learner's oral proficiency :

I-1Behaviourism:

Behaviourism is a psychological approach to learning that reached its apex in the 1950's and 1960's and still remains influential today. It outlines that the individual's behavior is not constraint, and it changes when it is influenced by some extrinsic motivators. As for learning, it is seen to be the result of environmental forces and is interpreted in terms of stimulus response connections. It is also viewed to be a basically mechanical process of habit formation and the major role of the teacher is to be the responsible for the individual's behavior modification. (Williams and Burden.1997).

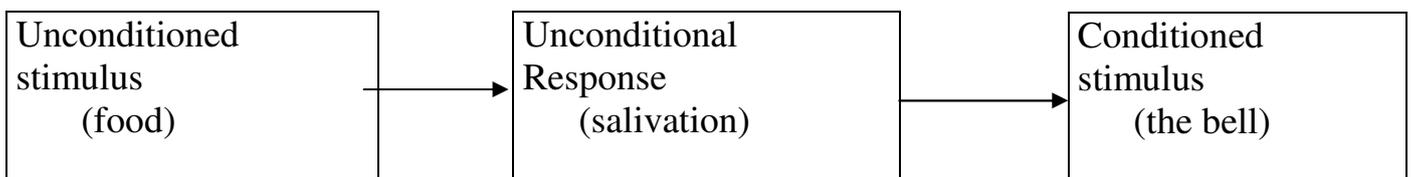
When talking about the behaviouristic approach to learning, it is necessary to mention the most known theorists that have contributed to its emergence as one of the most significant approach to learning. Chief among them, three are universally acknowledged: Ivan Pavlov, J.B.Watson and B.F. skinner.

I-1-1 –I.Pavlov and classical conditioning:

The Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov was behind the emergence of what came to be known as classical conditioning and was the first who asserted the fact that there is a close relationship between our psychic activities and the nervous system .This assumption was proved through his conditioning theory. (Duric.1998).

He conducted his experiments on dogs to explain the mechanisms of their conditioned reflexes. Pavlov used to give food to the animals after ringing a bell or putting on a light. The result was salivation. After the animal developed this habit i.e, getting accustomed with the condition of having food after hearing the bell ringing , Pavlov stopped giving food to the animal. The result was the same: salivation. Pavlov then assumed that this response (salivation) is evoked by two types of stimuli, a conditioned stimulus (the ringing of the bell) and an unconditioned stimulus (food) after the formation of a conditional reflex. Of course, an association exists between the response and both kinds of stimuli.

To better understand this theory, we propose the following model:



If we try to apply Pavlov's theory in learning, we find that it is well illustrated through the relationship existing between the teacher and the learner. The best example is when the teacher decides to test his students (the test is the unconditional stimulus), he first gives them a series of pretests (pretests are the conditional stimuli) so that the learner can practise the different problem solving activities. After making sure that his students have mastered what is

given in the pretest, he proposes the official test. The result would inevitably be satisfactory. (The result is the unconditional response).

I-1-2-J.B.Watson and the learning theory:

Watson, the father of behaviourism, was extremely influenced by Pavlov's Work that was particularly based on watching overt behavior. He believes that to understand what is going on in the process of learning; it would be better to concentrate on measurable and concrete data avoiding unscientific reasoning(Good and Brophy.1990.). In addition to that, Watson proposes his learning theory which stipulates that "all individual experience is reduced to the selection and reinforcement of responses contained in the instinctive store of the organism"(Duric.1989.p.79).i.e, the individual's response to a given stimulus is primarily due to inborn connections which in their turns reinforce that same response. Furthermore, Watson (1925) stresses the importance of the environment in the formation of the individual's personality. He asserted that when he said:

"Give me a dozen healthy infants, well formed, and my own special world to bring them up in, and I will guarantee to take anyone at random and train him To become any type of specialist I might select-doctor, Lawyer, artist,merchant –thief and yes, even beggarman and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, or race of his ancestry"

(Watson.1925.p82 cited in Good and Brophy. 1990.p155)

This say demonstrates the beliefs of the Psychologist J.B.Watson who was rigorously scientific and totally committed to an environmentalistic view of learning. He argues that this latter is something primarily due to environmental

forces. On the other hand, he totally denied the influence of heredity and innate processes. He urges that we learn effectively from the environment through training ourselves and forming some habits that would become later the basis of the activity we would choose in the future.

I-1-3-B.F. Skinner and Operant Conditioning:

The most significant contribution brought to the field of behaviouristic psychology was the one held by B.F. Skinner. Unlike Pavlov who explained the process of learning in terms of stimulus response connections, Skinner added a third element to his formula. It is reinforcement. His Operant Conditioning theory shows the extent to which a reward (positive reinforcement) or a punishment (negative reinforcement) can be influential in learning a language in general and developing the learner's communicative performance in particular.

Skinner's view of reinforcement is that he deeply believes that "we are controlled by our reinforcement histories to the extent that our notions of self determination are mere illusions" (C.I.Sandstrom.1983). In his theory, Skinner also neglects the role of innate processes and hereditary factors in learning, and instead he urges that the individual learns through imitation. Selective reinforcement, as it has already explained before, is a new dimension brought by Skinner to the field of behavioral psychology. He assumes that the individual responds to a given stimulus correctly only if he is rewarded; this will inevitably encourage him to make initiations, hence promoting his learning

process. In case where the individual's response is incorrect, he is going to be punished. Subsequently the learning process performance would be inhibited. (Williams and Burden .1997).

I-1-4-The Implications of the behaviouristic Principles in promoting the learner's Oral Proficiency:

Behaviouristic views of learning are widely taken into account especially by language teachers. Its principles proved to be of significant importance in the process of learning a language in general and developing the individual's communicative performance in particular. For instance, due to behavioral psychology, emerged audiolingualism, which is an approach to learning that is primarily based on stimulus response connections and imitation. According to that approach, the learner is asked to repeat sequences of utterances in the target language. Here, the skills that are to be developed are listening and speaking. The learner has to listen to the utterance, that are in most of the time produced by his teacher, then try to imitate him in order to re-produce the same utterance correctly (Richard and Rodgers.1986) . The most important principles of audiolingualism can be classified as follows:

- 1- Learning a foreign language is the outcome of mechanical habit formation.
- 2- Language skills are learned appropriately only if the language's oral aspect is taught before its written one.
- 3- The relevance of the context in which the target language is being taught.

4- Imitation and repetition are the best means to acquire the target language adequately.

5-According to audiolingualism, stimulus-response procedure is the best way that enables the learner to promote his oral performance.

Nevertheless, audiolingualism's hope had not been fulfilled especially after the emergence of transformational generative grammar, a contribution owed to the mentalist linguist Noam Chomsky. This latter asserts that this approach to language lacks creativity and is too mechanistic to the extent that the learners are not able to use the the language out of the classroom context.(Idem). Even when adopting the other behaviouristic theory of operant conditioning, Learning a language could not happen effectively, especially when the subject is reinforced negatively (punishment).This will prevent him from making initiations in speaking the target language successfully; subsequently, behaviouristic approach to learning proved to be inefficacious. It lost its importance during the 1960s' paving the way to a new mentalistic view of learning whose principles are of significant relevanceto the topic we are dealing with.

I-2-Cognitive Psychology:

It was a reaction to the prevailing behaviouristic ideas of the 1950's and 1960's. Cognitive psychologists believe that the fact of explaining the learning process through only watching overt behaviour is insuficient to understand

every thing about the mechanisms of learning. They also argue that further explanation is needed to talk about the involvement of the innate abilities the individual pocesses and the interference of the mind in the language learning procedure. Thus, a new trend was created that preached new principles which are in a total opposition with those of behavioral psychology. It is cognitivism.

So what is meant by cognitive psychology?

As its name implies, cognitive psychology is related to the mind's functions and activities like thinking, learning, memorizing , problem solving...(Williams and Libert.1997). In other words, it is the explanation of the different mechanisms of learning involving the mind's functions and other hereditary and innate factors that contribute to the fulfilment of the learning process. The most significant contribution to the field of cognition is the work held by Jean Piaget and his theory of cognitive development (see chaptre I). Its implication in teaching is of significnt relevance because, still according to him, learners from different ages must be given the instruction that goes with their age plus physical and cognitive abilities. An other theory that has a close relationship to cognitive psychology is Gagne's hierarchical theory(1979) which stipulates that some types of learning should be taught before some others ,i.e., proceeding from the easiest to the most difficult information so that the learner would be able to grasp every thing. Gagne's theory is especially well illustrated through curricula and instruction design that should be presented to the child through a hierarchy of easiness or/and difficulty,i.e,

beginning with the less difficult lessons till reaching the most complex ones. Along this procedure the subject is supposed to train himself psychologically to deal with these kind of activities and always getting prepared to meet others which are in most of the time more difficult . Gagne argues at the end that proceeding in such a way would inevitably facilitate and promote the process of learning.(Good and Brophy, 1990).

Bruner also advocates that learning in general occurs effectively only if we respect the needs each period of his discovery theory requires (see chaptre I). He urges that the learning process happens through a gradual change that influences both of our mind(thinking, problem solving and memorizing) and behavior.

1-2-1-The implication of cognitive psychology in promoting the learner's communicative performance:

Cognition or cognitive psychology provides a useful and meaningful illustrations of the kind of educational implications resulting from adopting the cognitive appraoch to learning. For example, it stipulates that effective learning is basically the result of mental processes that contribute to the accumulation of knowledge from the part of the learner. It also doubts the effectiveness and relevance of behaviouristic principles of learning that are committed to a social view of language. Cognitivists advocate that the innate capacities of the subject should be taken into consideration especially when designing the instruction

needed to each class of learners (children, adolescents and adults). Also, the majority of them share the idea that age is of relevant significance, for it is considered to be a very important factor that contribute to the success of mastering a given language. They argue that an early start of learning a language would inevitably facilitate the learning process in general and developing the learner's oral proficiency in particular.(M.Pavli.1996.1997).

From the cognitive psychological theory sprang a widespread approach to learning which is the communicative language teaching (CLT). It emerged as a reaction to the audiolingual method during the 1960' with the publication of Noam Chomky's book " Syntactic Strucrure", inaugurating a new era of language learning that is purely of mentalistic relevance. In contrast to audiolingualism, Chomsky, with his cognitive view of language brought fundamental dimentions to the learning process like creativty and uniqueness of the individual's sentences. (Richards and Rodgers.1986). The leaders of that approach tried to *develop language courses on a unit-credit system*. This latter is based on the belief that learning activities could be devided into *portions or units, each of which corresponds to a component of a learner's needs*. The role of the teacher in this case is of two kinds as put by Breen and Candlin (1980).The first is that he should act as an agent to facilitate the communication process between learners. The second is to avoid performing the role of the traditional teacher whose practical function is guiding the procedure of learning,

but rather acting as an independent participant with the communicative group that is primarily formed by the teacher and his students.

According to the communicative language teaching approach, applying its principles will inevitably develop the learner's communicative competence, i.e., being able to master the different set of rules that govern the target language and use them appropriately.

CLT principles that are deduced from what has been said so far, can be classified as follows:

1-Learning a language is the result of interaction between the different mental processes.

2-Creativity is very efficacious in the acquisition process.

3-The leaders of that approach are not interested in the oral performance, yet, they give much importance to the communicative competence; this results from Chomsky's distinction between deep and surface structures.(David Crystal.1982).
Cognitivist issues and principles developed to give birth to a new psychological theory which is constructivism. **SO** what does this term mean?

1-3-Constructivism:

Constructivism is a psychological theory to learning that is based on the premise that the individual constructs knowledge he possesses about the world from previous experience focusing mainly on ambiguous problem solving activities. It is also believed to be a kind to cognitive approach to

learning. (Williams and Burden.1997). Thus its principles do not differ a lot from those of cognitivism. They are considered to be their extension.

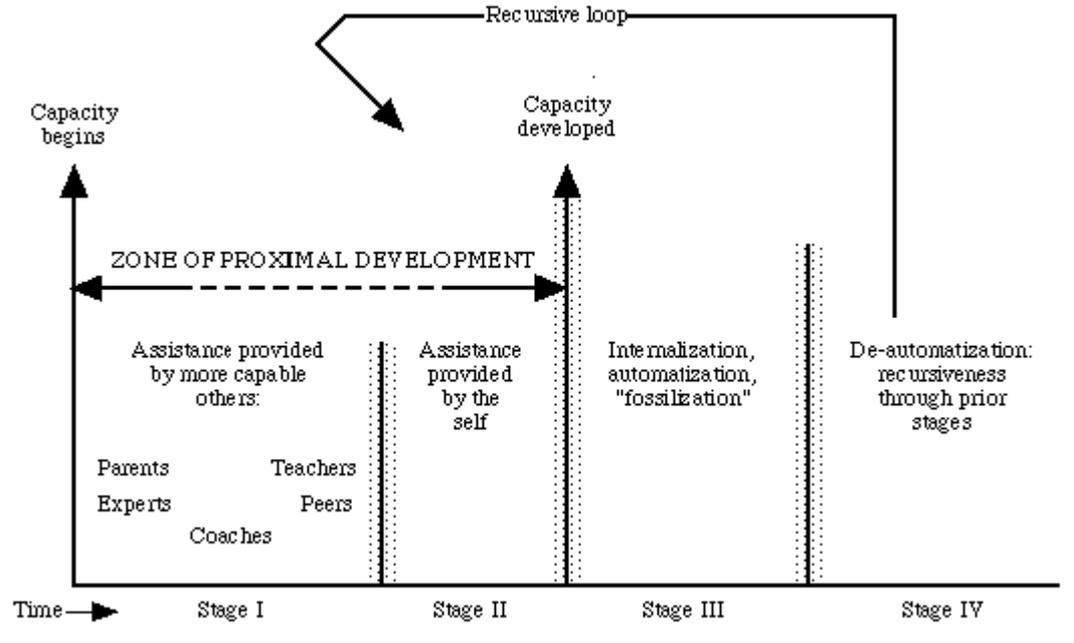
L.S Vygotky's work is the most significant contribution to the field of constructivist psychology. He was a Soviet psychologist who suggested that intellectual development may be largely influenced by a child's interaction with others .i.e, cognitive development is primarily due to the individual's interaction with both environment and people living in that same environment. Thus social interaction is considered to be the major theme in Vygotky's reasearch that plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. To better explain this, Vygotsky writes:

“Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual's level; first between people(interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals”

(Vygotsky.1978.p57cited in: [www_gwu_edu-__-Vygotsky.htm](http://www.gwu.edu/~Vygotsky.htm))

The most significant innovation brought to constructivist psychology owed to Vygotsky is what he calls: Zone of Proximal Development(ZPD).. What is meant by this (ZPd) is that it shows the variety of activities the child has not performed, yet, to which he has a considerable potential to do it at any given time. Also, Vygotsky believes that a full development of the Zone of Proximal Development will occur only if the child interacts freely with the society. By doing so, Vygotsky asserts that in learning a language for instance, our first

utterances have as a chief function communicating, but, after mastering all the aspect and rules of the language, our speech would be internalized allowing what the theorist dubs *inner speech* (www_gwu_edu_-_Vygotsky.htm). He also suggests that a complete development of the (ZPd) happens through four stages. To understand what characterizes each of these four stages, we propose the following model:



Source: http://www.ncrel.org/_lr1zpd1.htm from R.G. Tharp and R. Gallimore (1988). *Rousing minds to life* (p.35).

As it may implies, this model represents the four stages which a child Passes through in order to complete the (ZPd) development. During the first stage, the child relies on the members of his society to develop his potential capacities (language is one example) like his parents, teachers, peers, experts, coaches.... These people are supposed to have enough previous knowledge and

experience about the subject, that's why their help is seen as a rudimentary contribution to the development of the child's Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky refers to that as the social level contribution. Along time, the child is able to cope with the world alone, that's why during this second phase, his ZPD is primarily related to himself, i.e, he relies upon himself; the thing that Vygotsky calls the individual level contribution. During the third stage, the child is supposed to have mastered some aspects of his potential capacities (rules that govern a given language in case the potential capacity we are talking about is language). Hence, all these rules and aspects are going to be internalized allowing the inner speech. The last stage of Vygotsky's ZPD is recursiveness through prior stages. In other terms, at this level, the child revises what has been constructed during the three preceding phases for a better performance.

