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Investigating the Role of Peer Work Interaction in Developing Students' Oral Proficiency.

The Case of Second Year LMD Students at the English Language Division in Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

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

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis which was terminated by the assistance of god to:

My dearest and nearest father who supported me perpetually.

My life and my candle that the world ever knows, my mother.

My best uncle Abdelrachid and my sweetheart cousin Samira.

My lovely sisters: Fatiha, Saliha.

My precious brothers: Mustafa, Saededdin.

My fiancé.

My grandfather Zidelkheir Mustafa with gratitude and love.

My best friends: Sarah, Ahlem, Warda,Yassmin, Manel, and Hayat .

To everyone dear and near.

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Abstract

This work aims at exploring the role of peer work interaction in enhancing students' oral proficiency. The problem highlighted is that most EFL classes witness the assumption that the instruction is often seen to be in one direction; that is teachers spend most of their time speaking while the students listen without talking and interacting. This is a harmful problem if our teachers keep teaching with that method of teaching. It is hypothesized that if students work in groups, their communicative abilities would develop. The aim of this investigation is to enable EFL learners to practice and reach the proficiency of the language. It also provides students with some techniques and communicative abilities in order to improve their speaking and listening skill. In this case, teachers would seek the best methods and the useful techniques to teach them how to interact with each other using communication to reach high language proficiency. And since the aim of second language learners is to communicate in a foreign language they should understand that speaking and listening skills are the main skills to develop their communicative abilities. Through two questionnaires distributed to second year students and teachers at the department of English, university of Biskra, we intend to see their opinions about working in groups and to which degree they like to know more about the language. The results of the study indicate that most teachers argue that peer work interaction is an effective technique that provides students with much more opportunities to improve their communicative abilities. On the other hand, the results illustrate that most of the learners prefer to work cooperatively to reach the proficiency of the language.

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English Foreign Language

IQ: Intelligence Quotient

L1: first Language Learning

L2: Second language Learning

MRI: Magnetic Resonance Imaging

N: Number

QU: Question

%: Percent

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General Introduction

Teaching foreign languages is a mutual process that entails active participants (teachers and learners). Teachers would seek a small class size in which their students are homogenous in terms of language proficiency. However, teachers find themselves dealing with a huge number of students exhibiting different cognitive, social, and cultural abilities. Therefore, peer interaction can lead to a more dynamic classroom that promotes more learning; and hence, develops students' oral production. That is why, most of teachers and educationalists in the field of educational psychology aim at determining the most suitable methods and techniques that seek to achieve students' high oral language proficiency. However, implementing peer interaction in EFL classes is not like waving a magic wand: just say a few words, and whoosh! Everything is going great. In fact, teachers in doing so, have many decisions to make. For this reason, this humble investigation is an attempt to answer questions that may arise about the role of peer interaction in enhancing students' oral proficiency.

1. Statement of the Problem

Among the many objectives that are often targeted by foreign language practitioners is to enable EFL learners to express themselves fluently and accurately. Such a task can be usually attained through the process of interaction between the teacher and the students and between the students themselves. Nevertheless, in the current daily practices, a negative phenomenon is diagnosed. Most EFL classes witness the assumption that the instruction is often seen to be in one direction; that is, teachers spend most of their time speaking whereas the students listen without talking and interacting. Commonly, they are considered as passive spoon-fed participants. Consequently, learning techniques such as group work, pair work, and also individual work are not dealt with. More than this, this way of conducting instruction may create an unreleased atmosphere to learning. Students feel anxious and worried to take part in

the lessons. Again, this state of fact makes the task of learning/ teaching very complicated for both teachers and students.

2. Aim of the Study

The general purpose of this research is to sensitize the foreign language teachers to the crucial need to consider the role of peer work as an efficient technique that can help both teachers and students to interact with one another with the desire to promote the students' proficiency. Moreover, this general purpose can be categorized into some specific aims. These can be interpreted as follows:

- To encourage students to participate in the classroom to enhance their oral production skill.
- To give students better opportunities and more time to express themselves in the target language as it is used in a real context.
- To facilitate the teacher management of the classroom for him/her to focus on groups efforts and assess their achievement rather than to work with each individual separated.
- To enhance students' motivation and develop their sense of challenge and competition.

3. Research Questions

- How do teachers of oral expression manage their large classes?
- Which technique of classroom management is more suitable for students to develop their oral proficiency?
- Is peer interaction effective to enhance students' motivation to produce orally?
- What is the role of the teacher in organizing small groups and assessing their achievement in learning the foreign language and using it communicatively?

4. Hypothesis

We hypothesize that if the students work in small groups, their oral language production proficiency would develop.

5. Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is the descriptive method. We believe that it is the most appropriate for our research and the context where it takes part. Certainly, the choice of this method can be justified by the fact that this research methodology can provide us with consistent and comprehensive information and valid result. The data collection tool that will be used is the questionnaire. One questionnaire will be submitted to teachers, and another one to students. To confirm the data collected by this method, we have found it appropriate to use another data gathering tool: classroom observation. Hopefully, the use of these data collection tools can be of great usefulness for our investigation.

The subject of our study is second year LMD students at the English Division at Mohamed Kheider University. They are 300 students. Second year students are divided into two sub-sections, the first section includes five groups, and the second one includes seven groups. The fact that it is difficult to deal with this huge number of students, we have opted for a sample that consists of 70 students. In addition to the students' sample, we are interested in teachers of second year; more precisely, teachers of oral expression at the same division because they are supposed to have more direct contact with students. In addition to that, they are knowledgeable about the different motivational strategies that should be used in any given context, implementing the cooperative learning strategies and techniques such as pair work and group work to enhance their learners' language production. Five teachers will be asked to answer the questionnaire in order to collect information about their way of teaching oral

expression and their awareness about the effect of peer work interaction. Their experience and viewpoints in the domain will be very beneficial to confirm or reject our hypothesis.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is split into three chapters. In **the first Chapter**, we attempt to form a comprehensive definition of peer interaction and its nature. Then, we are going to shed light on small grouping in class as a technique used by teachers to execute their oral communicative activities and to detect students' anomalies or discrepancies that they may encounter with the small groups. In **The second chapter**, we try to provide a brief description of the speaking and the listening skills; their definition, nature, activities, etc. This chapter also examines the way in which teachers come to assess and evaluate their students' oral production.

In **the third Chapter,** we will expound the research methodology. It introduces the research method and tools that are used, the participants of the study (both teachers and students). It will treat a broad outline of the data analysis description. Most importantly, it contains the data analysis and the results. By the end, the results of the study will be translated into some practical suggestions for second year teachers of oral expression and teachers of other modules for the sake of helping and demonstrating the ways for students to develop their peer work interaction inside the classroom in order to develop their oral productive skill.

Chapter One: Peer Work Interaction

Chapter One: Peer Work Interaction

Introduction

The process of language teaching involves both knowledge and use of language. Communication in the classroom requires participants to understand what is wanted to tell them, or what the message is about. The main interest and the first priority of learners are to attain the use of the language. In this chapter we are going to investigate the role of peer interaction in enhancing students' communicative abilities and to show how interaction and its types facilitate the task of acquiring the language. Classifying learners into groups taking into account their gender and showing the students' attitude of towards the group is the best technique that serves to achieve high oral production. We are going to deal with the importance of the groups in the EFL classes and demonstrate the problems that occur within small groups and how the teacher can treat them.