1-3-1-The implication of constructivist psychology in promoting the learner's communicative performance:

The major assumption we can deduce from what has been said about the constructivist approach in general, and Vygotsky's theory of the ZPD in particular is that effective cognitive development requires interaction with society. If we try to compare this with education, we find that educational society is the classroom. **SO** how can a child interact with his classmates for a better learning process?

The answer is that the teacher should gather his student around tasks and

problem solving activities. The group of individual's purpose is then to exchange knowledge with each one, forming enough knowledge about the task given to them, then constructing this same knowledge appropriately in order to reach a satisfactory result.

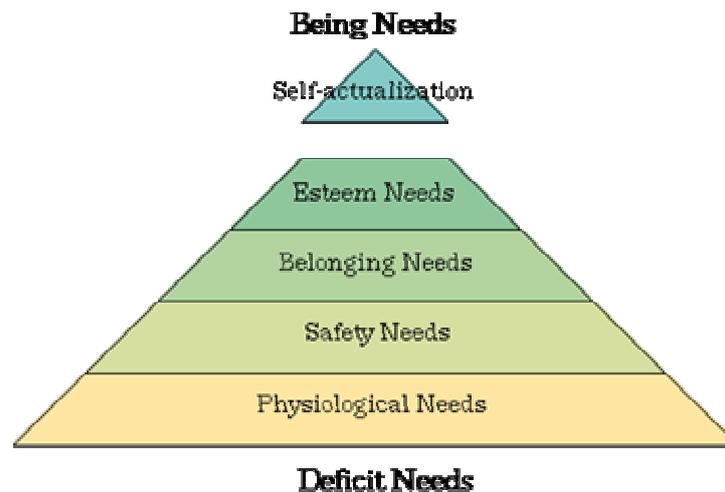
1-4 Humanism:

The last psychological theory to learning with which we are concerned is humanism. As its name suggests, humanistic psychology highlights the importance of emotions and feelings in the learning process, two criteria that were totally ignored by the preceding existing theories and methods. The leaders of this theory believe that effective learning occurs only if affective factors and variables are provided within a suitable healthy environment. Among the most prominent figures that has embodied the humanistic principles in his theories was the American psychologist Abraham Maslow.

Maslow attempts to explain the relevance of human emotions and feelings in the learning process. His motivational theory is primarily related to human needs. Along with Maslow's theory, we are presented with a hierarchy of human needs, each contributes to the fulfilment of the next need. At the beginning, Maslow made the distinction between two types of human needs: deficiency needs and growth needs. (William and Burden. 1997).

Deficiency needs include the physiological needs (food and water), safety needs (the need of security and being out of danger), belonging needs

(being affiliated with others and accepted by the community in which the individual lives) and finally esteem needs (achieving what the individual is expected to do to show his competences in order to gain approval and recognition).



Maslow's hierarchy of human needs

According to Maslow, any individual is motivated by the lower need so that he can pass to the next one. After reaching the last phase of deficient needs successfully, the individual is logically ready to pass to the following set of needs, those of growth or being needs. These latter include cognitive needs (being able to know, to understand and explore), aesthetic needs (order and beauty), and finally the outcome of all those preceding human needs, self actualization, which is to find self fulfilment and realize one's potetial. (Williams and Burden.1997).

Maslow's assumption about his hierachy of human needs is that each need

must be satisfied before passing to the next stage. In case where one of these needs is not met, this would cause a psychological disturbance for the individual ; hence provoking an unbalanced situation in the biological and psychic development of any person.

The implication of Maslow's theory of human needs in learning is of relevant significance. We believed it to be primarily addressed to the teachers. It helps them to understand children facing difficulties in their learning procedure. The educator has to understand that children who do not respond to his requirements should not have developed adequately both deficiency and growth needs. (William and Burden.1997). As for the role of the teacher, it is primarily related to encouraging the learner to make initiatives and being creative. Of course, they are supposed to avoid humiliating them in case they make mistakes, because, this fact may inhibit them, consequently hampering the process of learning.

An other equally important theory that must be mentioned when dealing with humanistic psychology is the one held by the clinical psychologist Carl Rogers. He introduced his famous theory that is mainly based on two major and influential key elements: self concept and positive regard. (Williams and Burden.1997). The former is believed to be a kind of self evaluation from the part of the individual himself (about his status, self image and especially his ability to rely upon himself to perform specific activities). The latter, on the other

hand, is seen as a self satisfaction ,i.e,being content and feeling gratified about what the individual has already performed.

Rogers, when applying his theory in the classroom suggests that the subjects should be treated as clients and not as students whose main goal is to acquire the maximum of data. This is for the sake of avoiding the traditional obstacles existng between the teacher and the learner. The teacher however,is supposed to respond to the students' needs, respect their point of views and even praise them in case they deserve apraisal. He also should initiate discussions and dialogues with them , and all the time try to get them involved in the lesson for the sake of achieving what Rogers calls direct instruction. (Hwuitt.1997).

1-4-1 humanism and open education:

Open education is generally related to instruction that happens in a humanistic atmosphere and through adopting humanistic principles. The teacher/educator can implement the humanistic approach to learning through different ways like encouraging the students to work in cooperative groups instead of individual ones and avoiding competitions confinig his role to only guidance and supervision . Furthermore, he should let the students select the kind of instruction they wish to be taught .(Idem) . The leaders of that approach believe that applying these humanistic rules and issues will facilitate the process of learning for the students and the procedure of teaching for educators with a very satisfactory results at the end.

Summary:

In this chapter, we have provided an overview of each of the behaviouristic, cognitivist, constructivist and humanistic views about learning a language. Then, we have considered the implication of each of these trends and approaches in teaching. We also tried to emphasize on the most important principles that are relevant to learning a language through exposing and comparing the four theories. Next, we showed the contribution of each criterion and principle to the learning process. Social interactionism is proved to be of great significance in communicating in the target language; for it is believed that the context in which the subject lives in plays a central role in the acquisition process.

Different psychological theories of learning belonging to these salient approaches and methods helped a lot in proving what has been said so far about learning a language in general and developing the learner's oral proficiency in particular. The majority of the pedagogical implications of each theory preach the same goal which is developing the learner's capacity in communicating in the target language fluently.

The next chapter is going to be concentrated to purely psycholinguistic views of language learning. Notions like innateness of the language, the relevance of grammar in learning among so many others are going to be dealt with in a more detailed way to show the relevance of the psycholinguistic principles and issues in acquiring the oral aspect of the target language.

Chapter III:

A Psycholinguistic interpretation of learning

*There are very deep and restrictive principles
That determine the nature of human language
And that are rooted in the specific character
Of the human mind.*

**Chomsky
Language and the mind**

Introduction:

In chapter 02, we exposed the four main theories of learning, and showed their implication in the teaching process. We also considered ways through which teachers seek to make sense of the learning process through adopting different principles and beliefs belonging to each theory. Concepts like communicative competence and performance ,ZPD, positive regard, self concept, open education have been introduced in order to show their relevance in the development of the learner's communicative performance, and how should teachers cope to select the criteria that best suit the individual in his learning process.

After having considered the procedure of the learner's oral proficiency development through a psychological and psycho-pedagogical point of views, the following chapter is going to be consecrated to a purely psycholinguistic survey about the same procedure. Making the distinction between the innate and acquired aspects of the language, explaining the processes involved in producing speech, and the relevance of grammar in the acquisition process are going to be our main focus in this chapter.

At the end of this chapter, and after mastering its material, we are supposed to be able to define and distinguish between what is innate and what is acquired in the language learning process, explain the role of grammar in the production of speech and also the mechanisms involved in its production.

1- Innateness of the language:

To tackle the subject related to the innateness of the language, it is preferable to refer to the work held by the American linguist Noam Chomsky, a mentalist whose ideas and point of views provoked a revolution in language learning. For it came to oppose the prevailing behaviouristic principles of the 1950's and 1960's concerning the same issue.

According to his theory, Chomsky asserts that any child is pre-disposed or pre-programmed to acquire language, i.e, the child is born with an innate potential capacity that helps him in his acquisition process. The proof of that is the fact that children are able to speak language before being instructed of any of its grammatical rules. Chomsky calls this innate property LAD which he believes to be universal in all human beings (Brown, 1987). The language acquisition device hypothesis is primarily based on the premise that children are innately endowed to acquire a language due to the natural data they process in the LAD and which linguists could not identify or show its location in the mind.

Yet the problem does not lie in what LAD really is, but rather our focus should be directed to highlight the innate properties that contribute in the language acquisition process, and which are generally found in the LAD. Answering this question is a very hard task especially that LAD is something abstract.

Nevertheless, Clark and Clark (1977) resorted to Ambrose Pierce belief when he

said about the same question that :

" the doctrine of innate ideas is one of the most admirable faiths of philosophy, being itself an innate idea and therefore inaccessible to disproof"

As it may imply, this say came to support Chomsky's ideas about the innate capacities human beings possess about the language and asserts its influence in the acquisition of any language. Chomsky went further when claiming that these innate properties in the LAD are grammar we generally use to organize our speech. He assumes that we must have inherited some unconscious knowledge and rules of grammar , and that these latter are those supposed innate properties of the language.

In addition to that, Chomsky notices that children are able to learn any language than their native one and that they follow the same procedure as in their mother tongue. Chomsky supposed that there must be some underlying and innate rules that are shared by all languages. Here the linguist introduces the notion of universals, which he qualifies to be the deep rules common to all languages (Brown 1987). A good example of that is that it is noticed that an Algerian baby, brought up in France, will learn the French language as a native French baby. Of course, and as stated before, Chomsky relates this to language universal criteria. Hence these latter contribute positively to the acquisition process no matter which language the child is exposed to. Chomsky (1965) continues his overview about

the universality of language when he made the distinction between two types of universals: substantive and formal (Aitchison,1976). The former is believed to be the core of the language, the substance out of which it is made, whereas the latter is supposed to be the form or the shape of grammar. This was not the only distinction Chomsky made, because he proposed an other dichotomy related to the deep and surface structure of the language(Crystal ,1982). The linguist urges that there exists a deep grammar (a set of rules) that govern all languages in the world; and in its turn this deep grammar reflects the innate properties of the human mind. The surface structure, however, is the organized grammatical utterances and sentences we produce.

To illustrate this, Chomsky proposes too many transformational rules due to which we can draw the differences between the deep and surface structures of the language. Consequently, the conception of generative grammar that has its roots in previous trends like behavioural structuralism developed. Unlike the behaviouristic sentence analysis (ICA is one example), which were proved to be inadequate and irrelevant, Chomsky could successfully analyse various set of sentences due to his distinction between deep and surface structure (Cristal,1997).

A well known example provided by Chomsky treating the same issue was the following:

-John is easy to please
-John is eager to please

According to IC Analysis, the two sentences are identical (the two sentences are judged through their surface structure), yet according to their deep meaning, we find the opposite. The first sentence has nothing to do with the second since in the former, someone else is involved in pleasing John, whereas in the second, John wants and has the intention to please.

An other equally important dimension owed to Chomsky is his dichotomy related to competence and performance. According to him, the individual's linguistic competence is his ability to master the different grammatical set of rules governing his language, and by virtue of which the speaker is able to recognize the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of a given set of utterances (a sentence for example). In other words, the linguistic competence is the individual's knowledge of his language system. For example, a sentence like "*yellow wooden table ate the meal*" is correct, as far as grammar is concerned. Nevertheless, in terms of meaning, it can not be interpreted coherently. Chomsky urges that what makes us result with such a conclusion is, in fact, this innate capacity we normally find in the LAD and this is what Chomsky means by the linguistic competence. Thus, this competence allows us to organize our ideas and transform them into language. Chomsky calls this the individual's performance, which he considers to

be the actual use of language in real life situation ,i.e, speaking.(Cristal,1971).

Therefore, and from what has been said before, we can conclude that the language faculty we process about a given language is innate , and that due to our linguistic competence, we can speak it correctly and coherently. In addition to that, we can easily notice that language develops through gradual stages. A baby, at the beginning of his acquisition process produces meaningless sounds, then, he develops them into intelligible and meaningful utterances. This implies that when acquiring our mother tongue, we must go through various stages during which we will be able to master the different grammatical rules and using them adequately in real life situations.

George Yule (1985) identified four of these stages and they are as follows:

The first of these stages is the **pre-language stage**, which is well illustrated through the cooing and the babbling of the child. The former begins approximately at the age of three months. It is especially characterized by the baby's pronunciation of some velar sounds like /k/ and /g/as well as some high vowels such as /I/ and /u/. Babbling, however, starts at the age of six months. The child is able to produce a number of different vowels and consonants as well as syllable-type sounds as *mu* and *du*. By nine months, the child begins imitating the external environment and is almost capable of articulating recognizable patterns due to which he can express his emotions and basic needs.

The second stage with which we are concerned is called **the one word** or **holophrastic stage**. During this period, the child begins to identify items and label them. Also, he can use a single unit to express whole phrases or sentences, and that is what is meant by the term holophrastic.

The third stage the child normally goes through is **the two word stage**. It begins approximately around the age of 18 to 20 months. During that era, the child is able to pronounce a sequence of words empty of all grammatical forms and which adults are supposed to understand according to the context. Yule proposes a good illustration about this. He argues that when a baby says *baby chair*, this implies many interpretations. It can be taken as an expression of possession (*this is baby's chair*) or as a request (*put baby in chair*).

The telegraphic speech is the fourth stage. It starts between two and three years old. The child's language develops gradually and now he is able to say meaningful sentences that are, in most of the time full of grammatical inflections. For instance, *he go out*. By the time the child is beyond three years old, he is going beyond the telegraphic forms and using some of the inflectional morphemes that indicate the function of each word used. In this stage, the child often makes grammatical over generalizations like adding "ed" for irregular verbs or /s/ to the plural of all words. With time passing, the child starts to give more

importance to syntax and meaning and makes efforts to apply these rules when speaking. This fact will make him master his mother tongue and speak it fluently by the age of five to six years old.

2-What is innate and what is acquired:

It is quite obvious that language is a social phenomenon, around which many controversies emerged and several speculations have been formulated. Chief among these controversies and speculations, two are widely known. One tends to defend the idea that language is innate and that we are pre-ordained to speak a language. The other, however, asserts that this phenomenon is acquired and is the result of environmental forces. Subsequently, a dilemma is emanated and a serious question is aroused: what are the innate properties of the language ?and what is acquired from the environment?

Before formulating any compromise, let us first consider the different tendencies of the linguistic point of views belonging to each theory about the same subject.

As far as language acquisition is concerned, the behaviouristic explanation about this procedure can be expressed through significant key words: imitation, trial and error, selective reinforcement, and stimulus response models.

Behaviourists believe that at birth, our mind is a blank state waiting for

external impressions to be recorded there. Through using the process of trial and error, the child knows his first language. Of course by imitating people living in his surrounding environment. These latter are supposed to select the best ways to encourage and reinforce them. Here, it is believed that a stimulus-response connection is formed, a medium through which adults stimulate children to speak, and these latter in their turns are supposed to respond adequately and correctly to adults' stimulators. (Williams and Burden.1997).

The most significant alternative to the behaviouristic approach is mentalism or particularly cognitivism. What is remarked throughout this approach is a total neglect of the contribution of the social factors in the language acquisition process. Instead, cognitivists concentrated on the innate capacities of the individual. This theory is engaged in a purely mentalistic approach to language teaching and learning.

According to cognitive psychologists, applying behaviouristic principles may be misleading and would reflect negative points and impressions to the development of someone's oral proficiency. The evidence of that is the fact that children often make wrong generalizations especially when they encounter cases of irregular verbs (make_maked) or irregular plural forms (information_informations; mouse_mouses). (Cristal, 1997).

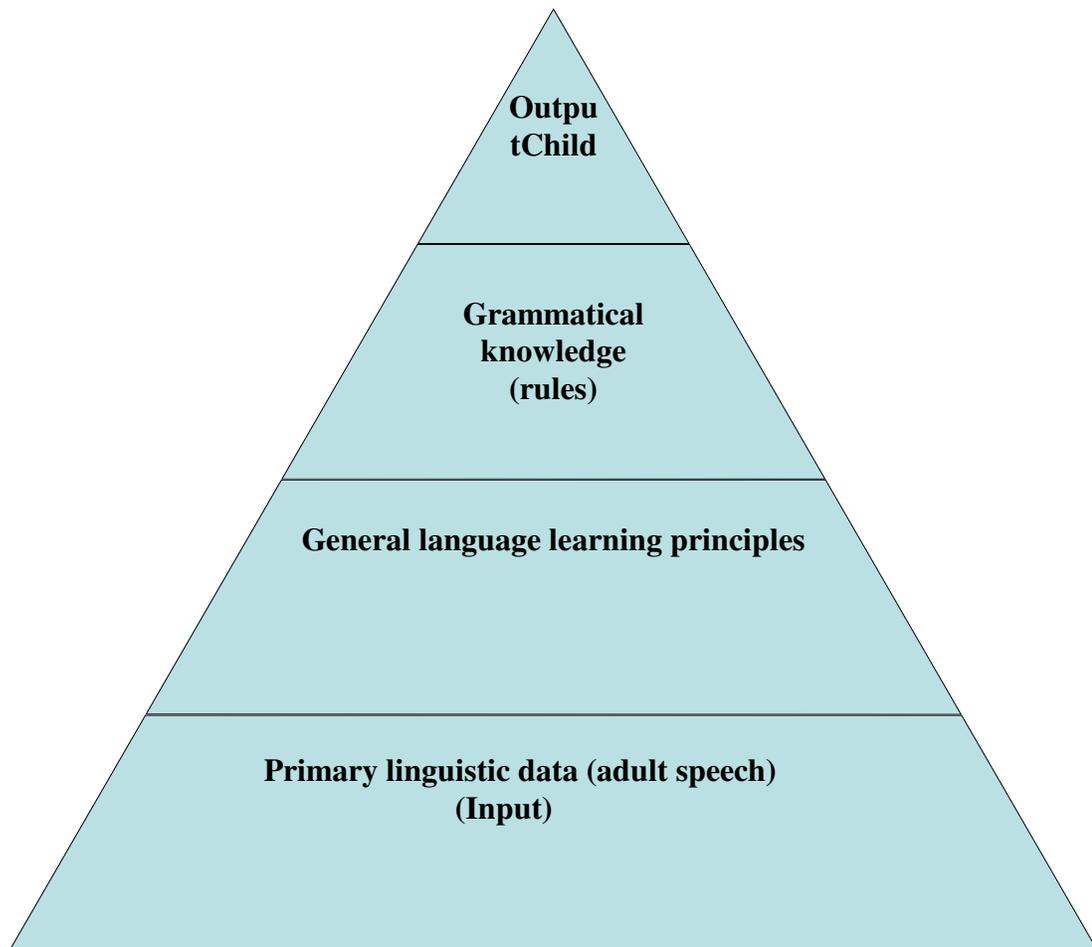
The second evidence lies in the fact that children are unable to reconstruct

correctly adult's grammatical complex sentences. A good illustration of that is what has been recorded by the American linguist, David McNeill (1933). This latter remarked that a child could not repeat correctly what his mother asked her to do, even after several attempts:

Child: Nobody don't like me
Mother: No, say "Nobody likes me"
Child: Nobody don't like me
(Eight repetitions of this dialogue)
Mother: No, now listen carefully; say "Nobody likes me"
Child: oh, Nobody don't likes me.

The process of imitation and trial and error proved to be ineffective in acquiring a language. Instead, cognitivists proposed a new option which is primarily based on the stereotyped premise that children are born with an innate capacity that enhances their acquisition process, and that this capacity is found in the LAD.

To understand the child's acquisition process through a purely mentalistic point of view, we propose the following model extracted from Crystal's model treating the same issue:



According to the model, the primary and basic linguistic data the child processes is owed to adult speech, which the child is frequently confronted to in his surrounding environment. This linguistic data is referred to as Input. due to this input, the child is able to utter meaningful sentences , which are in most of the time, not organized (because of the grammatical generalizations the child often makes). In the Language Acquisition Device,

and through the process of trial and error the child is able to produce more sophisticated and elaborate sentences that correspond to adults' speech. Obviously, this will happen only if the child masters the grammatical knowledge that governs his language and avoids misleading generalizations. The fact of producing speech similar to that of adults (in terms of grammar and phonology) is referred to as the Output.

After having exposed the two main linguistic point of views, we come to our central question concerning the distinction between what is innate and what is acquired. In other words: what are the innate properties of the language, and what do we acquire from the social environment we live in?

In order to answer such questions, we have to refer to a compromise without which the acquisition process theory would be incomplete. Subsequently, we believe that the child acquires the language adequately only if he makes use of his mental capacities with which he is innately endowed. This implies that our mind is not a blank slate at birth as stipulated by the behaviourists. Yet, this does not mean that the child does not need external incentives that will inevitably enhance the acquisition process, thus developing his oral proficiency.

3-What is the relevance of grammar when producing speech?

It is worldly acknowledged that, when we speak, we are bound to use some principles and rules that govern the language we are acquiring/learning, in order to

utter coherent and harmonious speech. Among these principles and rules, four are largely investigated: semantics, phonology, pragmatics and grammar. It is believed that the fact of mastering these four types of language aspects, the production of speech would be easier and successful.

As they may imply, semantics is primarily related to the meaning of the language; phonology with its pronunciation; pragmatics with the social norms related to the target language and grammar with the morphological and syntactic structure of the language.

Our emphasis in the following section is linked to grammar and its relevance in producing speech.

It is observed that at the beginning, a baby expresses himself through meaningless sounds which adults can interpret easily. The proof of that is the fact that babies' needs are in most of the time met by their parents though their incomprehensible speech.

What is also very important to be mentioned here is that this first aspect of babies' language is empty of grammar (the cooing phase). Along time, the child's grammar develops. During the first stage of the child's language acquisition, the single word utterances (see page 06), most of the words used have a naming function that soon, will be changed into nouns. It is also believed that 20% of the

words used at this level express actions (verbs). The rest is a mixture of prepositions, adjectives, adverbs and some other words that belong to non of these classes like “byebye”(Cristal.1997). At this stage, the child’s potential of grammar is not wholly exploited , for he interprets them in terms of their function and not in relationship to each other (a sentence).

In the next stage, the two word sentences, the child begins to string words together. David Cristal (1997) distinguished between four categories in which meaning is expressed:

- 1- An actor performs an action: Daddy kick
- 2- An action affects an object: shut door
- 3- An object is given a location: there teddy
- 4- An object or person is described:she cold

What is observed is that the words that are linked together carry a meaning though they are completely empty of grammar. Thus our first deduction is that despite the fact that grammar is not respected, a meaning is conveyed, and receptors can easily understand what is being said.

The third phase, the telegraphic stage, is characterized by the child’s ability to produce sentences of three-four words in length. He is also able to ask questions and make commands and requests. (Cristal, 1997). Particularly, during this period, the child does not use grammatical words like ‘the’, ‘is’ and the gerund. What is

agreed about is that at the age of three years old , the child is able to produce sentences relatively similar to adults. Furthermore, he starts using complex structured sentences. At the age of four or five, he is supposed to be able to master at least the most important grammatical rules and can speak fluently, as far as normal children are concerned.

Now, let us consider our problem: What is the relevance of grammar when we produce speech?

To answer this question, two dimensions should be discussed. We have first to consider the relevance of grammar in relationship to first language acquisition , and then foreign language learning.

For a child who is acquiring his mother tongue, we believe that grammar is necessary but not compulsory to be respected . It is true that a child needs grammar to produce correct set of sentences for the sake of being understood by the others, yet, this is not always applied. We believe that there are some features and expressions that can stand for grammar . Let us refer to these features and expressions by the term ‘linguistic substitutions’, which are in most of the time noticed through the individual’s hesitations, intonation, stress, pitch....etc.

Concerning second language learning, we believe that grammar is rudimentary and obligatory. As foreign language learners, we suffer from the lack

of these linguistic substitutions. Of course, this is due to the fact that we do not live in a society where the target language is being spoken. In addition to that, there is a great difference between the different cultural backgrounds. Thus the lack of the two conditions leads us to resort to the use of grammar. Being able to use grammatical rules adequately will allow us to speak the target language correctly and fluently.

Obviously, what distinguishes a second language learner from a child acquiring his mother tongue lies in the formality and informality of the language each of the two uses. The former's language is formal and academic whereas the latter's is informal and is, in most of the time, characterized by the constant use of specific jargons and dialects.

4-Do we respect grammatical rules when speaking?

The following section may be considered as complementary to the preceding one. For, after having exposed the extent to which grammar may be influential and of relevant significance in both first and second language acquisition/learning, we are going to show whether or not we respect these grammatical rules when producing speech.

In fact, asking such questions may seem paradoxical and contradictory, because the simple fact of proving that grammar is a significant factor that contributes to language acquisition development, automatically implies that we do

respect grammar when we speak. It is proved that in first language acquisition, children generally make use of grammar, but not frequently. What we referred to as linguistic substitutions can perform the role grammar does. Yet, it is not the case for second language learners. These latter are deprived from these linguistic substitutions. Subsequently they resort to the use of grammar. It is noticed that foreign language learners often pay attention to the grammar they use. They produce correct grammatical utterances and always try to be accademic and formel in their speech.

Generally, a foreign language learner is distinguished from a native speaker
Because:

- 1- of an intensive use of grammar.
- 2-His speech lacks what phoneticians generally refer to as speech accompaniments like intonation, rhythm, pitch...
- 3-His accent lacks the melody that characterizes the target language. This fact is believed to be due to an unconscious and inadequate use of stress, pitch, intonation..., we generally find in native speakers' language.

After having explained the way through which each of first and second language acquirers/learners make use of grammar, it is essential now to draw a parallel between first language acquisition and second language learning. The

difference is quite clear. First language acquisition is usually related to children acquiring their mother tongue whereas; second language learning is related to all social classes: children, adolescents or adults. A second difference lies in the time needed to master the language with all its aspects. Most psychologists assert the fact that a child begins acquiring his native language two or three months after his birth, and that by six years old, the child finds himself able to speak his mother tongue fluently. Here the acquisition process happens unconsciously. (Cristal,1981). Concerning L2, it is a quite different task. It is a process that happens consciously. The individual is aware of all the grammatical rules when applying them. This fact may hamper the process of developing the learner's oral proficiency of a second language quickly (McDonough,1986).

Psychologists postulated a critical period beyond which a child will face difficulties to learn a foreign language. It is assumed to be between 12 to 13 and it is called the critical hypothesis. (Brown,1987). This hypothesis stipulates that there is a biological determined period of life upon which depends the degree of easiness or difficulty in language acquisition.

The major contribution to that field is the one held by S. Krashen. In his work, Krashen brought considerable innovations to the field of second language Acquisition. After having made the distinction between acquisition and learning (the formal is unconscious and takes place in an informal context ,

whereas the latter happens consciously in an academic context), he postulated a theory consisting of five main hypotheses:

1-the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

2-The Monitor Hypothesis

3-The Natural Order Hypothesis

4-The Input Hypothesis

5-The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Steven.H.McDonough discussed the five hypotheses in a more detailed way in his book “psychology in Foreign Language Teaching” as follows:

a)-The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis:

Krashen argues that there are two independent systems in second language performance : The acquired the learned one. Acquisition, according to him, is the product of a sub-conscious process very similar to that children undergo when they acquire their first language. Learning, however, is the product of a formal instruction following a conscious process and resulting in conscious knowledge in grammar rules.

b)-The Monitor Hypothesis:

This hypothesis outlines the relationship between acquisition and learning and stresses on the role of grammar. It is based on the premise that when we

speak a foreign language, we generally make use of the knowledge of grammar we process to check what we are producing:

c)-The Natural Order Hypothesis:

It is especially related to the acquisition of grammatical morphemes. It stipulates that the acquisition of grammatical structure follows the same universal natural order which is in most of the time predictable.

d)-The Input Hypothesis:

This hypothesis tries to explain how a learner acquires a second language. In other terms, it illustrates how SLA takes place. It is primarily concerned with acquisition and not learning. According to Krashen, the learner improves and progresses along the natural order when he receives a second language input. This procedure is considered to be one step beyond the current stage of linguistic competence.

e)-The Affective Filter Hypothesis:

This hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of affective variables could facilitate the process of second language acquisition. These variables include motivation, self confidence, and anxiety, among so many others. He argues that learners who are equipped with these characteristics are best selected for success in SLA.

5-The medium of language:

By the expression “the medium of language”, we mean the way via which language is produced by the speaker, Heard and decoded by the receptor. Thus speaking and listening skills are the most important variables that will allow us understand the processes involved in the production of speech, and how this latter is interpreted by the receptor.

5-1-Speaking:

As it may implies, this section is especially devoted to the identification of the processes involved in the production of speech. To understand this, we have first to expose the different organs (often refered to as articulators) responsible for the production of speech sounds.

In fact, all the sounds we produce are the result of muscle contracting; the air we need for speech sound production is released from the chest dues to the muscles we generally use for breathing. Then, may other modifications in the flow of air happen at the level of the larynx, the vocal tract, the lungs to end as a sound after being released through the mouth (vocal sounds) or the noze (nasal sounds) (Roach.1983).

But, first, let us consider the different parts that are responsible for the production of these sounds. Seven articulators have been identified, without which our pronunciation would be wrong and unseccessful. The first of them is called the

pharynx, a tube found above the larynx which is a bit longer in men(about 7cm in women and 8 cm in men). There is also the soft and the hard palates, the alveolar ridge, the tongue, the teeth and the lips. All these organs contribute in the production of the different speech sounds.

In addition to the already stated articulators, three others should be added, though they are not considered to be speech organs. These are the larynx, the oral cavity and the nasal cavity. (Garman.1990).

Nevertheless, the major question that is now being asked is: how do these articulators, ones combined, produce speech?

To answer this question, we have just to observe ourselves when speaking. Obviously this procedure implies the use of the different speech organs. Yet, this is not to mean that when we produce one single sound, or the articulatory organs are included. For it depends on the kind of sound we do articulate. For instance, a sound like /p/ and /b/ includes only the use of the lips, hence, they are bilabial sounds. The process of the production of these sounds is approximately the same, except the fact that in the production of /p/, we use more efforts. That is why it is called fortis (strong) consonant. /b/ sound, however, is produced easily. It is referred to as lenis(weak) consonant.

The classification of /b/ and /p/ engenders a quite similar classification of

other sounds like /d/, /t/, /k/ and /g/. Despite the fact that these sounds are differently articulated (/t/ and /d/ are produced by the teeth and the alveolar ridge. /k/ and /g/ on the other hands, are produced by the velar), they are similar in terms of the distinctional category of fortis and lenis. In other words, /t/ and /k/ are fortis consonants, whereas /d/ and /g/ are lenis. (O'connor.1967).

To better understand the classification of the different consonants used in the production of the English speech sounds in general, we propose the following table:

Table 1. The International Phonetic Alphabet (revised to 1989)

CONSONANTS

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retrolflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			ʀ					ʀ		
Tap or Flap				ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			
Ejective stop	p̰			t̰		t̰	c̰	k̰	q̰		
Implosive	ɓ ɗ			ɗ			ɟ	ɡ	ɗ		

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

Source: Peter Roach(1996). English Phonetics and Phonology. A practical course. p. 40

5-2How is language organized in the brain:

After having identified the processes of speech sound production, we come to an other equally important insight related to language speaking. It is about the

fundamental question that turns around the organization of language in our brain.

Before dealing with this issue, we have first to identify the different parts the brain comprises.

The brain consists mainly of the following entities:

a)-The left and the right hemispheres which are generally separated by what is generally referred to as the *median longitudinal fissure*. Each hemisphere is distinguished by its own faculties. The following table proposed by Brown(1987), draws a clear distinction between the different characteristics of each hemisphere.

Left brain dominance	Right brain dominance
Intellectual	Intuitive
Remembers names	Remembers faces
Responds to verbal instructions and Explanations	Responds to demonstrated, illustrated, or symbolic instructions
Experiments systematically and with control	Experiments randomly
Makes objective judgments	Makes subjective judgments
Planned and structured	Fluid and spontaneous
Prefers established, certain information	Prefers elusive, uncertain information
Analytic reader	Synthesized reader
Reliance on language in thinking and remembering	Reliance on images in thinking and remembering
Prefers talking and writing	Prefers drawing and manipulating objects
Prefers multiple choice tests	prefers open-ended questions
Control feelings	More free with feelings
Not good at interpreting body language	Good at interpreting body language
Rarely uses metaphors	Frequently uses metaphors
Favors logical problem solving	Favors intuitive problem solving

b-The midbrain

c-the cerebrum

d-The cortex

These four parts are believed to be the major components of the brain, and any

disorder or damage in any of them, would provoke a disturbance in the brain's functions. One good example of these functions is the production of speech.