1. Interaction in the Classroom

Interaction is an important factor in learning and it is the basic element of communication where the teacher and the learner exchange ideas through producing and receiving comprehensible input. While interacting, students do not only send and receive messages, but they also negotiate meaning while understanding and interpreting them. In this sense, Choudron (1988, p.107) states: "the term interaction used alone will refer henceforth to the narrower sense of the negotiation of meaning in learner-learner or teacher-learner communicative exchanges".

Comprehensible input, which means facilitating comprehension, involves a kind of interactional changes integrated with the goal of avoiding communication breakdowns and repairing discourse when necessary. Negotiation of meaning concerns both learners and their

participants (peers) who may ask for clarification. When learners express lack of comprehension, they may receive modified input which is acceptable to their level of comprehension. According to Mackey (2007, p.12) "interaction creates opportunities for learning through focusing on input and output through negotiation for meaning".

According to Brown (2001, p.165) in his turn, defines as "collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people resulting in reciprocal of each other".

Interaction between learners is an important factor; it allows them to practise the language, exchange ideas, produce and receive knowledge, negotiate the meaning and cooperate with each other to reach their goals and accomplish their tasks.

2. Types of Interaction

2.1 Learner-learner Interaction

Remaining silent on the part of the learner may affect the process of learning a second language. Classroom is the only place where the learners are exposed to the language supplying them with activities that allow them to interact with each other. It is a good idea to create interaction among learners working on small groups through speaking tasks. Indeed, Lynch (1996) states

> The idea of group work (including pair work) is not new of course. The usual reasons given for using it that are simultaneous group work maximizes each learner's opportunity to speak and that practicing in small groups work the psychological burden of public performance. (p. 110)

Choudron(1998) emphasizes on distinguishing between the forms of the participation and what sometimes referred to as negotiating behaviour in interaction. He explains that native speakers raise the development of learners' communicative ability when these later ask for

clarification, repetition, and demonstration of meaning. Ellis (1984) was one from the many researchers who focus on the importance of the interactive discourse between the teacher and the students, or the students themselves. That is to say, the teacher can create active students by selecting the topic which allow them to negotiate the meaning or providing them with native speakers in which the students learn how to listen, imitate their pronunciation, and ask for the clarification for the better understanding to the message they are communicating (Cited in Choudron, 1988.p.106)

Foreign language learners are motivated to communicate with each other when they have opportunity to do so. Therefore, classroom interaction offers opportunities to learners to practise the language in appropriate contexts. When learning a foreign language, it is important to know the linguistic rules of the language, but the most important thing is to know how to employ and produce those rules in correct forms in order to be pragmatically competent when obtaining meaning from classroom events in order to achieve success in communication (ibid).

2.2. Teacher-Learner Interaction

In this type of research, the teacher takes part in such interaction. The mutual communication between the teacher and the learners ensures the best opportunities for the learners to test their competences and to receive meaningful feedback. The way the teacher presents the task and the amount of the talk can be measured and plays a major role in the process of the interaction between the teacher and the learner. Feedback provides learners with the opportunities to learn and leads to more interaction. Interaction generally occurs according to the contest in which the teacher takes into consideration the purpose and the content of the course. (ibid)

According to Johnson (1995, p.109), the fruitful teacher-student interaction is that "in which the structure and the content of the interaction are mutually constructed by both the students and the teacher". The teacher, here, discusses with his/her students the content of the course, gives direction, correction, correct answers, and ask questions, from their part, the student will profit from their teachers new knowledge added to their background in terms of interaction and as Lynch (1966) reports:

> If we want to extend learners' competences in speaking we have to know when to release our control over classroom interaction so as to give them chance to practice freer talk This does not mean that the classroom has to undergo total revolution of that teachers abandon all control but we should include at least occasional activities which realign the communicative roles of teachers-learners" (p. 199).

While the teacher-learner is interacting, the students look for showing their speaking and listening skills. During learning and teaching, the teacher should provide learners with activities which develop their communicative abilities. That is why we should take into consideration the importance of this type of research.

The following figure which is done by Gass & Mackey (as cited in Mackey, 2007, p. 79) shows how interaction enhance language development when learners interact with each other, negotiate meaning, recasts and receive knowledge in the same time exchange the interactive feedback with highlighting the role of attention as well as noticing in the learning process
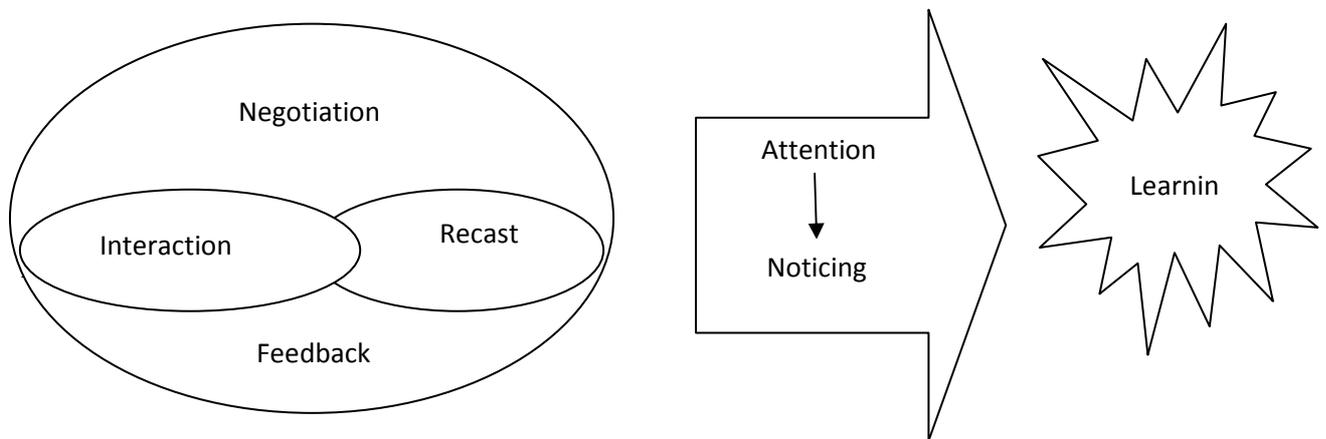
Diagram .1. Graphic representation of interaction

3. Student's Attitude towards Small Groups

Language learning is affected by attitude and motivation. According to Brown (2001, P.61) "Attitude is characterized by large proportion of emotional involvement such as feeling, self, relationships in community". Students' attitude towards learning establishes their ability and readiness to learn. Attitude is an essential element of second language learning and has great impact on the success of acquiring the target language. Longman English Dictionary (2010, p 38) defines attitude as "a way of feeling or thinking about someone, or something especially as this influences one's behaviour". Attitude, thus, refers to a set of believes, views, feelings that form our behaviour towards the culture of the target language.

3.1. The Changing of Behaviour

3.1.1. Individuals Can Modify a Group

The aim of educational process is not only teaching, but it is also an important factor in building and changing students' characters either directly or indirectly. As Paul and Rouhedge (1961) state "the learning process is much wider than this and includes changes attributable to maturing and to reactions to alterations in the physical environment" (p. 22)

Education is not related only to schools and universities, it exists whenever changes happening as results of individual impact on groups or changes resulting on the social exploit used by groups in their management of individuals. The change is possible on the adjustment of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes and it is started by the individuals, and may influence other members through face to face contact. They can attain their goals through any employed media, but it depends on the individuals' background on the whole group responses. Paul and Rouhedge (1962) say

> The exact nature of response depends not merely upon his original nature and endowment (though these have their importance). It is not mere sequel to his past experiences in general. It varies with his present intentions and wishes and also with his social relationships to the individual who is responsible for the attempt to educate (p. 22).