It is believed that many language pathologies are primarily owed to a damage of one of the already listed parts. The idea that language pathology is due to a disturbance in the brain has been developed to the theory of localization, though this latter is not only related to speech production, but it is generalized to other handicaps related to distinct disturbances in the brain like the vision(Cristal.1997). One widespread language pathology worthy to be discussed is aphasia. So what is aphasia?

Aphasia is the loss of power of speech. It can be regarded as a difficulty an individual suffers from in the production of speech that is primarily due to disorder or injury in specific parts of the brain.

There are many types of aphasia that is, as it has already mentioned, the result of disorder of some specific areas in the brain. Chief among them we can list: global aphasia, Broca aphasia, Wernicke's aphasia, conduction aphasia, transcortical motor aphasia, transcortical sensory aphasia, among so many others(Garman.1990).

The following section however, is devoted to only two of them. Our choice is based on the premises that these two are the most spread types of aphasia that affect the human brain. Second, because of the extreme contrast in the

characteristics of both of them. These are Broca and Wernicke's aphasia.

a- Broca aphasia:

This type of aphasia was first dealt with by the French neurologist Paul Pierre Broca in 1861, after whom it was called. His experiences were of great significance to the field of psycholinguistics in particular and its results brought considerable innovations to neurological pathologies. His findings contributed to answer ambiguous questions related to this kind of language handicap. Broca believes that people affected by this aphasia are unable to produce speech despite the fact of being able to understand the language. (Crystal.1997). Broca proved this through the experiences he conducted on his first patient Leborgne. This man lost his speech at the age of 30. Broca asserts that Leborgne understands everything, yet whenever he replies, he uses the only utterance 'tan', 'tan' (Garman.1997). Broca then identified an area in the left hemisphere, which he calls after his name, and came with the assumption that this area is responsible for speech production/lateralization. The neurologist also urges that Broca aphasics have some common characteristics, like the non-fluency of their spontaneous speech. Also, they often use inappropriately the supra-segmental features. In addition to that, it is noticed that their speech lacks grammar. Broca aphasics also resort to the substitute difficult sounds for easier ones to facilitate their pronunciation.

All in all what can be deduced from what has been said before about Broca aphasia is that it affects the oral aspect of the language. In other words, Broca aphasics are unable to speak though they are able to hear, understand and organize the language in the brain. That is why, we notice that the majority of them resort to the use of telegraphic style to convey their messages.

Wernicke's Aphasia:

It is a neurological pathology characterized by a perturbation of language comprehension as a result of a lesion of the cortex to which Wernicke's area is posterior. Findings related to this second type of aphasia are owed to the German neurologist Carl Wernicke (1874) who identified the so-called areas responsible for language comprehension. Wernicke believes that a damage in this area would provoke an incapacity of understanding the language despite the fact that the patient can speak it fluently and with ease.

In contrast to Broca aphasia, the subject of which is supposed to understand the language but unable to produce it, Wernicke's aphasia is totally the opposite. Wernicke's aphasics 'speech is fluent with no articulatory difficulty. Yet, they are unable to comprehend what is being said.

Like Broca, Wernicke identified some key characteristics Wernicke's aphasia generally suffer from. For example, their spontaneous speech is fluent with a normal intonation. Two other equally noteworthy characteristics are reading and

writing.

These two activities are hardly performed by Wernicke's aphasics; like the subjects are unable to master the oral skills, they are also unable to understand the graphic ones.

As a conclusion, we can say that Wernicke aphasics develop a normal oral proficiency yet, they are unable to understand the meaning of the language itself.(Garùan.1990).

5-3Listening:

When speech is produced, its sound waves are transmitted via the air towards the ear. Then, these waves continue their way to the brain where they are supposed to be interpreted and decoded. Hence, the following sections are basically with the analysis of the different mechanisms involved in speech reception and interpretation. In other words, we will try to investigate how sounds are received and analyzed by the hearer. To understand such a process, we will be following the flow of waves at four different levels: the outer ear, the middle ear, the inner ear and finally the brain..

David Cristal(1997) dealt with the same issue in a more detail and what follows is a brief survey about the function of each part in the interpretation of language.

The outer ear has as a major role to focus sound waves into the ear. Due to its auricle, we can detect the source of sounds. Also, it stands like a barrier against any foreign particle that may enter into the ear and decreases the amount of sounds we are all the time confronted to. The external auditory canal is the second component of the outer ear that leads to the ear drum. It performs the role of an amplifier for specific sound frequencies.

The second part with which we are concerned is the middle ear. It is separated from the middle ear by a tympanic membrane. Its fibrous elastic tissue enables its vibration whenever the waves of sounds reach it. The middle ear also consists of the eustachian tube which is, once opened, permits the maintenance of both sides of the ear drum. At the middle ear level, sound vibrations are transformed into mechanical movements to be transmitted to the inner ear to the auditory ossicles (a system of three tiny bones usually referred to as malleus (hammer), incus (anvil) and the stapes (stirrup)).

The inner ear is the last component of that organ and is filled with fluid. In addition to the semi-circular canals, the inner ear also consists of the cochlea, a spiral-shaped cavity. Its major function is to turn those mechanical movements into nerve impulses to be transmitted to the brain. Once there, these sounds are obviously identified, interpreted and decoded. In other words, at the level of the cochlea, the acoustic impulses are converted into neurological impulses to be

sent to the brain for interpretation, and ones again producing the adequate speech in case an answer is required. By so doing, we close the cycle of language production and reception.

Summary:

Throughout this chapter we have considered the individual's oral proficiency development through a purely psycholinguistic point of view. We also tried to answer some key questions that may help us to understand successfully that process. Among these questions, we have discussed the interpellation of the innate and acquired properties of the language . We also illustrated the relevance of grammar in producing speech, and wheather or not it is necessary to respect the different grammatical rules governing the language we are acquiring or learning.

An other equally important dimension delt with in this chaptre, is what is referred to as the medium of language. We have tried to explain this phenomenon through two different processes. The first is related to speech production in which we have tackled salient issues like the identification of the different articulatory organs. We also explained the implication of the brain in such a process. In addition to that, and to prove the relevance of the brain when speaking, we have exposed some of the brain's deficiencies(aphasia). We have showed the extent to which a damage of some specific areas in the brain may be fastidious when

speaking.

Speech perception was the third central focus of discussion. After having explained how an individual produces speech, we have also examined how this speech is received, understood, and interpreted by the brain.

Finally, the assumption we made is that speech is the product of an interaction between different organs, the majority of which contribute to the use of language adequately, Subsequently intending to develop the individual's oral proficiency.

Chaptre IIII

Identification of the Psychological Factors Leading to Failure in Developing the Learner's Oral Proficiency:

Although I initially constructed intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, one can also imagine situations in which Intrinsic interest and extrinsic rewards might correlate, As it were, to motivate learning.

(Harter. 1981:310-11)

Introduction :

Throughout the previous chapters of this dissertation, we have exposed a brief survey about language learning/acquisition as viewed by three significant linguistic and educational disciplines and approaches: psychology, psycho-pedagogy and psycholinguistics. Each of these disciplines carries an apt interpretation about this process in general, and the development of the learner's communicative performance in particular. Subsequently, our aim was to show the relevant contribution of each approach as well as its drawbacks. By so doing, we believe that we have succeeded to sort out a reliable and authentic psychological, educational and psycholinguistic opinions about effective learning.

Along this chapter, however, we intend to look for some of the hampering factors that may stand as a barrier to the occurrence of the targeted effective learning. Thus, if asked to identify the most powerful psychological influences of learning, concepts like extroversion, introversion, field dependence, field independence, motivation, inhibition among so many others would probably stand as the most important characteristics and personality traits the individual should get rid of in order to enhance his learning process .

As it may imply, the following chapter aims at discussing the already listed factors, and exhibit their negative impressions that may have negative results and influences of both the learner and the learning process.

1-Some psychological factors that hamper the process of developing the learner's oral proficiency:

1-1-Extroversion vs Introversion:

Before discussing the issue of extroversion/introversion and show its influence in developing the learner's oral proficiency, we should first explain what is really meant by these two terms.

Generally speaking, we qualify someone of being extrovert when he shows interest to the external world than his own thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, he has a tendency to manifest his beliefs and opinions overtly. Consequently extroversion is a state where the individual has thoughts and activities committed to the environment. Introversion, on the other hand, is totally the opposite. Being introvert means being interested in ones thoughts and feelings neglecting the external events and objects. An introverted person tends to fold up towards his own thoughts and feelings with a total exclusion of the outer world.

The question that is now being raised is: What is the link between the two personality traits and developing someone's communicative performance?

In fact, there has been a great deal of speculation and controversies about this subject. Some believe that there is no link between extroversion/introversion and the process of developing/hampering the individual's oral proficiency. Others, however urge that there is a close relationship between these two

characteristics and the fact of speaking the target language fluently.

Pavli(1996,1997) stood midway between the two tides of opinions. In her research paper “Age and other factors in foreign language learning”, she has well illustrated what was reported by Ellis(1994) after having debated the work of Naiman et all(1978) about the same issue. This latter believes that there is no clear and relevant link between the two personality traits and the process of developing the learner’s oral proficiency. Yet, in Ellis’ point of view, the psychologist asserts the opposite. He even postulated two distinct hypothesis concerning the effect extroversion/introversion may have on the learner’s procedure of developing his oral proficiency.

The first hypothesis supports the idea that extroverted persons acquire more easily and rapidly the oral aspect of the language.This obviously due to their sociability and environmentalistic commitment. Subsequently, they are given more occasions and opportunities to practise and use the target language in real life situation. The second hypothesis is related to introverted learners. Ellis believes that because of their timidity and draw back from society; introverted people seek refuge in writing and reading, hence, they might succeed academically, but not in speaking the target language fluently.

Brown(1987) also contributed in the interpretation of Extroversion/introversion and their influence in learning a language. He assumes that the two personality traits are misunderstood. He believes that because of the stereotyped idea about the two characteristics, teacher’s perceptions of the

students are more often influenced and even subjective. To prove that, he proposes the example of Ausubel(1968), when he noted that both of the two features are “a grossly misleading index of social adjustment”. Subsequently, students are often prejudiced about their behavior. We believe this prejudice and prejudgement prevents the learner from speaking the target language regardless to their state of being extrovert or introvert.

As a final conclusion, we can say that extroverted learners are more likely apt to acquire any language. This is clearly owed to the unconscious opportunities they are presented with to interact in the target language. This enables them to develop both communicative competence and performance. Being introverted, however, may cause an inhibition in fostering the development of the language oral proficiency; hence, provoking a failure in speaking fluently the target language.

1-2 Field independence vs field dependence:

Other equally significant factors that may develop/hamper the learner's oral proficiency are what is generally referred to as field independence and field dependence. So why is the significance of these two terms?

As they may suggest, a field independent person is generally characterized by being able to perform some kinds of tasks and activities without the help of others. In other words, they rely on themselves whenever it comes to do something. They are also characterized of being creative, and often show satisfaction when they succeed in their tasks like solving different types of

problems through different ways and methods. An other criterion specific to field independent persons is that they are able to deal with components in a field separately from their own context and background they are accustomed to. (Williams and Burden.1997). Field dependence, however, is the state of being subordinate to the context in which the individual lives. Field dependent persons generally lack creativity and are often uncertain of the outcome of their work. In other words, they are unable to perform any type of tasks and activities without the interference of environmental forces; they count on their own context to succeed.

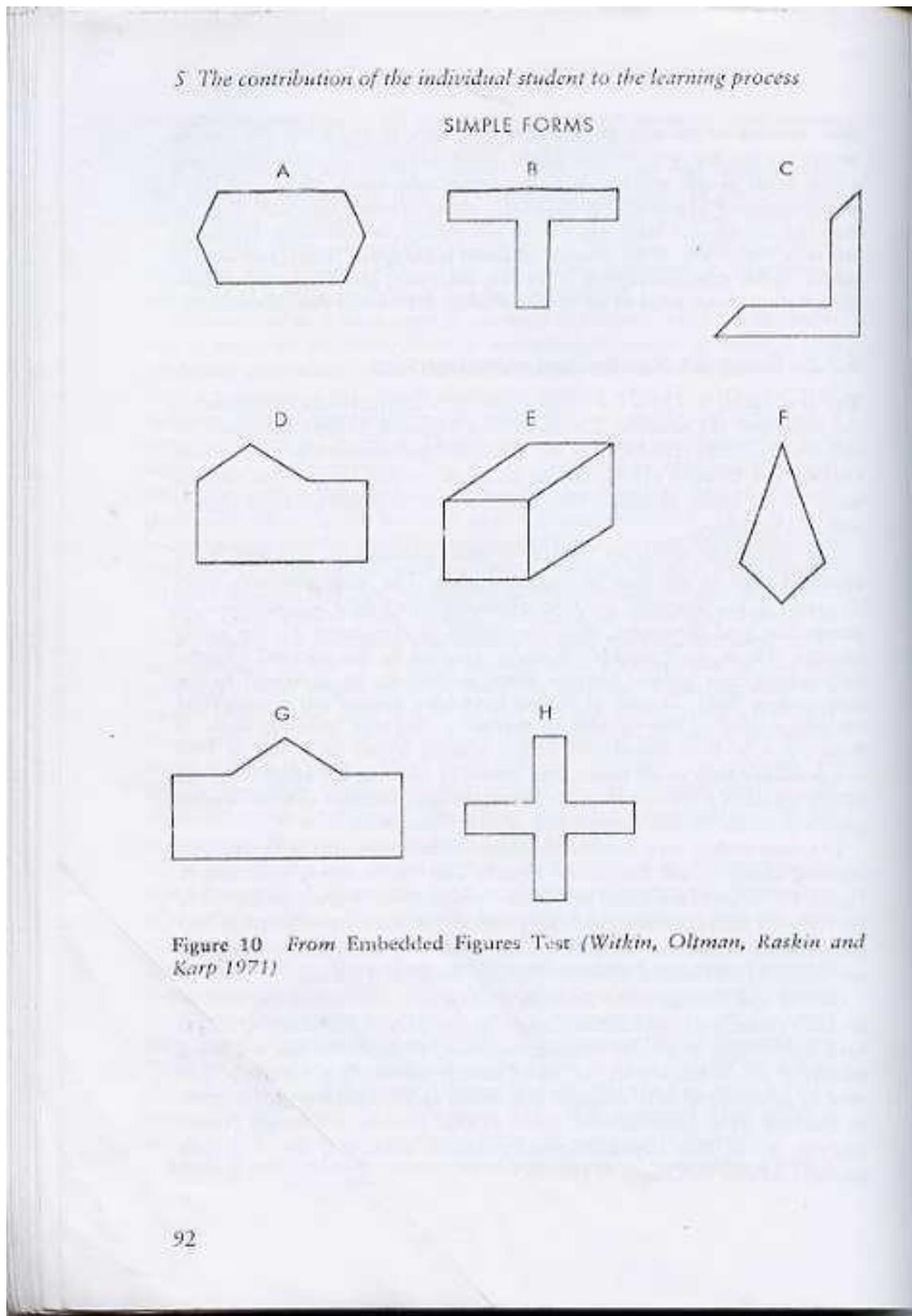
To better understand these two paradoxal concepts, we propose the comparison made by Williams and Burden(1997). In their opinion, people, who are field dependent , “their perception is dominated by the whole context, that is, they perceive things in relation to the context, whereas, field independence people perceive items as discrete or related to the surrounding field”(p.91).

After having explained what is meant by the two personality traits, we ought now to show their relevance in language learning ; particularly, its influence in developing/hampering the individual’s oral performance.

Williams and Burden(1997) reported that d’Anglejan and Renaud(1985) found that “people scoring higher on a test of field independence tend to do better than others at learning a foreign language”.

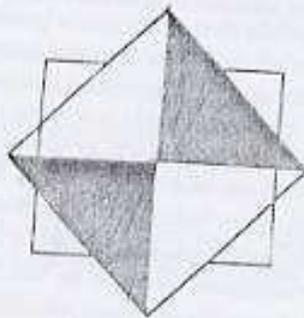
To explain the above statement we are going to explain a widely used test related to field independence /dependence. It is called the test of embedded

figures proposed by Witkin, Oltman, Raskin and Karp(1971).

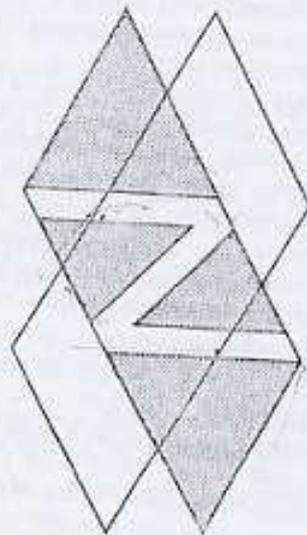


3.2 Some problems with the notion of individual differences.

SECOND SECTION



1 Find Simple Form "G"



2 Find Simple Form "A"

This test has a particular aim which is distinguishing between the cognitive abilities of both field independence and field independent persons. The figures contained in the test are divided into two sections. The first section is presented with simple forms easy to be drawn and kept in mind. The second section, however, is presented with more complex figures, the majority of which are composed of a mixture of the already proposed simple figures. The learners are supposed to find out the simple formed figures that compose each of the complex ones.

It is argued that higher scorers are believed to be field independent learners. Because of their character and creative way of considering concepts, they are easily able to detect the simple forms even when these latter are mixed up with others. On the other hand, field dependent subjects can not do the same thing, and in case they could, this will take a very long time.

The relevance of these two contradictory psychological factors in the process of learning is quite clear. The educator, when instructing her students may provide them with only one solution for a specific problem, though one problem may have different solutions. Field independent learners succeed in solving the provided problem using different solutions. They do not bind themselves to the example given by the teacher. What interests them is that the result would be right whatever solution they might select. Nevertheless, field dependent learners rely only upon the solution provided by their teacher and are unable to follow the path field independent subjects do.

All in all, we can say that both of field independence/dependence are among the most significant factors that foster/ hamper the process of learning in general and development of the individual's oral proficiency. The main difference between the two personality traits lies in the fact that in contrast to field independent learners, field dependent ones lack creativity and are unable to cope with the different types of tasks and items out of their context and background.

1-3 Empathy, apathy and aversion:

We are going to investigate further personality traits that may psychologically influence the process of developing /hampering the learner's oral performance . These are: empathy, apathy and aversion.

a)-Empathy:

Empathy is believed to be an intuitive endowment by virtue of which we can understand the feelings or ideas of the others. Brown (1987) believes that empathy is “ The process of putting yourself in someone else shoes” (p.107). He also, he argues that this personality trait is the best way for a good coexistence in a community of individuals.

To better illustrate the concept of empathy, Brown gathered a number of Definitions related to the same issue and which are proposed by different psychologists. He reports that Guira (1972) outlined that the concept of empathy is “a process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self-object boundaries permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the affective

experience of an other”. Guira added that this concept of empathy will be well developed and exploited only if we realize a further condition. This latter is about having enough knowledge about one’s feelings. This will allow us to adequately understand the others.

Brown also provided the definition proposed by Hogan (1969). This latter believes that empathy is a “relatively discrete social phenomenon recognizable in the experience of laymaen and psychologists alike”.

What is remarked is that all the definitions exposed above turn around the same conception of empathy,i.e. being able to understand adequately the others for the sake of establishing a good communicative medium, hence , assuring the continuity of using language.

One may ask, what is the importance of empathy in developing someone’s communicative performance?

Brown(1987), stipulates that effective and intelligible communication happens only when there exists a mutual cognitive and affective understanding. He also argues that a misinterpretation of the other person’s cognitive and affective state would inevitably break down communication. That is why, Brown urges that we need to surpass our ego boundaries. Guiora used the term ‘permeate ego boundaries’ to express the same concept whose main purpose is to succeed in understanding each other.

Yet, when it comes to second or foreign language in general, the situation

is quite different. The language users must correctly identify the cognitive and affective sides of others. Here foreign language learners have a difficult task, because they are supposed to perform this task using a language whose background and culture are unknown to them. The subjects are often misunderstood by the native speakers and vice versa. It is proved that what foreigners produce is linguistically true despite the fact that it is misinterpreted by native speakers. Brown (1987), relates this to the different cultural backgrounds for both foreign language users and native speakers. He believes that there are some cultural standards ignored by foreigners that lead to misunderstanding. Normally, here should interfere the role of empathy. Brown asserts that the best way to empathize using a foreign language is to acculturate and adapt ourselves to the new social and cultural norms imposed by the simple fact of using this foreign language. By so doing, we are going to establish a good empathic medium, hence, avoiding misunderstandings and succeeding in our communication.

b)-Apathy:

Apathy is a psychological status where the individual shows an indifferent mode of behavior. He generally lacks energy and the will to perform different tasks and activities successfully. In other words, he is not interested in what he is engaged in. In its turn, this status is believed to be due to some other psychological factors like, the dislike of the activity /task, which, in most of the time, the subject has not chosen.

If we try to compare this with English language learners, we find that apathetic students are, in most of the time, those subjects who have not chosen the English language for their university studies. They, probably, have other tendencies, but other factors (their average, the parent's interference) contribute to hampering the fulfilment of their hopes.

Hence, we expect varied behaviors: some students avoid attending the English classroom lectures; others stop their studies and some others became frustrated because of the choice imposed upon them and the duty they have to succeed in this unwelcome field. The result would inevitably be failure in developing both written and oral aspects of the language.

We believe that the best therapy to that phenomenon is to try to create a contradictive feeling in the learner. In other words, those apathetic subjects, by a means or an other, must sympathize with their studies. Here should interfere the role of the teacher. He must show to his students the positive aspects of the material he is teaching and stimulating them to respond to their recommendations. He also has to establish a good relationship with his subjects so that dialogues would be allowed, and students can explain overtly what displeases them when learning the foreign language. By so doing, the teacher can easily communicate, influence and change the learner's mind about the archaic idea they already formulated about learning a foreign language in general. The result would inevitably be fruitful, and the purpose of developing the learner's oral proficiency would inevitably be achieved.

c)-Aversion:

What is meant by aversion is antipathy or hatred that results from a given situation. To better understand this concept, we expose the social learning theory that was proposed by the Canadian psychologist, Albert Bandura. His theory is primarily related to classroom motivation and management.

Bandura(1986)believes that the individual's behavior should be interpreted in terms of cognitive, behavioral and environmental variables.(Good and Brophy.1990). Of course, still according to Bandura's theory, the process of reinforcement is essential to boost the subject to learn.The psychologist also argues that the best way to achieve effective learning is through imitating Models.The learners are supposed to be exposed to filmed models, and then they are observed whether or no they are going to imitate that same model ones put in a similar situation. From his social learning theory, Albert Bandura deduces that school violence, frustration and venadalism are due to the fact of imitating wrong and unsuitable models.Hence, a feeling of aversion is inevitably established. In the field of learning English as a foreign language, for instance, the teacher proposes different models, and observes whether or not his subjects are imitating these models. Obviously, he is supposed to motivate and encourage them to achieve the desired behavior, which is in our case speaking the language fluently. Thus, if the model or the verbal explanation provided by the teacher suits the subjects, these latter are supposed to respond adequately to their

teacher's recommendations. In case where the model does not go with the learner's tendencies, This will create a feeling of versioning repulsion of the material the foreign language students are being taught. This implies that they will hate learning this language . The result would be a total failure in acquiring the different aspects of the language and in particular developing its oral aspect and being able to speak the target language fluently.

1-4Inhibition, motivation and anxiety:

a)-Inhibition:

The term inhibition in psychology means to prevent the subject from Doing something by provoking different psychological agents, the majority of which contribute to restrain him from making initiations and participating in the field he/she is engaged in. In other words, It is a mental process via which an individual is regressed from acting, thinking, and even feeling.

In her work Pavli (1996.1997) relates inhibition to risk taking. She Believes that there is a close relationship with the two concepts. She argues that the defensiveness associated with inhibition, discourages the risk taking, which is necessary for a rapid progression in foreign language". On the other hand, Brown (1987) relates inhibition to self esteem. He urges that people are all the time building sets of defences to protect their ego. To better illustrate this, he explained the gradual development of inhibition (building defences to protect the ego)from babyhood to adulthood and came with the following conclusion.

Some persons-those with higher self esteem and ego strength- are more able to withstand threats to their existence and thus their defences are lower. Those with weaker self esteem maintain wall of inhibition to protect what is self perceived to be a weak or fragile ego, or a lack of self confidence in a situation or task”(p.103)

Brown means that there is a negative relationship between the self esteem and the ego with inhibition. In other words: the higher the self esteem is and the stronger the ego is, the lower the person's defences are , and vice versa.

The influence of inhibition in foreign language learning is quite obvious. It is primarily related to the psychological status of the learner in which this latter finds himself unable to use the language adequately though he possesses a considerable potential of language material that needs to be exploited. The problem lies in the fact that the subject is mentally inhibited because he is not sure to succeed in such an enterprise hence he may fail and disappoint his ego. This proves that language learning is very personal and is of an egocentric nature.(Brown.1987). Guiora et al (1972) asserted this relation existing between the ego, inhibition and second language learning through the experiment she conducted on a group of subjects. These latter were given quantities of alcohol to lower their defences. The psychologist noticed that the performance of the students given alcohol is better than those who did not drink the liquid. Brown reported that Guiora concluded that those who drank alcohol were semi-unconscious. They did not pay attention the social norms nor did they take into consideration the judgement their behavior may provoke in case their

pronunciation would be wrong. In other words, by drinking alcohol, their ego stopped building defenses to be protected. Subsequently, their inhibition was lowered, and the result was positive. The control group (whose members were not given alcohol), however, was conscious and aware of the result their wrong pronunciation may engender (being ridiculed for example) and this inhibited them from a good performance.

b)- Motivation:

Motivation is believed to be one of the most significant factors leading to effective learning. A great amount of speculations about the same subject led to its interpretation through different psychological views, the majority of which agree that motivation is an important psychological factor without which little could be done in the classroom.

Before investigating the different areas related to motivation, let us first consider the salient theories and overviews that treated this issue.

The major behavioral theoretical assumption to learning stipulates how animals behave to meet their basic biological needs through the classical conditioning learning theory. This view is later on generated and applied to human beings. It also explained the process through which they are stimulated to respond to a given external incentive. The concept of reinforcement was also one of the behavioral most significant pre-occupation. For, Psychologists tried to show the extent to which reinforcement (reward or punishment) may progress or regress the individual's behavior when learning (Williams and Burden.1997).

All in all, we can say that behaviourists see in motivation the outcome of external stimulators.

Cognitively speaking, and as the term may suggest, motivation is viewed to be the outcome of internal processes via which the subject is stimulated to achieve a given objective. A widely known theory, the attribution theory, has thoroughly investigated this issue. It considers motivation in relationship to the person's success or failure. The individual is often trying to link his success or failure to reasonable causes. By so doing, the subject is sure to detect the variables he thinks influence his own performance, and which may loosely be called cognition as quoted by McDonough(1981). To better understand what has already stated about the attribution theory, we propose the following example.

Success on a test, for instance, may be attributed to hard work or luck. According to the theory, we are supposed to predict the behavior of the student on the ground of the result obtained. On the other hands, failure could be attributed to less work or to the non understanding of what was taught. Again, the prediction of the learner's behavior depends on the learner's result. An other equally important theory that is of significant relevance in human being's motivation in general is the one related to the achievement theory. This latter is derived from the drive reduction approach, which is based on the premise that human being's motivation is energy directed to create a balance between the internal and physical state of the body. This situation is generally referred

to as homeostasis.(McDonough.1981). Achievement motivation, however, is believed to be, as reported by Williams and Burden(1997) from Atkinson (1964), simply the need to achieve. In other words, learners achieve only when they want to achieve.

It is believed that people's need to achieve differs from one person to another. That's why the outcome of their learning differs quite markedly. Hence, we may find people who are motivated to be successful, generally select difficult tasks to challenge and prove that they are able to succeed. Nevertheless, there are some other learners who avoid engaging in difficult activities because of the fear of failure. By so doing, they have a chance to succeed even if their achievement would not be high. A third category is motivated to succeed because of the competition existing between the learners to meet parental approval. Others, because of the high level of the competition would avoid taking the examination to do not let down their capacities and upset their parents. (Williams and Burden.1997). Here lie the differences between the individual's needs to achieve they goals. It might be the need to achieve or the need to avoid failure.

A Definition to Motivation:

Williams and Burden (1997) proposed a definition to motivation, which was as follows:

- a state of cognitive and emotional arousal
- which leads to conscious decision to act, and

- which give rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort
- in order to attain a previously set goal(goal(s))

Let us examine the above definition:

We notice that there are some key words (the underlined words) that may help us to understand the meaning of this definition.

according to the author, motivation is the result of some cognitive and emotional factors, which contribute to push the subject to make conscious choices and decisions about an already set objective. We can say that the individual processes a potential energy that needs to be directed rightful towards creating a balance between his body's physical and intellectual requirements. Hence, he is supposed to make efforts (both physical and intellectual) in order to find the appropriate solution to achieve the expected objective.

What is remarked is that this definition is purely cognitive, for it considers as a major incentive to achieve only the cognitive factors. The emotional arousal is also taken into consideration, a proof that this definition has some humanistic tendencies. Yet, in our opinion we believe that in addition to these cognitive needs (being able to know, understand and explore) and emotional ones(achieving what the individual is supposed to do and show his competencies to gain approval and recognition), there are other factors of identical importance. These are the environmentalistic (social) factors. As they

may be motivated from within, the students can also be stimulated from outside.

The incentives to learn may originate from the individual's own perception to achieve, as well as from the environment in which he lives. Subsequently, this fact will lead us to make the distinction between two types of motivation: cognitive (intrinsic) and contextual(extrinsic) motivation. But before tackling this issue , let us first explain what is meant by the term 'motive'.

Duric(1989) quoted that Smirnov(21) et al viewed motives as follows: "What is reflected in man's mind and stimulates him to achieve, directing his activity towards the satisfaction of a certain need, is called the motive of the activity".

Thus, a motive is what the individual perceives to be a stimulator of the task he intends to perform. This stimulator may be internal or external. Internal Motivation is the result of the organism's needs to achieve in order to gain satisfaction(Duric 1989). When the individual is internally motivated, doing the planned activity will generate interest and enjoyment. In other words, the individual appreciates what he is doing. External motivation on the other hands, is seen to be the individual's endeavour to do an activity under the influence of some external variables like rewards or parental approval in case he succeeds(Williams and Burden.1997).It is believed that internal motivation in learning has a significant impact on that process than external motivation has. For it is proved that learning under some specific social factors will inevitably lead to stress the subject. This fact may have bad outcomes. The learner, seeking

to get the reward or his parental approval by a means or an other, may feel frustrated. Consequently, he will do his best to succeed even if he does not like the activity he does. Nevertheless, when motivation generates from a personal will, the result will inevitably be satisfactory. The learner feels at ease and enjoys what he is doing. He will meticulously achieve the already set objective and his expectations would be realized.

Despite the fact that internal motivation is preferred to external motivation, we keep holding that the contribution of both types is of similar value.

After having covered the different areas related to motivation, we are now supposed to provide our own perception about the same subject, hence our definition would be as follows:

motivation is the result of an interaction between two sets of factors, internal and external, and which contribute to achieve an already planned objective.

c)- Anxiety :

anxiety is the state of being anxious. The individual is all the time worrying about his own capacities and at the same time eager to achieve and succeed. We also believed it to be an excess of motivation. In other words, the subject is excessively motivated to the extent of doubting his own intellectual capacities.