This entails that individuals outcome is not only a result of the environment they are surrounded by, but also the new experiences gained through education maintaining the desired goal.

3.1.2. Groups Can Modify Individuals

When students work together they will be able to reach their goals through collecting effort, existing abilities of the group members, and supportive help. They will learn how to help each other, respect others' opinion, and appreciate turn-taking: students perceive the sense of appreciating each other. Cooperative group learning maintains the feeling to a group or society and is loved by the members of the society (Johnson and Johnson, 1995, p. 140).

Success is more attained in a group; learning within a group is more achieved than the individual attempts. The group requires a dominant who imposes a suggestion and the acceptance by the other members. The individual who masters the conversation norms would

have powerful impact on realizing their intention. Paul and Rouhedge (1961) state that "it is not now a relationship between a dominant (or a would be dominant) individual who through prestige leadership or attractiveness succeed in raising 'his instruction' to the status of an accepted 'suggestion'". (p. 27)

Groups can modify the individuals through the treatment that they learn together changing their negative attitudes into positive. While discussing certain topics, they will learn to respect others' opinions, respect their turns, and create relationships that allow them to communicate meaningfully with the outsider society (ibid, p.28-9).

4. The Role of Gender in Peer Interaction

Gender in classroom interaction plays an increasingly important role. Group work can engage more students, but teachers must check the interaction between learners in those groups to ensure all students are participating and that one student is not dominating the group.

Effective discussion, negotiation for meaning, exchanging ideas, and getting new knowledge will be realized when learners (gender) are mixed. As Gass and Varonis (1986) state "when looking at the individual learner language production, studies have suggested that both males and females negotiations are in mixed gender pairings" (cited in Mackey2007, p.56). Males often strive as individuals to achieve and maintain dominance; they manage all the speech than their female peers. Gass and Varoniss argue "males dominate in both the amount of the talk and the performance of the task" (ibid).

The difference between female and male interaction in one group is described in the style of participation and behaviour; student discussion groups composed entirely of females tended to have turn taking style of participation, they are more sensitive to interpersonal dynamics in classroom and that their performance depends on feeling a positive relation to

their peers. Mackey (2007) explains: "this raises the possibility that female language learners might be more sensitive to the influence of gender than male learners" (p. 56).

Many researchers have conducted the role of gender in learner strategy. Politzer (1983, cited in Cohen & Marco, 2007, p.71) examined 90 American college students learning foreign language and found that female students used social interactional strategies more frequently than their male counterparts. Male and female in conversational behaviour are different. Females intend to take turn in sense of sensibility, they differ from their males counterparts in the way of participating and they often show solidarity, tension release, agreeing, and encouraging each other while males intend to attain dominance.

5. The Importance of Small Groups in EFL Classes

Grouping students into small groups can supply appropriate challenges and carry to meet the needs of individual students. As Lacky (2010, p.43) state "it can create a system in which amazing number of needs can be met". Students' membership in the group can be adjusted to reflect changes in their knowledge and skills. Putting students into groups permit teachers to facilitate learning and achieve interaction among them. Groups can connect students with activities such as oral performance, explaining what is not understood, finding solutions to certain problems, and realizing relationships between them. According to Turner (1937),

> Being a member of group does appear to alter an individual's behaviour so that is more consonant with that of the group as whole. This change is the result of social influence and is of particular relevance to education as children are, developmentally, susceptible to presume and, indeed, much of education is concerned with attempting to make norms comprehensible and thereby encourage adherence to them. (p. 147)

As Turner shows above, connecting individuals in one group would change their behaviours and encourage them to incorporate with the external world. He indicates that this change comes as result of the social influence and related more to the social influence. That is to say, when they communicate with each other, share ideas, and maintain the social relationships in terms of helping each other.

And as Rosenbaum (1980) states "setting up groups in the classroom sets in motion social processes that have both social and instructional effect" (cited in Rouhedge and Paul 1971 p. 277). Effective learning is achieved in groups. Students support each other to express their opinions, clarify their answers, exchange knowledge, and solve certain issues when they arise, motivating students during their learning activities, and participate in the discussion. According to Harmer (1983)

> Group work seems to be an extremely attractive idea for number of reasons. Just as in pair work, we can mention in the increase in the amount of student talking time and we can emphasize on the opportunities it gives students really to use language to communicate with each other" (p. 207).

Working in groups leads to the interaction in the classroom. The interaction between the learner and the teacher is an essential factor in conversational groups. The teacher designs the activities and creates good atmosphere in the classroom to give students opportunities to participate the language and show their understanding. Ur (1991, p.232) points out that "group work learners perform a learning task through small group interaction. It is from learner activation that is of particular value in the practice of oral fluency". It is clear that shaping groups to learn is a good idea to create and achieve good learning. Students need a teacher or a group that support them, accept their mistakes without hurting and criticising them, help and motivate them, understand their problems and interests, and react positively

with them through working teams. The use of small group work makes learners feel secure from criticism. As Lacky (2010, p.14) says "in order to learn people need to feel safe. To be safe they need a group or a teacher that supports them;"

If the students understand the task, they would perform well. A group is a necessary, active, and vivid place where the interaction takes place, where the adjustments of some learners' behaviours are permitted, and where learners would enjoy the communication and the discussion of the topic among themselves. Successful learning depends on the goals we want to achieve. According to Lacky (2010, p.16) "on a good day, participants can use your learning group to discover one of life's basic truths: we co-create the world we live in."

Forming groups in learning a second language is the key that raises the ability to acquire the language. A group is one of the basic techniques that connect between learners' different skills. Moreover, Learning in groups, according to many researchers, provides students with many opportunities to interact with each other, exchange ideas, produce comprehensible output and show their understanding. Shaping groups aims at achieving students' high oral language proficiency while communicating. According to McCafferty, et al., (2OO6, p. 30)

> groups are the core of most cooperative learning activities. Many questions arise about group formation. How often should cooperative learning be used? How many students should be in a group? How should group seating be arranged? How long should groups stay together.

The importance of groups is described in the increase of participation; forming groups encourage students to participate in the classroom to enhance their oral production skill, give students better opportunities to express themselves in the target language as it is used in the real context, and facilitate the teacher management of the classroom rather than to work with each individual separated. Ur (1981) states that

The first advantage of group work is of course the increased participation. If you have five or six groups then there will be five or six times the amount of talking. Class discussion, as has been pointed out, is very wasteful in terms of the ratio of teacher or students effort and time to actual language practice taking place: group discussion is relatively efficient. Moreover, this heightened participation is not limited to those who are shy of saying something in front of the whole class, or the teacher, often find it much easier to express themselves in front of a small group of their peers. (p. 7)

Groups enhance students' motivation and develop their sense of challenge and competition as well as it overcomes shyness and anxiety. Ur (1981, p.7) adds "the motivation of participants also improves when they work in small groups".

6. Groups Characteristics (Norms, Roles, and Status)

In order to understand group characteristics we need to understand ourselves and our behaviours in a given context. The way of dealing with people differs from person to another and this affect our students. For example, there are some students who bring to their classroom the language of the street. Participants differ from each other even if they are from the same environment. One of the basic characteristics of the group is that it forms 'Norm'. Norms have many understandings which are conventional among many researchers. Norms are those social prospects that lead to a certain behaviour or those formal and informal patterns, standards, measures, attitudes and believes which are shared between the members of the group that show them how they should behave in given situation. Turner (1977) explains

the concept 'norm' has many different interpretations but a simple way to conceptualize it is to think of it a similar to force field, that it marks out an area

of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and indicates to participants what is
consonant or disconsonant with the belief system of the group. (p. 131)

As Turner explained above, norm often acts as accepted or unaccepted (formal/informal). Participants who share the same accepted norm should be connected in the same group ensuring that the group is setting clear objectives of learning and holding the same norms such as, norm of "work", "performance", or "appearance". The pressure of some deviation is acceptable, but if one of the members deviate faraway, doesn't respect the norm, he/she will either change the group, leave it, or receive certain adjustment of the behaviour (informal norm) or leave the group (Turner, 1977, p. 132).

The procedure of incorporating participants to connect group norms is known as "conformity". The members of the group sharing the same patterns of behaviour or enjoying the same social and environmental stages are able to interact well. As a matter of fact, both groups learning objectives and encouraging interpersonal relations are achieved effectively. As Argyle (1969 cited in ibid) suggests: "shared patterns of behaviour are adopted by group members because this enables them to attain group goals and satisfy interpersonal need".

Other researchers hypothesized that deviation of some norms is important and accepted by the group when there is a common interest. Informal norms can be affected by other outsider patterns as the notion of culture or the prospects of the teacher. The notion of culture is associated with knowing which type of behaviour can be used and what kind of topic is allowed to be discussed. Here, participants decide to which extent it is acceptable to deviate norms. Furthermore, the members' norms are affected by the social interactional patterns that shape the desired standard. Arnold (1999) says

The advantage of well internalized norm is that when someone violates   them,
the group is likely to be able to cope with such deviation. This may happen

through a range of groups behaviours from showing active support for the teachers' effort to have the norms observed, to expressing indirectly disagreement with and dislike for the deviate members, and even to criticize them openly and putting them in social 'quarantine' (p. 161).

When the norms are clear enough to the learners, they become aware whenever one of the norms is violated by any learner and they react to this violation either by supporting or criticising the one who deviate the norm. As far as the teacher is concerned, we interfere directly by pointing out the violation or indirectly by showing opposition to the member concerned so that they are put a part (isolation) and their odd behaviour is noticed and controlled.

The second characteristic of the group is described in the term 'role'. It refers to the pattern which specifies the performance of each individual or a particular member within the group in a given context. As Tuner (1977, p. 133) states: "the term role refers to an expected pattern of reciprocal behaviour and within group different members will play different roles".

Roles are often found in our daily life. People incorporate with other people taking into consideration that the roles of each person can be duties as well as responsibilities. Roles in small groups determine the members' needs to express themselves and become more assertive. Turner (1977, p. 133) concludes that in small groups context" he the[individual] may be the one who initiates new activities, who facilitates the activities of others, who is an expert in the task or who acts as a critic or clown".

The issue that is observed in the group is that if one of the members guides him/ herself with a certain role, it will be difficult to modify his/her role either from responsibility to a duty or from duty to a responsibility because the cohesiveness of the group is standard on a certain measure of role relationship. Moreover, a problem with roles occurs "once a person

has been cast or has cast himself in a certain role, it may be difficult for him to change as the equilibrium of the group is based on a certain pattern of role relationships, and for one to change might upset the equilibrium that causing others to put pressure on him" (ibid). So, roles are the result of both the individual's own predisposition and others' expectations.

The third characteristic of the group is the status which belongs to the strangeness and the effectiveness of the members in the group. It describes the role of each participant and gives judgement about others' achievement. Turner (1977) argues: "closely related to the concept of role is that of status which refers to the power dimension in a group. It is purely the function of group membership that it only occurs when people evaluate each other" (p. 135)

In group work, status is the achievement of each member. It is classified as high and lower status. High status refers to the membership who usually acts in the group as facilitator of new activities, offers more new meaningful ideas, and gives suggestion and solution to any problem when rises. However, lower status represents those participants whose contribution is poor, who usually remain silent, or offer ideas not accepted in the context. Indeed, Turner (1977) explains

> A person is said to have high status if he is successful in initiating action or interaction within a group. The member with high status is the one whose ideas, overtime, are those which are acted upon by the group, not necessarily the individual who speaks most or who offers most ideas" (p. 135).

Learners' production skills would enhance if they work cooperatively. According to many researchers forming groups in learning provide the students with many opportunities to learn in terms of interaction. That is to say, they will be motivated to ask and answer question, respect others' opinion, and share knowledge. However, some students found themselves

uncomfortable when working cooperatively they believe that groups would reduce their individuals skills and hide their existence as good students.

7. Problems Encountered in Small Group Work

There are various problems associated with group work. If the teacher lets students without control, they fall back to their L1 when they need to produce in the L2. The organization into groups consumes more time and it is noisy and disruptive. There are some students who do not want to take part in the discussion either because of the lack of competence or for a psychological factor. These questions have to do to do with the teacher's implementation in the classroom and his/her relationship with learners not with the kind of the activity (Ur, 1981, p. 8).

Harmer (2001) presented many problems found in group work. For example; he mentions that when forming small groups "it is likely to be noisy" (p. 117). The Teacher feels that he/she cannot impose control on all groups; consequently, students feel their achievement about to disappear. Harmer adds: "Not all students enjoy it since they would prefer to be the focus of the teacher's attention rather than working with their peers" (p. 118). Some students prefer to work individually to attract their teacher attention and to express their understanding. Indeed, "Individuals may fall in to group roles that become fossilised so that some are passive whereas others may dominate" (ibid).

When working in groups, the students may change their roles if the teacher didn't select those who they are going to work; this may cause trouble. The students who used to be passive tend to be dominant and those who used to be active remain silent and will not take part in the interaction.

Students are different in levels and interests. It is a problem when the teacher addresses them to do the same task (Harmer, 1983, p. 208). Group size is one of the basic problems. There are some tasks which need to be incorporated with large students' number However, working in huge groups would affect its organization and would lead to its disintegration (ibid).

In addition, when forming groups, the teacher concentrates on one single group and excludes the other groups, and that will lead them to lose their willingness to do the task and play about. The teacher will give up his duties towards the classroom and give the responsibility of the group to the good student as leadership who would act as second teacher whose opinion is always right and his suggestions is often accepted.

In group work, while doing the activity, participants rely on each other. They will have poor contribution and this would break down their self-reliance. Students perceive that their teacher would help them better than their member mates and the fact that students are working together in groups bring some problems as they are cooperating because some students are annoyed from correcting others' member mates (Mackey & Tom, 1999, p. 26)

8. Teachers' Attitude towards Group Work Problems

Since teachers are worried about the use of the student's native language, they should motivate them and explain the reason of the activity to enhance their oral production (Harmer, 1983, p. 208). Also, the fact that the teacher concentrates on one single group is wrong. He/she should remain at the front of the class and organize feedback to see the successful dimension of cooperative learning (ibid).