Brown (1987) believes that anxiety plays an important role in second language acquisition. He also reported that Bailey (1983) studied the influence

of competitiveness and anxiety in second language learning and came with the assumption that anxiety is the key towards the success in mastering the target language in addition to that, Bailey made the distinction between two types of anxiety : debilitating and facilitative anxiety. Pavli (1996, 97) stated that the former is believed to be a factor that urges the learner to avoid the task he is engaged in for the sake of avoiding the origins of anxiety. The latter, however is considered to be a motivating factor that pushes the learner to face the different activities and tasks he may be introduced to .Also, facilitative anxiety stimulates the learner to endeavour himself in order to succeed and over bear their anxiety. (Albert and Haber.1960 cited by Scovel.1978). Pavli concluded that facilitative anxiety is a low state of anxiety whereas debilitating anxiety is a high state of anxiety. Thus our assumption is that the facilitative anxiety is a key element that contributes to to success in learning a second /foreign language in general and fostering the learner's oral performance in particular.

Summary:

Throughout this chapter we have been introduced to the different psychological factors we believe to be the most hampering ones in the process of developing someone's oral proficiency. The identification of these varied factors will probably help us to discover the source of the learner's handicap in speaking the target language fluently. Thus our purpose is to find out solutions in order to get rid of these hampering factors. The teacher's role consists mainly to detect the source f these factors to facilitate the proccass of learning, hence

developing his oral proficiency.

These psychological factors are manifested by the learner through different ways. The teacher can easily detect them through a careful observation of the student's behavior. For example, the state of anxiety can be released through the excess of learning and the tendency to compete in order to succeed. An introverted student generally tends to isolate himself to avoid confrontation with others. The state of empathy is generally manifested through the individual's clumsiness and inadequate comportment when dealing with others.

All in all, the teacher can cure these hampering psychological factors through knowing their source and origins. By so doing, the educator will facilitate the process of language acquisition, hence participating in fostering the process of developing his own oral performance.

Part :II

Introduction :

The second part of this dissertation is devoted to a critical analysis of the empirical research results administered to 2nd year students in the department of English at Biskra University. Throughout the questionnaire's answers, we will try to prove our already stated hypotheses about the contribution of the psychological status of the learner in developing his/her oral performance when acquiring the target language.

In addition to the questionnaire, we also resorted to analyse and interpret diverse opinions and point of views of the same population, which we believe to be of significant importance to the present study.

As will be seen later in the next, the obtained interpretations and analysis will facilitate the process of sorting out these psychological factors and single out the extent to which they may be influential in learning a foreign language in general and developing the subject's oral proficiency in particular.

When analysing the questionnaire, we tended to respect the items' order. Also, these latter are reproduced along with their analysis for further clarification, accuracy and explicitness.

Description of the Questionnaire:

As already stated, the questionnaire is conducted on a population which

includes 2nd year students (males and females) in the department of English at Biskra University. Their age generally varies between 18 and 24 years old. Yet, there are some exceptions where we find students of 25 to 30 years old.. This variety in sex and age provides a diversity of opinions and point of views which contributed, through a way or an other, to achieve our already stated objective.

We may add that the questionnaire is divided into two sections, the first of which is consecrated to general information about the population itself (age, sex, branch followed in the high school). This is willingly done for the sake of helping the reader to get acquainted with the context in which our experiment is being held. The second section, however, contains the items due to which analysis we are supposed to find out the targeted psychological factors. Of course, and as we may notice, we have two types of questions: close-ended questions which include yes/no questions and multiple answer items. The subject has just to tick one of the provided possibilities in both categories. Then we have open-ended questions where the learner is required to give his/her own opinions and appreciations.

Section I : General Information:

1-Sex

	N	%
Male	29	27.10
female	78	72.89

Figure 01

According to the above table, the majority of 2nd year students registered in the department of English at Biskra University are females (72.89%). The remaining (27.10%) represent a male category. This classification can be generalized to different other departments of English in Algeria where the same phenomenon is observed. This fact comes to show the different tendencies of both sexes: females generally tend to register in branches of literary and humanistic criteria like foreign languages, law, history etc...

Males, however, are in most of the time registered in branches like mechanics, computing, maths etc...

2-Age:

Age	N	%
18_24	102	95.32
Above 24	05	4.67

Figure 02

Figure 02 comprises statistics related to the age of students registered in the department of English at Biskra University. What is remarked is that 95.32% of this same population are young persons whose age varies from 18 to 24 years old. A minority of 4.67% represents students of 25 to 30 years old. These latter are in most of the time students who have already experienced graduate learning in other domains than English.

3-Branch followed in the high school:

Branch	N	%
Literary	72	67.28
scientific	32	29.90
others	03	02.80

Figure 03

In figure 03, we tried to classify students according to the branch they followed in the high school. The result was that the majority of them (67.28%) were students of letters. An equally important percentage of 29.90 % were scientific. The last category studied other branches which vary between economy and maths (still according to our population).

General Observation:

According to figures 01, 02, 03, our population is a mixture of different classes of persons belonging to both sexes, and who have undergone salient branches in the high school. This diversity in sex, age and the branch followed in the high school will inevitably allow a multitude of answers, opinions and point of views, which we believe will lead us to achieve our objective and prove

our hypotheses about the hampering psychological factors leading to failure in developing the subject's oral proficiency.

Section II:

Item 01:

-Your choice of learning English for your University studies was:

a)- Yours

b)-Imposed

Item 02

-In case it is yours, give the reasons.

Our aim from asking these two questions is just to know whether or not the students have voluntarily registered in the department of English or not. This fact will direct us towards a better conceptualization of the learner's psychological status towards his/her learning process. In case the fact of choosing the English language for for his/her university studies was a voluntary choice, this means that he/she is satisfied; hence he/she is psychologically prepared to learn English. In case it is the opposite, this implies that the learner is not content of his choice, which may not go with his/her own tendencies.

The result was that more than three thirds of the population ticked that the choice was theirs and the remaining minority answered that learning English was an imposed choice.

When considering these statistics, one may think that, according to our theory, the majority of students are psychologically prepared to learn English. Nevertheless, when stating the reasons why they had made such a choice, the results were unexpected. 64 of them asserted that they were quite reasonable to accept this branch to be learned in the University , especially that their average did not allow them to register in other fields.

They augmented that English is “today’s language” and that it is also “widely used” that is why “we must know it”.

Here we can easily deduce that 2nd year students in the department of English at Biskra University have chosen to study English for their university studies simply because they had no other choice.

The second minor category of the population, who assumed that learning English at the university was an imposed choice argued that it is “a pleasant burden” since it allows them to get respectable jobs (as future teachers) and gain their lives honestly. They asserted that even if they have not registered in the field they solicited at the beginning , learning English for their graduate studies is not really alarming , and that through a way or another, they would accept this fact and adapt themselves to the context of foreign language learning.

Subsequently, what is observed about both categories is that the fact of learning English at the university , whether it is a voluntary or imposed choice, does not generate from an innate will or interest. But because it is a

key road towards achieving their material objectives of obtaining qualifications that allow them to found respectable situations and integrate steadily in society.

Item 03

- Do you think that your English performance has improved during this first year?

a)- Yes

b)-No

Item 04

-If no, say why?

Our intention behind such questions is to highlight whether or not the learner's communicative competence and performance have improved during the first year, bearing in mind that the questionnaire is administered to the population right at the beginning of the academic year, and that 2nd year students are relatively considered to be new comers to the university.

Students' answers were as follows:

-35 students affirmed that their English oral performance has improved, yet they provided no further explanation for item 04.

-29 students definitively negated the fact that their oral performance has developed, and also abstained from giving any further clarification for item 04.

-15 students pretended that their oral aspect of the language considerably developed, and that they are relatively able to produce correct utterances in English. They explained that this fact is due to the interest they show to the kind of music, movies, and books which they listen to, watch or read respectively and which are in most of the time in English. In addition to that, they admitted the importance of the vocabulary they acquired from attending English courses at the university during their first year.

-28 students assured that their English has not developed at all during and after their first year. To better illustrate this last point, we have selected some of the students comments which we judged to be very interesting:

1-“My English has not improved because I am still making mistakes, and this may be my fault because I can not pronounce words correctly like my teachers”

2-“I think that there is no change between my level in the high school and my level in the university”

3-“Because during the first year, we didn’t practise enough English, certainly during the oral expression courses”

What is quite obvious about the three opinions is that all of the students share the idea that their English has not improved . Yet, each one relates the reasons of that failure to different sources. For example, in the case of the first student, he/she totally relates this failure to his/her own capacities. We can

easily notice that the learner feels guilty and he/she is doubting his/her own mental capacities in acquiring the target language. We believe that this feeling shakes the stability of the learner's psyche. This disturbance led him/her to doubt his own abilities; hence the learner unconsciously developed the idea that speaking English fluently is a difficult task which he/she can never perform.

The second student, however, stated that there is no difference between English he/she spoke in the high school and the one he/she actually uses in the university. In other words, his/her language has not developed at all. This latter observation has been repeated too many times throughout the questionnaire's results. Too many other students also believe that their English has witnessed no change even after being specialized in the field.

The third student, on the other hand related this failure in developing his/her oral proficiency to external motives, since he/she believes that ,with his classmates, he/she did not practise enough English in the classroom especially during the oral expression course. This implies that the learner is aware of the source of his/her failure, and the best, is that he/she relates it to external factors. This kind of students posses a kind of self confidence and trust in their own capacities, and they are believed to be able to achieve their objective even if they face some difficulties and obstacles at the begining.

Item05

-How often you are given the opportunity to speak English in the

classroom?

a)-Always

b)-rarely

c)-never

Item06:

- In what modules?

Throughout these two questions, we aim at singling out whether or not the subjects practise English in the classroom, and try to link that to their Success/failure in speaking English fluently. Furthermore, we asked the learners to precise in what modules they are given the opportunity to use the language in the calssroom in order to demonstrate the kind of courses which contribute to the learner's oral performance development.

Concerning Item 05, 85 students out of 107 who answered the questionnaire assured that they rarely speak English in the classroom, and that the only occasion given to them to use the language within an accademic context is generally during the course of oral espression: 66 students out of 107 believe that they are frequetly given the opportunity to speak the language during this course.

Students replies to item 05 and 06 are summarized in the following tables:

a- Item 05:

	N	%
Always	12	11.21
Rarely	85	79.43
Never	10	09.34

Figure04

b-Item06:

	N	%
Phonetics	25	23.36
Oral expression	66	61.68
British.civ	08	07.74
English.lit	07	06.54
American.civ	10	09.34
American.lit	05	04.67
linguistics	04	03.73

What is agreed about according to these two figures is that 2nd year students in the department of English at Biskra University are rarely given the opportunity to use the English language in the classroom, and in case it happens, it was during the course of oral expression (61.68 %) and phonetics (23.36%). This is quite obvious since both courses are basically designed to provide the students with equal opportunities to use the language appropriately. Yet, what is also observed is that, an other minority of the same population believe that in addition to these two courses, they are also given the occasion to use the target language in other modules than the two former ones. They argeed that in courses like British and American Civilizations, English and American literatures and linguistics, they develop interesting discussions and debates about

a specific topic usually proposed by the teachers. Students, when giving their ideas and point of views during these lectures, unconsciously use the English language. Furthermore, they do not pay attention to the language itself. They give more importance to the information they provide regardless to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the language via which they transmitt their messages.

Here, two exclusive points are observed:

1- This minority of students who uses the language in other courses than the oral expression and phonetics ones are believed to be extroverted persons,i.e, they feel a deep necessity in speaking the language in these modules rather than in those which are primarily designed to develop their oral proficiencies.

2-The unconscious use of the language in these kinds of courses is believed to be risking and enterprizing, yet very favorable. Since the practical aim of the student in this case is to convey the information and not speaking the language correctly. This unawareness of the use of the language gives the subject the opportunity to speak the language freely without beeing bound to respect its rules. We believe that this fact helps our students in their acquisition process.

Item07:

-Do you feel at ease and comfortable when speaking infront of your teachers and friends?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item08

-Do you still feel at ease and comfortable when speaking in front of your teacher and friends even when you make mistakes?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item09

-Explain.

We willingly asked these two complementary questions to show the psychological status of the subject while speaking. At first, the question is rather general; we just want to know how does the learner feel when speaking the language in the classroom in front of his/her teachers and classmates. The second question is more specific since we intend to know about the psychological status of the learner while (1)-speaking in front of his/her teachers and classmates and (2)- committing mistakes at the same time.

The majority of students ticked “yes”, i.e, according to them, when using the language in both cases , they feel at ease and comfortable. Nevertheless, they provided many interesting explanations. One good example was the interpretation provided by a 25 years old young girl:

“Sometimes, others do not accept your way of speaking, this reaction affects my language. But this situation is temporary and soon disappears”

What is observed here is that this girl is aware of her bad performance, yet she does not care about the other's opinions. On the other hand, she admits that this fact affects her speech just temporarily. This implies that the factor of age (maturation) is of great significance in the process of developing the learner's oral proficiency. In other words, the subject's personality is mature enough to the extent that when using the language in front of her teachers and classmates she feels at ease and comfortable even when she commits mistakes.

To prove this, we propose some further explanations provided by 20, 19 and 18 years old girls respectively:

1-“I do not feel at ease when speaking in the classroom.

I am ashamed of my language”

2-“In the classroom, I rarely speak, and when I do, I make too many mistakes. That is why I stopped speaking in the classroom. I don't like my language”

3-“Because I dislike making mistakes”

These three students assured that they feel uncomfortable when using the language in the classroom in front of their teachers and classmates especially when committing mistakes. That is why they resorted to stop speaking in the classroom to avoid unfavorable comments from the part of the others.

This is just to highlight the importance of maturation (biological and intellectual) in forging the learner's personality in general and developing

his/her oral proficiency in particular.

Item10:

-To what extent you think that the atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed and enjoyable?

Concerning this question, we had a diversity of opinions, which we may classify into three categories:

-A first category believes that the atmosphere in the classroom is quite relaxed and enjoyable. Also, they argued that effective learning can occur within such an environment especially when the content of the course is interesting and attractive.

-A second category believes that the atmosphere in the classroom is not relaxed and enjoyable at all. They added that they can never learn to speak English fluently within such an environment. They related this to the lack of the necessary media and material which they judge of a considerable significance in their acquisition process.

-A third category, however, stood neutral to both of the already stated point of views. They argued that the atmosphere in the classroom is not favorable for effective learning. Yet, they believe that they must adapt themselves to the least with which they are provided. Obviously, because they have no other solution.

According to the above interpretations, we can easily deduce the important role of the environment (learning context) in which the learning process is being held, in developing the subject's oral proficiency For, a well accommodated

environment creates a feeling of easiness and confort for the learner. In other words and in our case , the learning environment can contribute to the progression of the subject's oral proficiency as well as to its regression.

Item 11:

-Which course you think helps you to develop your oral English?

a- Phonetics

b- Oral expression

c- Others , specify.....

Item 12:

- Do you believe that the material presented during these lectures is interesting and motivating?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item 13:

-If no, justify.

The aim behind these three questions is to show whether or not the students are conscious about the modules which helps them to develop their oral performance. In fact, their answers proved that the majority of them practise English in the classroom during the courses of oral expression and phonetics, something which is expected since the two former courses are primarily designed for this purpose. Nevertheless, some other students asserted the fact

that they practise the target language in other courses which has nothing to do with the language itself like civilization and literature (as already stated in item 06). They related this to the content of these courses which they judge very interesting and attractive. They also argued that they are motivated to learn things which are new and exotic. According to them, these kinds of lectures give them the opportunity to develop pleasing discussions in which they use their language freely for the sake of expressing their own ideas and thoughts without giving much importance to the form of the language they use. Also they do not feel bound to respect the different rules and standards governing that same Language. they added that their teachers of civilization and literature are interested only in the information they provide and not in their way of speaking ,that's why they feel relaxed to use language and unconsciously they succeed in their speech.

We believe that this fact prepares the learner psychologically to speak the language, because we are persuaded that the learner under pressure (like in the case of oral expression and phonetics courses in which the learners are evaluated according to their oral performance) can not produce correct and appropriate utterances in the target language. However, in courses like civilization and literature, whose practical purpose is the information the learner gives and not the language itself (even if the learner is evaluated according to his language , much importance is given to the content of the learner's answer) The learner feels released to use the language , a task which he/she unconsciously

succeeds to achieve.

We conclude our analysis of items 11, 12, 13 by explaining that the interest students display for the content of specific courses helps a lot the subjects to develop their English in both aspects of the language (speaking and writing).