When the teacher observes that the students are noisy and disruptive and they become bored, restless, he should recognize that those reactions are due to a lack of control and

management. To solve this problem, the teacher should either reduce the time when working in groups with changing the type of the activity, or stop it and move to something else. (ibid)

Teachers should follow a strategy when deciding to work with cooperative learning either to put each strong student with the weak ones, or to form groups that adhere all the strong and the weak separately, or to classify them according to their gender to achieve good learning and to enhance their communicative efficiency. (ibid)

The Teacher should give different tasks to perform because students have different levels and interests. The teacher should not prefer some students to others; he should deal with them equally and encourage them to enhance their level of proficiency. (Harmer, 2001, p.2)

When teachers form learning groups, they act as controllers of the whole class. They act as organizers when preparing various activities and making students work on them. They also work as assessors when giving the feedback to them and showing if they are getting good use of the English language (ibid, p.267).

The teacher should create good relationship with his/her students in order to leave space to the interaction to occur which makes the lesson more enjoyable and relaxing (ibid, p. 3). Moreover, the teacher should give feedback appropriately without offending and comparing them with their team mates. They should explain them that doing mistakes is one of the reasons that derive them towards language proficiency (ibid). If one of the student's attitudes towards the group is negative, one of the most teachers' duties is to change his behaviour smoothly and intelligently (ibid, p. 278).

Conclusion

Among the many causes that are often targeted by foreign language practitioners is to enable EFL learners to express themselves fluently and accurately. In the field of the second language acquisition, interaction has for long been considered crucial in language learning. It involves active participation of both teachers and learners in the process of the second language learning. In this chapter we have shown that teaching foreign languages is a process that needs to be taken seriously by teachers through following procedures that enable them to promote the efficiency of the language.

Chapter Two: Oral Proficiency

Chapter Two: Language Oral Proficiency

Introduction

Among the many causes that are often targeted by foreign language practitioners is to enable EFL learners to express themselves fluently and accurately. One of the basic roles of the teacher is to encourage students to communicate through oral language to enhance their proficiency. Hence, communication is based on two activities which are speaking and listening. In this chapter we are going to investigate the communicative abilities, their function in developing the communication, their importance, their difficulties, and the techniques used in teaching those specific skills in order to achieve high oral proficiency.

1. Oral Proficiency

In learning foreign language, most EFL learners share one main objective that is represented in the right use of the language and reach the proficiency. One of the main duties of the teacher is to enable EFL learners to attain the proficiency. Proficiency is the ability to use language effectively in order to maintain the communicative aims. It is related to two main skills which are speaking and listening. To be a good speaker requires being a good listener, that is to say; speaking is often related to reasons that mast be satisfied. We speak because we want to address messages, share ideas, express agreement or disagreement, and respond other people. These actions are often occurring after the listening process; Furthermore, speaking is considered as productive skill and listening is considered a receptive skill. In the coming types of the research, we will master the proficiency of the language through the previous oral communicative abilities.

1.1 Two Sides of Oral Proficiency

1.1.1 Applied Issues

Many studies have been conducted to show the nature of language proficiency and explain its main effect on the process of education. In the part of language teaching methodology, the great focus was and is still on the teaching of grammar. The implied notion of language proficiency has viewed the oral proficiency more than a question of grammar and lexis, but as the ability to use the language in its appropriate context and the limit of the individuals' oral target language abilities. According to Harley, Allen et al., (1990, p.8)

> The recent movement towards communicative language teaching has been associated with the broader view of language that includes not just its grammatical aspect, but the ability to use the language appropriately in different contexts and the ability to organize one's thought through language. That is to say, the recent emphasis on communication in language teaching is expressed in attempt to develop students' sociolinguistic and discourse competencies in addition to their grammatical competence. In short, the conception of what it means to be proficient in language has expanded significantly.

Harley et al., state that in very different context, it is clear that in the lingual programmes for minority students in the United States, another notion of the nature of language proficiency have played an important role in "policy" and "practice". The feature of these programmes has been described in the founding of "entry" and "exit" principles. Indeed, "students must be declared of limited proficiency in English to answer the programme and of sufficient proficiency English to follow regular all-English instruction in order to exit from the programme" (ibid).

One of the most contentious features of the "lingual education policy in the United States" has been establishing exactly what shape sufficient proficiency for the student to carry on academically "in regular English classroom." According to Harley et al (1990)

> The ability to function adequately in face to face situations and use English appropriately in conversational context; However, the evidence suggest that many children who have exited from the lingual into all English programmes continue to experience academic difficulties in English. (p. 8)

This increases the issue of how special characteristics of language fluency are connected to the ability to control language in the appropriate academic context.

The same issue increases in the part of "psychological assessment." When the other students face some academic problems, educationalists speculate whether the student has some learning disabilities or an insufficient clutch of English. Some students show that they are proficient in managing their language since they understand and speak English well, but in fact when they take IQ (intelligence quotient) and other psychological tests in English they appear weaker than performance abilities. Ortiz and Yates (1983) report that

> Hispanic minority students in Texas were over represented by 300 hundred per cent in the learning disability category. Once again, the problem is directly related to the way in which language proficiency has been conceptualized-specifically, the extrapolation from conversational fluency in English to overall proficiency in the language and the judgement that students have sufficient proficiency so that verbal IQ tests will not discriminate against them on the basis of language (Cited in ibid).

1.1.2 Theoretical Issues

The investigation of the nature of language proficiency took two stages: the first stage was approved between 1920 and 1970 by researchers such as Thurstone, Carroll, Guilforb, Spearnan, Burt, and Gensen to the continuation of factor analytic work which basically refer to the basic structure of mental abilities, including language abilities. The work of John Oller differs from the previous researchers in terms that its theoretical basis is derived from applied linguistic rather than from psychometrics. (Harley et al, 1990, p. 9)

The second stage was described by the use of much more complicated form of aspect analysis than that employed by Oller. Assenting aspects analysis permitted the clear testing of theoretical models and was first applied to the field of language proficiency. Bachman and Palmer's work (cited in Harley et al., 1990) on the theoretical model of communicative competence and their outcomes, demonstrated clearly that more than just one general factor could be extracted from language proficiency data.

2. What is speaking?

2.1. Definition of Speaking

Through interaction, learners develop their communicative ability. Interaction is a mutual process where we transmit and receive messages in order to achieve communication. Communication in the classroom is based on two main skills which are listening and speaking. The first focus in this part of research will be on the speaking ability. Speaking is the ability which must be developed to attain the proficiency of the language since it is the main interest when communicating in English. It is the action of expressing one's thought or feeling through the spoken language. In addition to that, it is the most preferable thing among learners. According to Channy (1998, p.13) "speaking is the process of building and sharing

meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols in the variety of context". The purpose of learning a foreign language is one main objective and shared among all the learners that is represented in the communicating (speaking) and reaching the target language fluency.

2.2 Basic Types of Speaking

Brown (2004, p. 141) points five types related to the oral production that any learner must achieve in the class:

2.2.1 Imitative

The role of the teacher is to expose learners into authentic listening material and ask them to repeat the words or the phrase they listen to in order to imitate the pronunciation of the native speaker and as it is described by Brown (2004, p.141) it is purely phonetic level that provide the learners with opportunities to describe the grammatical structure and the lexical item of the word.

2.2.2. Intensive

This type of speaking involves intensive production of short stretches of the oral language to demonstrate the major role of the phonetic phase such as intonation, stress, rhythm, and juncture, and its power in changing the semantic aspect of the language.

2.2.3. Responsive

Usually the students' participation is too short when they are asked to answer a question, comment about a given topic, or start a conversation. Even though they produce a small talk, it can be meaningful and authentic.

2.2.4. Interactive

It is the same as the previous type, but it involves a long period of time where the students are given the opportunity to discuss their opinions. It can be practiced in pairs or groups. According to Brown it is classified into two categories:

- **Transactional Language:** that aims at exchanging specific information.

- **Interpersonal Exchanges:** that aim at reaching a social relationship; it is complicated for the level of the student since it involves speaking with colloquial language, ellipses, slang, humour and other sociolinguistic conventions.

2.2.5. Extensive

It includes activities such as oral presentation and storytelling to improve students' understanding. The language is chosen according to the topic, it is also called monologue.

3. Difficulties in Speaking

Brown (2001, p. 270-1) identifies eight problems that face the learner when using the target language for communicating:

3.1. Clustering

Some students do not have the ability to talk directly, they tend to make pauses and segments when they produce orally. The role of the teacher is clear; he should encourage them to speak fluently by producing meaningful sentences.

3.2. Redundancy

The student's oral performance is often redundant in terms of saying differently the passage they are asked to repeat. It provides a set of opportunities for better understanding.

3.3. Reduced Forms

It is difficult for the students who are used to study the full forms of the language to return that to the short forms because it is not limited and contains all the components of the language such as phonological, syntactic, and morphological.

3.4. Performance Variable

Second language learning differs from first language learning; it is characterised by some segments, pauses, and the use of some paralinguistic signals. The role of the teacher is to encourage students to think about what they are going to produce orally.

3.5. Colloquial Language

It is informal language that is not rude but would not be used in formal situation, it is less unacceptable than slang. And since the second language learners are used to talk with the academic language, it will be difficult for them to understand and communicate with this kind of language. The role of the teacher is to get the student try to communicate or develop their communication by using the colloquial language.

3.6. Rate of Delivery

It is the manner or style in uttering utterances; the speed of speech and the fastest spoken of the language. The role of the teacher is to help the student to speak with the target language fluently and rapidly with respecting the rate of speech such as intonation, rhythm, stress**.**

3.7. Stress, Rhythm, and Intonation

Students must respect these elements of language because they are responsible for designating and changing the meaning of the language.

3.8. Interaction

Interaction provides students with opportunities to learn more. It is an active process that enables students to exchange ideas, discuss points of view and raise the development of the second language acquisition.

To sum up, the speaking skill is the most difficult of all others. If the educationalists do not use the right method for teaching it, it will be difficult to reach language proficiency. They suggest a set of activities to be well developed. And since speaking is a productive skill, it is a very important process that enables the learners to evaluate their proficiency in the target language

4. The Listening Skill

Listening has become an essential part in our daily life. During our conversation, it is clear that we exchange ideas, share thoughts, and expose new knowledge that result into listening to each other. The need of learning a foreign language involves employing this skill which realizes great success that is represented in the development of the learning task.

4.1. Definition of Listening as a Skill

According to Linse (2005, p. 22), "babies as young as one and two months of age have the capacity to discriminate speech sound". Listening is an innate ability which is not restricted to adults, but it grows up since infancy and develops through time to distinguish between the sounds. And before we comprehend the meaning of a word, we have to listen to the rhythm and the melody of the language.

Listening has given a major importance in the teaching process. It helps the learners to acquire well the foreign language they are learning. Othman & Vanachas (2004) state

For too long listening has been given little attention in English language classroom. This could be due to the fact that there has been a lack of research interest into listening. Furthermore, listening has often been as a passive skill which learners just 'pick up.' Teachers believe that exposing students to spoken language is sufficient instruction in listening comprehension.   (p. 19)

In the traditional methods of teaching, educationalist consider listening not as an important element as speaking since it is a receptive skill, they believe that engaging students into amount of talking is enough for them to acquire the foreign language. Recent studies prove that listening and speaking are interrelated and we cannot teach students the language by separating these two skills and. They add that a good listening results in good speaking of the language, and this was confirmed by Brown (2004, p.119) "listening is often implied as a component of speaking". Listening allows the learners not only to receive the information through the input but also to learn a new vocabulary which facilitates the process of speaking the target language. That is, what was memorized will be stated either orally or in written form.

Listening is the ability to understand what others mean by their messages involving students to understand the basic component of the language while the process of listening is occurring. The first is to listen carefully to the word to comprehend the structure and the lexical item and the second is to understand the meaning of the word. Brown (2004) states

The listening performance itself is the invisible, inaudible process of internalizing meaning from the auditory signals being transmitted to the ear and the brain. Or you may argue that the product of listening is spoken or written from the students that indicate correct (or incorrect) auditory processing. Again, the product of listening and reading is not the spoken or

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written response. The product is within the structure of the brain and until teachers carry with them a little portable and MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scanners to detect meaningful intake. It is impossible to observe the product. You observe only the result of meaningful input in the form of spoken or written output. (p. 118)

4.2. Definition of Listening for Comprehension

In most Algerian EFL classes, listening is assumed to have the main function of facilitating the understanding of spoken discourse. Teachers are focused on bottom up information processing (students are supposed to pick up words from a text that the teacher reads loud for them). Students are seldom encouraged to notice a linguistic item in a passage read for them for the purpose of developing listening. According to Richards (2008, p.14), "listening for comprehension is based on the assumption that the role of listening in language programme is to help develop learners' abilities to understand things they listen to." Therefore, he insures that listening involves comprehension from the part of listeners to construct meaning from the passage they listen to and relate it to what they learn in existing knowledge.

Listening is divided into several genres involving employing them into their right context; the listener has to listen to the oral passage, to be aware of the appropriate context bearing in mind that the melody and the rhythm of the word play a major role for correct understanding. Some of the most common genres of the listening comprehension are informative listening, appreciative listening, and critical listening. According to Rost (2002)

> At further remove from the physics of sound, and the linguistic level of text we arrive at listening comprehension. Definition of L2 listening comprehension tells us as much about the definer as they do about listening characterisation of listening [...] Both first and second language listening may be explicit or

implicit and, they have varied with their items. Listening has been seen as rising from habit formation, as function of innate cognitive language abilities, as akin to computation, as a quality related to psychology or self awareness, as cultural awareness, or information processing. (p. 1)

The focus of this investigation is to master the factors of participating in the teaching process success. Whether the teacher is taking the role of listener or speaker, the most important is the discovery of these important skills and understanding that a good listening result in a good output (spoken language).

4.3. The Importance of Listening

Any conversation consists of two activities: speaking and listening. Participants should listen thoroughly to the speaker in order to be able to comprehend what is intended to say, in addition to that, he/she will be able to stick the information in his mind that he considers easy to remember. Also, the speaker's speech may show an interesting point that he/she is looking for. Listening is an active activity and a hard ability that the student must be trained for because if they are not good listeners they will not be good speakers. Listeners should pay attention to what is being said in order to improve their oral comprehension. It is not easy for EFL learner to be a good listener and in order to raise his/her listening comprehension, three conditions must be satisfied:

- Provide a good listening environment where noise and distractions are reduced and where the speaker talks loudly enough for everyone to hear.
- The selection of the subject plays a major role in developing this ability.
- Using some special activities that develop the listening skill.

Listeners should pay attention to the paralinguistic signals of the speaker such as eye contact, facial expressions, posture, and occasional rejoinders because through those signals, the importance of the topic appears and imposes the learner to listen more. A period of time is required in order to develop this innate ability and successful conversation demands these two specific abilities (speaking and listening) in which we store and produce orally. All in all, success in life often depends on how well we listen whether in our mother tongue or in a foreign language. (Dobson, 1992, p. 22-3).