Item 14

-What do your teachers do to encourage you to raise your self esteem and confidence about your own capacities?

Throughout our analysis of this question, we are going to add a vital new dimension to the teaching/learning process and exhibit further insights, which are of significant importance to that same procedure.

Till now, we have demonstrated the importance of the subject's psychological status in acquiring the target language, and how should he/she cope to direct his/her behavior and thoughts towards achieving their objectives (in our case the subject's major objective is speaking the language fluently and appropriately). Yet, we have to single out another equally important factor, which will inevitably facilitate the acquisition process. It is the role of the teacher. In other words, what is the teacher supposed to do to prepare the students psychologically to learn a foreign language?

The students' answers were various and manifold. But what was remarked is that, when answering the question, instead of giving their opinions

and observations about their teachers' role in raising their self esteem and confidence about their own capacities, they started their replies with words like I wish that my teacher.... ,I would like.... or it would be better if..... In other words , the subjects expressed their wishes and hopes about the behavior they would like to find in their teachers.

This explains that the subjects suffer from the lack of being understood in the classroom especially from the part of his/her own teacher. In fact the learner is in need of comprehension when expressing overtly his/her ideas and point of views. This task should normally be performed by the teacher himself. If the learner's behavior and thought is misunderstood and wrongly interpreted, the subject would find himself in a situation which he/she qualifies of being ridiculous. This kind of comportment will lead to a state of frustration. Subsequently the learner would resort to stop using the language in the classroom to avoid these kind of situations. This resolution will inevitably worsen the learner's conditions and state , especially that, as we may know, the best therapy for frustration is speaking.

Item15:

- Have you ever developed personal, mature relationships with your Teachers/classmates?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item16

-If yes, how did they start? And what is your teacher's method to establish such a relationship and assure an effective learning?

After having tackled the vital role the teacher may play in helping his students in their process of acquiring the target language, we went further in this same issue and developed it to the relationship that may exist between the teacher and his students.

Traditionally speaking, the process of teaching is primarily related to the educator's role in transmitting knowledge and the necessary information to the learner. Obviously, to succeed in this task, the teacher is supposed to use the different methods, techniques and materials, due to which he would make sure that his subjects know what is going on in that process. Subsequently, we can say that teaching is a system via which knowledge is transmitted to the learners. Of course, the most effective agent behind such a system is obviously the teacher. We may also add that the process of teaching facilitates the other complementary process, learning. Brown (1987) shares with us this idea for he believes that providing a definition to teaching without including the concept of learning and its principles, will inevitably diminish the validity of our definition.

Brown also stresses the importance of applying the principles of different theories and approaches when teaching. He quoted, in support to this idea, that Nathan Cage (1964) noted that "to satisfy the practical demands of education,

theories of learning must be stood on their heads so as to yield theories of learning”. This means that in order to succeed in teaching, we have to select the adequate learning theory which we judge to be of significant relevance for our foreign language learners. We believe that fact to be the best way that will inevitably involve the subject emotionally, mentally and psychologically in his/her task, which is in our case learning a foreign language and particularly mastering its oral aspect.

Since the focus of this dissertation is directed towards the identification of Some psychological factors that generally hamper the development of the learner’s oral proficiency, we argue that the good teacher often takes into consideration this fact. Throughout this research, we proved that the psychological status of the learner plays a vital role in his acquisition process, hence, developing his oral performance. For this reason, we hardly believe that a successful teaching process has as its major qualities and criteria taking into account the subject’s psyche when learning the target language. Thus, in addition to preparing the learner emotionally and cognitively, we add a third rubric, which are the individual’s psychological conditions.

According to what has been stated above about teaching, new dimensions Have been added to the traditional and archaic definition of teaching. So, if we try to propose our own definition, we keep saying that the process of teaching is a system in which the educator and the learner are the major actors. It is also the

medium by means of which the teacher facilitates the learning process to his subject through understanding and preparing him emotionally, intellectually and psychologically in the task he/she is engaged in (learning a foreign language is one example).

Coming back to our central question about the nature of the relationship, if any, that should be established between the teacher and his students. In fact, the students provided salient opinions and point of views that converge to meet on one central point which is that the success of learning lies in the good performance of the teacher and the positive responses of the learner to his/her teacher's recommendations (which signals that the students have understood their teacher's messages).

The majority of the students agreed that they had established friendly relationships between themselves that helped them in their learning process, i.e., they tried to study together and exchange knowledge. They argued that this fact helped them a lot in their studies because, still according to them, diversity of opinions and thoughts helps a lot in acquiring knowledge and even correcting some already stored information and data which they thought, for a long time, of being true and reliable.

In a discussion I had with a group of that same population about the main focus of the present study, i.e., how would a friendly relationship develop their oral performance, students replied that it plays a relevant role in that process. They urged that, as non native speakers, they do not really know how to

pronounce correctly different words and items in English. Yet the fact of learning together allows them to look for the right articulation. And in case they do not know how such a word is pronounced, they resorted to the use of the dictionary, “a task which they seldom do when they are studying alone”, asserted these same students.

Concerning the second part of the question, which is about the kind of relationships that should link a teacher to his subjects, the majority of them replied that they had never established such a tie with their teachers though they wished to do so. Some students asserted that the majority of their teachers avoid to establish these kind of relationships with them to keep their prestige and for the sake that their position as University teachers would not be shaken, simply because of some frequentations which they judge inferior to what dictates their position and status.

What teachers ignore by doing so is that they unconsciously establish a psychological barrier with their students. These latter will deduce that their teachers are too strict, that is why, they would avoid any confrontations with them in the classroom. This fact will emotionally and psychologically blockade the subjects, subsequently, they would not give much importance to their studies and avoiding using the language in the classroom. The result would be a total failure in developing their oral proficiency because of the lack of practise.

Item17:

-do you prefer studying

a-in groups

b- individually

Throughout this question, we intended to identify and analyse the nature of the subjects' personality .i.e. Is the student an individualistic person or is he/she committed to society. Also, this may help us to highlight whether the subject is introverted (likes isolating himself), or extroverted (enjoys learning within groups and exchanging different opinions and point of views). The question also directs us to prove that the learners are self independent persons (they learn alone and they do not need the others' help to succeed in their learning), or they are self dependent (they resort to learn within groups because they can not rely on themselves to learn individually and successfully).

What is observed in the department of English at Biskra University is that the majority of 2nd year students prefer learning within groups. They asserted that it is the best way to grasp all what has been said in the classroom and also assured that, by so doing, they understand and retain the teacher's instructions about a given course.

Here, a fundamental question is raised: if the students understand and grasp the teacher's explanations and instructions about a specific course, how shall we explain the bad results the students obtained during their 1st year in both of the written and oral exams?

The answer is quite clear. The problem of the learners does not lie in the mental faculties. On the contrary, they are able to apprehend and conceive all what is being said in the classroom. The learners' difficulty, however, is related to the way through which they express themselves in the target language. Of course, any teacher, when evaluating his students, takes into account two major criteria: the content of the learners' answers (the information the student provides as a reply to the proposed question), and the form of his/her answer (The way of expressing the supposedly correct answers like their styles, punctuation, capitalization in case the exam is written, and stress, pitch intonation the learner generally uses in case the exam is oral).

Consequently, we can easily deduce why the majority of the students obtained bad results in their exam. It is true that their answers are correct and appropriate, yet the language they use to express these answers is not adequate. As foreign language learners, the teacher, when evaluating, must give equal importance to both of the content as well as the form of the answer. (If not more importance to the language they use than the content of the answer itself).

Item18:

-Do you respond to your teachers' questions adequately and correctly?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item19:

-If no, say why?

It is quite obvious now that the success of teaching lies in the good performance of the teacher, which is inevitably accompanied with a positive response from the part of the learners to their teacher's requirements. Thus the crucial question that is now being asked is: what are both of the teacher and the learner supposed to do to the fulfilment of the teaching process, hence the success of learning?

Answering this question will pave the way to a best analysis of Items 18 and 19 which approximately deal with the same issue.

First of all, we have to emphasize on two fundamental dimensions: the characteristics of a good teacher and the role of the teacher himself. There was a great deal of speculations about the teacher's characteristics to the extent that several studies about what "makes" a good teacher were directed for the sake of selecting the best characteristics a good teacher should possess. Williams and Burden (1997) reported that S.Erickson (1984) stated in his book "The Essence of Good Teaching" that "an outstanding teacher should be an inspiring instructor who is concerned about students, an active scholar who is respected by Discipline peers and an efficient organized professional who is accessible to students and colleagues"

This statement outlines the three most important characteristics a teacher should possess to succeed in his teaching process.: an inspiring instructor, an

active scholar and an efficient organized professional.

An other equally important study about the same subject was the one held by Rosenshine(1971) and Rosenshine and First (1973). Williams and Burden reported that these psychologists tried to measure some of the teacher's characteristics due to which they are able to judge the efficacy of the teacher. Williams and Burden argue that this procedure is generally referred to as process-product. Subsequently, the former psychologists identified nine key factors they believe to be the basis of a successful teaching process. These are:

- Clarity of presentation
- Teacher enthusiasm
- Variety of activities during lessons
- Achievement- oriented behavior in classroom
- Opportunity to learn. Criterion material
- Acknowledgement and stimulation of students ideas
- (Lack of) criticism
- Use of structuring comments at the beginning and during lessons
- Guiding the student answers.

Williams and Burden went further in their research and made a comparison between the above findings with the results of another study aiming to identify the characteristics of a good teacher. This study was performed by two psychologists: Brown and McIntyre. These latter resorted to use a study of

opinions of 75 children (12 to 13 years old) belonging to a school of the UK about what makes a good teacher. The results provided us with 10 categories describing good teaching:

- Creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom
- Retaining control in the classroom
- Presenting work in an interesting and motivating way
- providing conditions so pupils understand the work
- Making clear what pupils are to do and achieve
- Judging what can be expected from pupils
- Helping pupils with difficulties
- Encouraging pupils to raise their expectations of themselves

If we try to consider the above instructions, we will inevitably notice that they are classified into two categories. The first category has as its major goal preparing the subject psychologically to learn . For example, the fact of creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom will help the learner to feel at ease and comfortable during the process of learning. Subsequently, he would get rid of the archaic idea he/she has about learning in general. This implies that he/she would feel more confident and secure to the extent of trusting his teacher. In other words, giving more attention to the teacher and respond, in most of the time, successfully to the different proposed recommendations.(which is the aim of item 18 and 19).

Also, presenting work in, an interesting and motivating way, helping

learners with difficulties, and choosing the right teaching conditions are also instructions of psychological significance, the purpose of which is to pave the way to a good and successful teaching/learning processes.

The second category, however, is basically related to the teacher's role. A good illustration of that is: making clear what pupils are to do and achieve. This means that the teacher must set an objective (what is expected from the learner to do) and observe whether or not the objective is achieved at the end of the session or semester.

An other equally important role of the teacher, is to retain control in the classroom through intensive, yet not boring activities, and also by dominating the classroom intellectually. In other word, showing that he has enough Knowledge about what he is teaching.

All in all, we may say that the teaching/learning process is relatively based on two major key elements:

- 1-The teacher due to whom knowledge is transmitted to the learner
- 2-The learner, who receives this knowledge, interprets it correctly to respond successfully to his/her teacher's instructions.

NB:

Having said that the teaching /learning process is primarily related to the teacher and learner does not mean that other variables like, the learning context , the material used to teach ets...is excluded or of lower relevance.

Hence, when considering item 18 and 19, we may understand that the intention is to see whether or not all the already stated procedures and the different characteristics of a good teacher are found and respected in the context in which this questionnaire is being conducted.

2nd year students in the department of English at Biskra University assured that in most of the time they do respond correctly to their teacher's recommendations. They asserted that positive interaction exists between them and their teachers and that what the teacher intends to transmit is received and understood by them.

Yet, they argued, and as we have explained in item 17, their difficulty is not related to the information itself but rather to the way they convey this information. The students also added that this situation may be caused because of the environment in which the process of learning is being held or even to the content of the courses, which seems to be boring for some of the students. Yet, we keep holding that the nature of the teacher's personality is of relevant importance in motivating the students to learn or vice versa.

Item20

-When you speak, you probably commit mistakes. Does this fact prevent you from using the language freely in the classroom?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item 21:

-Why?

The psychological factor we intend to sort out from the students' answers to this question is inhibition. We will also try to find the source of the learner's inhibition and show its impact on the development or regression of the subject's oral proficiency.

We believe that the fact of speaking the language wrongly makes the student not sure of his/her performance and even he/she starts doubting his/her own capacities in acquiring the target language. Hence, this situation will psychologically block the learner. We refer to this state as a state of inhibition. This means that the subject is innately disallowed from using and speaking the language in the classroom. This state will create a kind of resentment and annoyance from the part of the students and psychologically prevents them from using the language freely with no debase or discredit, especially at this critical age where 2nd year students are believed to be relatively still adolescents. Their personality is not totally shaped and they have not yet a complete and dialectical conception of the world.

65 student out of the whole population upon whom this questionnaire was held pretended that even if they find difficulties in speaking the English language, they keep using it freely with no shame. They argued that, once in the classroom, they are learning a language which is not theirs. That is why, it is quite normal and logical that they commit mistakes. Also, still according

to them, they added that their learning context (the classroom) is the only place where they can practise English freely. So, if they stop using the language in the classroom because of something, which they qualify to be ‘insignificant’, they would never acquire the language and speak it fluently.

The remaining population (4 of which abstained from giving any further explanation, though they affirmend that the fact of speaking the language wrongly prevents them from using the language in the classroom.), agreed with us that because of committing mistakes while speaking, they resorted to stop using the language in front of their classmates and teachers. We believe that the students generrally take this resolution to protect their ego from being a center of amusement and diversion to the members of their surrounding environment.

A very interesting illustration, which comes to support what we have said before about the same issue, is the answer provided by a 21st guy, and which is as follows:

“When I don’t know how to speak, I can’t speak”

This statement does not mean that the student does not know how to speak because he does not master the different rules governing the English laguage. On the contrary, 2en year students’ grmmar exams, in the department of English at biskra University, prove that the majority of them master these rules successfully. Subsequently, the problem lies in the psychological status of

learner himself, who ones speaking, he/she takes into consideration every little detail related to the external environment. This will provoke stress and an innate ongrowing tention on the subject's psyche. The result would be uncertainty about the individual's own capacities in producing correct utterances in the target language. He/she would feel as if the language, with all its aspects and rules, deserting him/her. We believe this situation, which we qualify to be a psychological inhibition, to be among those salient factors behind the learner's failure in developing his/her oral proficiency.

Item22:

-Does the others' (teachers or your classmates) judgement and regard influence your oral performance?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item23:

-If yes, why?

Throughout this question, we aim at demonstrating the impact the learner's environment members may have on the insividual's psyche.

Obviously, the learner's environment members, who are believed to play a quite significant role in his /her acquisition process, are the teacher and the classmates.

When the learner uses the language in the classroom, he/she undergoes

both of the teacher and classmates regard and influence. To avoid any disfavorable comment or elucidation to his/her own performance, the subject tries his/her best to adequately speak the language in front of these people. This considerable mental endeavour has a great impact on the learner's oral performance. His/her objective in this situation is not to learn how to speak the language correctly and fluently, as it is expected from foreign language learner. It is rather to try to please his/her teacher and classmate through perfecting the way he/she uses the language. A task which is very difficult to achieve especially under such a pressure.

The majority of 2nd year students in the department of English at Biskra University shares with us this resolution. They believe that the constant presence of the teacher and other learners in the classroom agitate and confuse them. The majority of them also tend to provide a good appreciation about their mental capacities and performance, especially in front of their teacher. The fear to be disgraced in front of him would be as psychological burden that discomposes the learner to the extent that it prevents the occurrence of effective and spontaneous learning.

Let's consider the following answer provided by an 18 years old female student:

“When I speak in front of my teacher I feel disturbed and cannot concentrate on my language.....Sometimes I commit silly and meaningless mistakes”

The above statement shows the extent to which the presence of the teacher may be weighty to some of the students who, by bearing this situation, suffer from a terrible psychological torment.

Item24

- which domain you think you best master

a- Writing

b- Speaking

Item25

-Why?

This question aims at making a clear comparison between which domain the learners best master: speaking or writing the English language.