4.4. Choosing the Appropriate Listening

One of the basic reasons that motivate students to listen to a spoken foreign language is to master its different varieties. Students, nowadays, need to be exposed to those varieties in order to be able to communicate with the target language and to enhance their proficiency. The question that should be asked is: what kind of listening students should use? Many investigations have been done to answer this question. Harmer (1998) claims that engaging students into authentic listening material is not more than a violent listening as it is the case in reading. He exemplifies that if we ask them to listen to a long listening material which is not interesting to them such as a political speech, they will not benefit from such kind of listening; they will just hear the sound of the language and lose the semantic aspect and become demotivated to acquire more the language. He suggests that if we expose students into the real conversation, we will reach a better learning.

Furthermore, he relates the kind of listening to the level of the student. If students are beginners, it will be useful for them to employ some authentic material such as pre-recorded announcements, and telephone messages, for example. Some difficult materials will be appropriate for elementary students, for example; thinking about the answer of a question and

interpret their understanding orally. For advanced levels they will learn more from scripted material.

The appropriate kinds of listening are those with the right students' level since listening to audio tapes brings different kinds of speaking into the classroom. These are some kinds of listening of tapes to be practiced such as an announcement, conversations, lectures, plays, new broadcasts, interviews, other radio programmes and stories read aloud, etc. All these materials enhance the students' oral proficiency and motivate students to learn more if the teacher uses them in the appropriate way (Harmer, 1998, p. 98).

5. Listening and Speaking Relationship

The relationship between listening and speaking is clear. According to Brown (2001, p. 275), there is "a natural link between speaking and listening". That is, it appears in sense that they are both oral skills. Educationalists should not ignore to integrate these two skills in the teaching process. In addition to that, listening and speaking occur together and when the teacher presents the task of speaking, listening is almost presented. Linse (2005) states

> The relationship between listening and speaking is clear because they are both oral skills. By listening children are preparing to replicate the sound when they speak. In addition, these are specific listening skills which can lay the foundation for reading instruction because by developing good listening skill children are able to match the sound with the correspondent symbols when they decode words. (p. 25)

Listening is a fundamental ability that must be developed because it links between the other skills such as reading when wanting to decode symbols. And as Anderson & Lynch (1998, p.15) state: "a carefully prepared 12 utterance is only a useful aid to communication if

the speaker can deal effectively with the replies they receive. For the L2 learner in conversation, he needs to be skilled as both speaker and listener" (p.15). It means that, a successful conversation is the one which integrates the special abilities. Educationalists must identify to the learners the relationship between speaking and listening and clarify that the successful speaking refers to a successful listening of the target language, and intended messages cannot be well expressed if there is no careful listening to the interested passage.

To sum up, listening is a receptive skill that has been given a major role in the success of the conversation. Teachers should use the right methods for teaching it and clarify how it is the basic source of getting knowledge, with an emphasis on explaining that the listening skill is an important component in the process of acquiring a foreign language. The coming diagram done by Byrnne (1976, p. 130) illustrates how the four skills are interrelated, and how each skill complete the other. Therefore, learners have to practice and get used these innate abilities in order to successfully master the whole for skills.
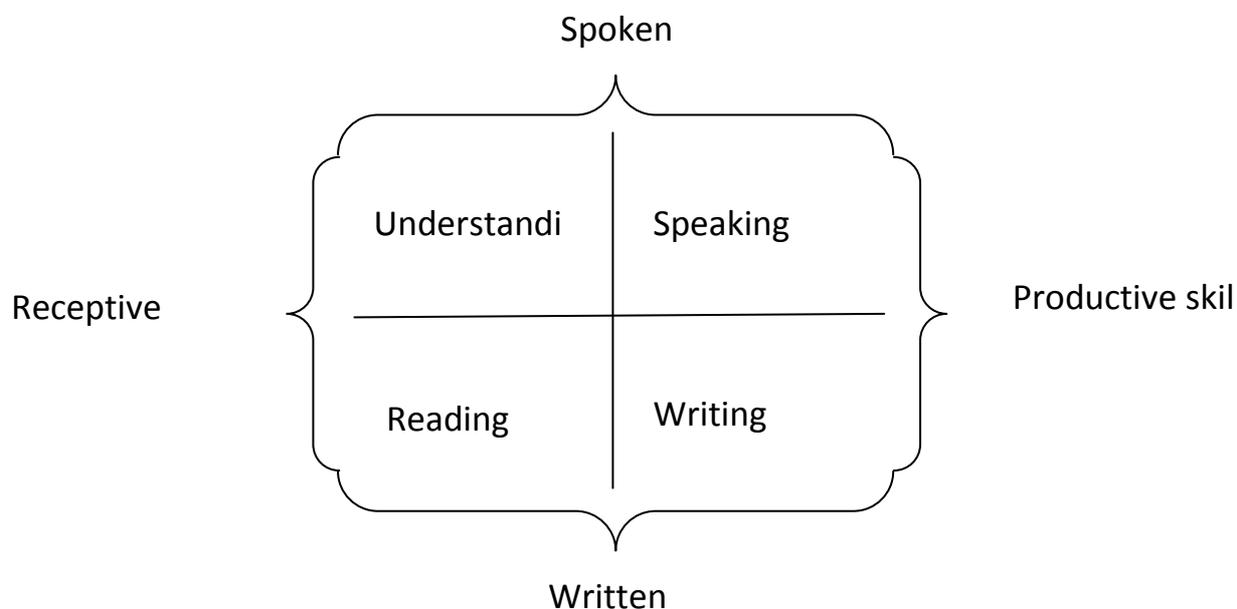
Diagram.2. Inter-Relationship of the Four Skills

6. Activities Used to Develop Listening and Speaking

Using activities such as group work, problem solving, role-play, and discussion would enhance students' oral production. Efficient teachers use those activities to provide learners with opportunities to learn more and practice the language communicatively.

6.1. Group Work

Group work is an interactive activity that increases more opportunities to learn. Through group work students interact with each other by exchanging ideas, getting new knowledge, and learning. Through this interaction, students can be given the opportunity for all to help each other and exchange ideas with no fear or shyness. Indeed, Ur (1981, p.7) argues: "students who are shy of saying something in front of the whole class or the teacher often find it much easier to express themselves in front of a small group of their peers". Students will be motivated to ask and answer questions, comment about a given topic, and solve the problem when rise.

Group work is a meaningful technique that results in a meaningful oral fluency. As McCafferty et al. (2006, p.30) state: "groups are the core of most cooperative learning activities". This technique takes a significant place in the teachers' methods of teaching; when the teacher helps the students to work out a word meaning or a structure. It is up to the teachers to use this activity and when to employ it. Group work increases the participation from the part of the learners as well as the amount of talking time, and it gives the opportunity to use the language to interact with each other. This is what was concerned by Vaughn & Bos (2009) when stating: "cooperative learning helps students experience positive interaction with peers and develop strategies for supporting others" (p. 89).

Forming groups is an effective idea to better learning. When a number of students are working together to produce something, they use language to communicate with each other: they are cooperating together. Lacky (2010, p.14) says: "when I moved on the other courses, I noticed that the order some groups created was more effective in supporting the learning than others, and so I began to intervene proactively to shape a supportive atmosphere".