To our great surprise, 77 students out of the whole population asserted that they master speaking better than writing. They based their answer on the premise that writing requires a good style and a careful use of punctuation and capitalization, which they often forget or misuse. Also, there is the spelling and grammatical mistakes which are their biggest problem. Too many students suffer from committing these kind of mistakes and assured that teachers are intolerable with them when evaluating, especially when it comes to these mistakes in particular. Nevertheless, when speaking, they do not need to punctuate and capitalize whenever necessary, especially that a simple pose in speech will mark these functions. Concerning their style, they believe that a good intonation

with other different kinds of speech accompaniments will effectively stand for the already stated functions.

7 students, however, assured that they do not master both of the language aspects: writing and speaking. They believe that the fact of not mastering one aspect inevitably engenders the misuse of the other. This is a quite logical equation, if we keep believing that both aspects are complementary.

The remaining population (23 students) assured that they master the written aspect of the language better than the oral one. As a proof to their answer, they referred to their exam results they obtained during their 1st year. In the written modules, the 23 students obtained quite satisfactory marks. Yet, in the oral modules, the results were catastrophic. This third category of students argued that their success in writing is due to the time they take when formulating correct and adequate sentences before providing the last draft. Unlike speech, which generally happens successively and spontaneously, writing is easier because of the time students take when thinking about the adequate and reliable reply.

In fact, to this question, we have three distinct points of views, which are quite logical and reasonable. We can not deny the fact that both aspects of the language (oral and written) are complementary. Yet, this does not imply that misusing one of them engenders the misuse of the remaining aspect. For, we have some students, whose nature is extrovert. This state of being will push

them to master the oral aspect of the language better than the written one. On the other hand, introverted students generally resort to express their ideas through writing, especially that speaking the language in front of their teacher and classmates will psychologically blockade them.

Item26:

-Do you feel afraid when you mispronounce words in English?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item27:

-If yes, explain.

Item28:

- Does this encourage or discourage you?

Item29:

-Explain?

We are still debating the impact of the learner's psychological status on the process of learning English as a foreign language in general and developing the learner's oral proficiency in particular. Throughout these four questions, we intend to demonstrate the reaction of the learners when producing inadequate and wrong speech. In fact, a beginner often commits mistakes when speaking, and this inevitably engenders some psychological and innate reactions, which are invisible to the teacher, but which affects the

learner's acquisition process negatively.

The students answers were various and diversified. However, the majority of them agreed that they do not feel afraid when they mispronounce words in English, in a context where all the students committ approximately the same mistakes and errors.

For item 27, this same majority assured that the fact of mispronouncing words in English discourage them and that through time, they get accustomed with this situation. The result would be that they loose hope in acquiring an adequate oral aspect of the English language. Hence, their objective would become concentrating on the written modules to obtain good marks in order to succeed in the final exam, with a total neglect to speech. Some other students belonging to this same category admitted that the English speech is very difficult and that they started worrying how would they cope with such a situation in the future when they would become teachers.

Here, it is easy to notice that the majority of the students are unconsciously prepared to accept their failure in developing their oral proficiency. The fact of admitting that the English speech is very difficult to be acquired and starting from their 2nd year asking such crucial questions about how would they cope with such a situation as future teachers of English, demonstrates that these subjects have the conviction to never acquire English, hence never developing their oral proficiencies.

A minority of students however answered that, in fact, when they mispronounce words in English, an atmosphere of uneasiness and discomfort is created, which soon would be developed into a terrible obsession and anxiety about their own capacities. This minority also asserted that they really want to develop a good English speech, yet when they are confronted with situations in which they find themselves unable to produce correct utterances in the target language, they start doubting their own capacities in speaking English fluently. They even went further and admitted that with this rhythm, they would never be ready to use the language adequately and spontaneously as they are supposed to do by the end of their studies, i.e., by the end of their 4th year.

A 19 years old girl explained that when she pronounces some words and utterances wrongly in English, she gets angry and feels that she reaps no benefit from the phonetics courses. And when asked about whether or not the fact of mispronouncing words in English discourages her or will push her to take a challenge to use the language once again till she would commit no further mistake, the young girl added that:

“This discourages me and makes me anxious”

This critical situation, which is generated from the simple fact of misusing the language, can be generalized to the whole population of 2nd year students. For, through a way or another, they suffer from the same psychological factor, which is a mixture of anxiety leading to a psychological inhibition. This state is

believed to have a great psychological impact on the learners' oral performance development.

Item30:

-In real life situations, do you rely on yourself or on the others (parents or friends) to perform specific tasks?

a)- Yes

b)-No

Item31:

-If no, say why?

Field dependency and field independency are two psychological characteristics which are of significant relevance in the process of learning English as a foreign language and developing the learner's oral proficiency in particular. That's why, and on the light of the 30th and 31st questions, we will try to demonstrate the extent to which this hypothesis may be true.

In fact, what we were expecting, was proved throughout the answers of the students. 98 students out of 107 ticked "no", i.e; they are self dependent persons. They assured that in real life situations, they do not rely upon themselves to perform specific tasks especially females. (The remaining students who ticked "yes" are, in majority, males). They added that their parents facilitate things for them and are available whenever they needed them.

What is remarked is that, once this hypothesis is generalized into a more

academic context, the majority of learners are dependent subjects. This fact has a negative influence on the process of learning itself. For instance, students who do not rely upon themselves are in most of the time characterized of being introvert and do not enterprize to use the language in the classroom without the assistance and encouragements of people belonging to the learning environment (teachers and friends for examples). This fact will inevitably influence the acquisition process, for the best way to acquire the language adequately and rapidly, is through a permanent use of the language.

On the other hand, field independent subjects are generally characterized of being extroverted and more enterprising. They use the language freely in front of their teacher and classmates with no fear even if they commit mistakes. This state of self confidency in ones capacities has positive reflections on the subject's learning process and his/her oral proficiency developments more particularly.

Item32

-Succeeding in your studies is the reason for your:

- a)-motivation
- b)-anxiety
- c) - None of the above

Item33

-Justify your answer.

As it may suggest, this question intends to highlight the source and the reason for the learner's success. In other words, does the fact of succeeding in his/her learning process motivates him/her to learn more or is success itself represents a source of anxiousness and doubt about the subject's own abilities to achieve the targeted objective (succeeding in learning in general)?

In fact, answers to this question were of two kinds. The first category

(64 students) ticked that their success in learning is the reason for their motivation. They assured that the fact of obtaining good marks, for instance, in the first semester, encourages them to learn more to keep this good level or ameliorate it. Yet, in case it is the opposite, the subjects are discouraged and lose confidence in their own intellectual capacities. Thus the result would be a dramatic deterioration in the second term.

The second category, however, asserted that, for them, success is the reason for their anxiousness. They believe that, they are learning to succeed and not learning for the sake of pleasure and enjoyment. We believe that this situation engenders a state of anxiety. Some subjects learn to succeed just in order to please their parents or because they are obliged to learn to succeed in creating a decent place for them in society. Because of this kind of objectives, learners often feel anxious, stressed and under pressure. The fear of failure will be an obsession. This fact will create difficulties in the acquisition process, thus failing in developing the oral performance.

If the subject's objective would be learning for pleasure, things will

change and he/she will endeavour himself/herself to do his/her best to succeed.

In this case, success evokes the learner's motivation and will inevitably succeed in his/her learning process even if he /she sometimes fails.

Item34:

-You consider success in your studies as

a) - a pleasant objective

b)-A burden you are obliged to end up with as soon as possible

Item35:

-Are you indifferent to both cases?

a)-Yes

b)-No

Item 36:

-Why?

These three questions aim at identifying the objective of the student from his/her learning process. In other words, explaining how does the student conceive success in learning English as a foreign language for his/her University studies. In fact, we have provided three possibilities and now will try to analyse the results according to the population's choice and answers.

To our great surprise the majority of the population (76 students) pretended that they consider success in their studies as a pleasant objective. They argued that learning English as a foreign language consists a pleasant and enjoyable task which they perform voluntarily. They added that the way

of speaking English also fascinates them and that achieving this objective consists a source of motivation to succeed in at least, mastering the oral aspect of the language.

25 of the remaining population asserted that the fact of learning English as a foreign language consists a burden which they wish to get rid of as soon as possible, they declared that the only goal of their learning process is obtaining a qualification, the use of which will allow them to work and assure their independency. As for learning, they believe that they do not see any necessity of knowing all the syllabus of the different modules (which they consider very long, complex and especially foreign). Their main objective is to cope and succeed in getting good marks the day of the exam to succeed in passing to the superior level.

The last minor category, however, asserted that they are totally indifferent to both cases; they do not really care about the outcome their success or failure may have on their learning process. For, they do not see any benefit or interest in developing their language especially that they do not intend to use it in the future. (Probably this last minority do not plan to become teachers). They also added, that their only claim is to instruct themselves and be included in the intellectual category which has undergone university studies.

Item37:

-What would you like to suggest as far as this issue is concerned?

Throughout this last question, we intended to know the general conception the learner has about the way of developing his/her own oral proficiency. In addition to that, we hoped that the student will provide some comments about the way he/she is taught the target language and to illustrate the different modifications he/she wants to happen in the teaching learning processes. In fact what was expected was found throughout the learners' answers. The majority of them agreed that the context in which they are taught the English language does not contribute positively in the development of their oral proficiency. In addition to that, they related their bad performance to the lack of the necessary material that plays a vital role in facilitating the process of acquiring the target language. Nevertheless, what attracted us, when analysing the results of this question is the students' development of the notion of errors. Some of them believe that they do not learn from their errors. A good illustration of that is what a 22 years old young man provided:

“I do not speak English fluently because I am still repeating the same errors I committed in the 1st year.”

Here, should interfere the teacher's role to treat and cure the learner's errors as reported by Alright and Baily(1991). The teacher must first know the nature of the error and then try to relate it to its source. By so doing, the learner would become more aware of the different kinds of errors he/she generally committs, and consequently try to avoid them in the future.

In addition to the already stated observations and comments proposed by the learners, these latter focused more on the teacher's psychological help and assistance. The majority of them wish more comprehension from the part of their educators. They added that, the fact of committing mistakes when speaking is not done willingly and does not need the teacher's anger and scorn, because this reaction will inhibit them from using the language freely in the classroom. Instead, they proposed that a discussion about these mistakes and how to avoid them is welcome. Furthermore, the learners mentioned the necessity of mutual respect and complicity as a significant factor that will reinforce the relationship between the teacher and his subjects; hence these latter are going to develop trust and confidence in their own intellectual capacities. This will engender a voluntary and permanent use and practise of the language, which is considered to be the best way to develop someone's oral proficiency.

APPENDIX
*QUESTIONNAIRE FOR
LEARNERS*

**UNIVERSITY M.KHEIDHAR. BISKRA
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student,

This questionnaire identifies some of the psychological factors leading to failure in learning English as a foreign language in general, and developing your oral proficiency (speaking) in particular. We believe that your answers will allow us to gather the necessary information and statistics needed for the study. We assure you that the confidentiality of the questionnaire would be kept, and that the contained information will be used only by the author herself.

-General information:

.Age:

. Male , Female

.The branch followed in the high school:

scientific ; literary ; others(specify).....

1-Your choice of learning English for your University studies was:

a)- Yours

b)-Imposed

2-If yes, give the reasons.

.....

3- Do you think that your English performance has improved during this

first year?

a)- Yes

b)-No

4-If no, say why?

.....

.....

.....

5-How often you are given the opportunity to speak English in the classroom?

a)-Always

b)-rarely

c)-never

6- In what modules?

.....

.....

7-Do you feel at ease and comfortable when speaking in front of your teachers and friends?

a)-Yes

b)-No

8-Do you still feel at ease and comfortable when speaking in front of your teacher and friends even when you make mistakes?

a)-Yes

b)-No

9-Explain.

.....
.....
.....

10-Which course you think helps you to develop your oral English?

a- Phonetics

b- Oral expression

c- Others ,specify.....

11-To what extent you think that the atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed and enjoyable?

.....
.....
.....

12- Do you believe that the material presented during these lectures is interesting and motivating?

a)-Yes

b)-No

13-If no, justify.

.....
.....

14-What do your teachers do to encourage you to raise your self esteem and

confidence about your own capacities?

.....

.....

.....

.....

15- Have you ever developed personal, mature relationships with your teachers/classmates?

a)-Yes

b)-No

16-If yes, how did they start?

.....

.....

.....

17-do you prefer studying

a-in groups

b- individually

18-Do you respond to your teachers' questions adequately and correctly?

a)-Yes

b)-No

19-If no, say why?

.....

.....
.....

20-When you speak , you probably commit mistakes. Does this fact prevent you from using the language freely in the classroom?

a)-Yes

b)-No

21-Why?

.....
.....
.....

22-Does the others' (teachers or your classmates) judgement and regard influence your oral performance?

a)-Yes

b)-No

23-If yes, why?

.....
.....
.....

24- which domain you think you best master

a- Writing

b- Speaking

25-Why?

.....
.....
.....

26-Do you feel afraid when you mispronounce words in English?

a)-Yes

b)-No

27-If yes, explain.

.....
.....
.....

28- Does this encourage or discourage you?

.....
.....

29-Explain?

.....
.....
.....
.....

30-In real life situations, do you rely on yourself or on the others (parents or friends) to perform specific tasks?

a)- Yes

b)-No

31-If no, say why?

.....

.....

.....

32-Succeeding in your studies is the reason for your :

a)-motivation

b)-anxiety

c)- None of the above

33-Justify your answer.

.....

.....

.....

34-You consider success in your studies as

a)- a pleasant objective

b)-A burden you are obliged to end up with as soon as possible

35-Are you indifferent to both cases?

a)-Yes

b)-No

36-Why?

.....
.....

37-What would you like to suggest as far as this issue is concerned?

.....
.....
.....

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Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, we could confirm our already stated hypothesis about the significant influence the psychological status of the learner might have on hampering/developing the subject's oral proficiency. Thus, the research study reported in the previous chapters contributed, through a way or another, to explain the relationship existing between the learner, language acquisition/learning and the subject's psyche. An equation which has been settled through a literature overview about the same subject, which in its turn was evidenced throughout the questionnaire answers' analysis.

Subsequently, we came to the assumption that the acquisition/learning process of any language, English in particular, is closely related to the psychological condition of the subject. We even went further and identified some of those psychological factors which we judged to be defective to the learning process in general and developing the learner's oral proficiency in particular.

In chapter 04, these salient psychological factors(motivation, anxiety, inhibition, self dependency, self independency, introversion, extroversion, empathy, apathy, aversion..... among others) have been dealt with in a more detailed way; each highlights the role it plays in the targeted acquisition process. However satisfactory the results are, we keep believing that other factors of different sources (social, ethnic....) are also of significant relevance to the process of learning. We even judge them to be complementary. For, a student

who is psychologically prepared to learn a foreign language is inevitably going to face difficulties to acquire/learn a language , about which, he/she ignores almost everything, especially concerning the ethnic standars and the different social norms that govern that same language.

Such speculations led to the emergence of more serious questions about the same process like: How could a learner be psychologically prepared to learn a language the society and culture of which is totally foreign and unknown to him/her?!

As far as educational psychology is concerned, both of the ambiguity and relevane of this question are recognized. For it is quite obvious that the foreign language learner would never feel at ease and comfortable to confront the outlandish values, customs, and standards that govern the target languagehe/she is acquiring/learning.

Hence , to find an adequate and reliable solution, we should resort to a compromise. This latter stipulates that to achieve an effective acquisition process, we have to prepare the subject psychologically to do such an enterprise through motivating and encouraging him/her especially from the part of the educator, and obviously through an intensive use of language. In addition to that the theacher should help his subjects to get rid of those psychological obstacles that restrain the learning process. At the same time, we have to provide the learners with the needed linguistic baggage and information concerning the

cultural and social norms and values related to that language. This would be willingly done for the sake of teaching and preparing the foreign language learner to what is awaiting him/her, and also to guide them towards the best way to use the target language adequately and appropriately according to the situation and context.

Perhaps, this is the expected conclusion we should reach at the end of this study. Preparing the learners psychologically to learn the foreign language and providing them with the different social and cultural requisites is the educator's chief objective. Yet, it is still very far away from achieving an ideal technique/method to teach the target language successfully.