6.2. Role Play

It is an authentic activity which involves dividing students into groups in order to discuss a topic whether to improve particular situation of the target language or to enhance their oral production. Role play is an effective activity which involves exposing the language into practice. Students can pretend many roles within this activity as Ur (1981) states

> Students are no longer limited to the kind of language used by learners in a classroom: they can be shopkeepers or spies, young parents or children, or authority figures or subordinates, they can be bored or frightened, irritated or amused, disapproving or affectionate; they can be threatening, advising, apologizing, condoling. (p. 9)

In fact the role is performed according to the imaginative situations that involve presenting people without joining them in order to be able to communicate in any real life situation.

Role play is the most preferable activity among learners because they can act many different characters. Hence, this kind of activity can develop the relationship between students when they cooperate with each other. It gives the opportunity to say what they want to say not what the others want them to say. According to Harmer (1998, p.22)

> Role play activities are those where students are asked to imagine that they are in different situation and act accordingly. We may tell them to role play being

guest at a party, travel agent, and answering a customer or questions or a participant in a public meeting about a road-building project for example.

Such kind of activities gives the student a chance to practice speaking English fluently and the aim of this type of activity is to use English freely in order to practice the language students have learned in class. The majority of students will be able to practice communicating when they work in groups without referring to the teacher, but they must have a sufficient vocabulary in order to act in the role play. They should produce meaningful sentences, grammatically correct. The teacher encourages his/her students to guess meaning through the process of education. They should be knowledgeable about the topic they are going to treat; time of the activity should not be long/ In addition, since the students are using role play for the first time, the language must be clear and simple. Teachers should not correct the mistakes during the activity, but just note them, then correct them when the activity and is finished. Finally, the role play topic should be chosen to fit the interest of the students in order for them to be motivated to involve themselves and successfully do the task (Baker & Westrup, 2000, p. 92)

6.3. Problem Solving

This activity involves connecting a number of students into one group in order to find a solution to certain problems. This kind of activity emerges from an imaginative situation to a real one. Students are required to solve the problem orally and discuss issues meaningfully. Problem solving activities require from the students making predictions about the use of "conditional sentences", or "sequential logical connectors", or "casual logical connectors", or "host of other structures"; that is to say, the problem they are solving could be structural and about learners' communicative needs. Also, this kind of activity leads to the interaction

between students and will result in enhancing their communicative competences (Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988, pp. 139- 40- 41).

Individuals differ from one another in their ways of treating a problem. Their performance develops from the traditional one to the discovery of the new one. It is a way of learning from others' problems involving the practice of the language within the appropriate context. As Gagné (1966; cited in Turner, 1977, p.39) sets a clear definition and says: "problem solving is a change in individual performance leading to a change in human capability. He argued that the problem solver must develop a new rule not recall an old one"

6.4. Discussion

The most effective activity that gets students practice talking freely is discussion. It is a term used for debating most difficult issues, exchanging ideas and knowledge, negotiating meanings, and learning how to communicate. The aim from this activity is to achieve efficient fluency practice. It may be an end in itself; an activity for enhancing oral production through exchanging ideas. Learning from content is also an aim of this activity. According to Ur (1981, p.3), "in many discussions there is much to be learned". Discussion can provide learners with opportunities to improve listening and speaking. Proficiency skills raise the comprehension level and motivate shy student to take part and practice in the conversation. Topics of the discussion should not be chosen randomly, they must be selected according to the students' needs and preferences. The role of the teacher is not to manage the discussion and impose his/her opinion, but instead he/she should encourage them to participate in the conversation and select the topics that fit their interests (Ur, 1981, p. 2-3).

To sum up, these activities create a good atmosphere to the learners in terms of raising their participation. That is to say, they provide them with opportunities to interact with each

other and motivate them to perform the task better. It is up to the teacher who knows how and when to use these activities in order to develop their oral language proficiency.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the main aspects of the language that lead to a successful communication. We have seen that speaking and listening are the most important skills in the evaluation of learner's proficiency and they are interrelated. We cannot reach proficiency by studying them in isolation, indeed, oral and listening proficiency is one the shared objective among the learners that must be developed together. One of the main duties of the teacher is to get students communicate effectively through the oral language. In this part of research, we have presented many activities that aim at enhancing students' oral proficiency and how they can be meaningful when the teacher knows how and when to use them.

Chapter Three: Design of the Research Methodology

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

In the previous chapters, we have tackled the subject of the role of peer work interaction in developing students' oral proficiency theoretically. We have presented different considerations and perceptions of multiple researchers. In this last chapter, we are going to prove the data we dealt with practically that is undertaken on specific population.

1. Methodology

Due to research constrains, this chapter is non-experimental; therefore, the method we have opted to conduct this study is the descriptive due to the nature of our research that lays within the descriptive field studies and in order to guarantee our hypothesis. We followed qualitative approach to explore teachers and students' attitudes about the role of peer work in enhancing students' oral language production proficiency. In a nutshell way, this research is definitely exploratory-descriptive. In the interpretive phase, a number of descriptive measurement tools were involved to gather, analyze, and interpret data namely questionnaires.

2. Research Approach

2.1. Study Design

The presents study is conduct at the Division of English at Biskra University during the second semester of 2012/ 2013 academic year. It employed administering two questionnaires. One was handed to teachers of oral expression module. In the meantime, the second one was administered to students. Both of the questionnaire were piloted by a small group of teachers. A copy is included in the appendix.

2.2. Population

It was necessary to select a random sampling. We selected a representative sample which is a total of 90 participants from……**,** thus, the method used is random sampling in

which there is no scope for subjectivity or bias. The respondents were two groups from the second year from the Division of English.

2.3. Research Instruments

As far as we are concerned, the main instruments for this study is mainly questionnaires. Therefrom, we have adopted two questionnaires; the first is distributed to the teachers, teachers who argue that making students working in small groups is more worthy and effective. The second questionnaire is handed to two second year groups at the Division of English-Biskra University- bearing in mind that the reason of choosing the second year level is that the learners are more willing to enhance their communicative abilities. This questionnaire is well designed that helps us to get a clear picture about the nature of language learning. As we have stated above, this part of research aims at proving the data gathered practically in sorts of analysis represented in tables and graphs.

2.3.1. Teachers' Questionnaire

a) The Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is devised in order to gather information about how teachers aid in enhancing students' oral proficiency. This aid is through knowing their abilities, their requests, and the activities must be employed in the classroom. It is important to calculate the teachers' opinions about the use of small group work

b) The description of the questionnaire

The Questionnaire was given to eight teachers of oral expression. The number of the teachers was divided according to two degrees: License and Magister to gather different opinions around the core of how to develop students' oral proficiency and show how the experience plays a major role in teaching a foreign language. Our teachers where very kind and helpful when they accepted answering the questions and their answers were very important to our research. It served at proving our hypothesis and added the validity to the

data gathered the questionnaires was answered anonymously. It is composed of sixteen questions and divided into three sections. **The first section** is about the personal information of the teachers, **the second section** deals with teachers' structure of the classroom, and **the third section** is about the speaking proficiency. These sections aim at evaluating students' oral proficiency through the activities proposed by the teacher. The Questions are in form of open ended and closed ended questions. The teachers are required to answer these questions by looking for the appropriate answer either by "yes, no" or full statements whenever necessary.

C) The Analysis of the Results

Section one: Background Information

Item 1: Teachers' degree.

Table .1. Teachers' degree

Degree		N	%
BA(license)		2	25%
MA	Magister	5	62.5%
	Master	1	12.5%
PH.D(Doctorate)		0	0
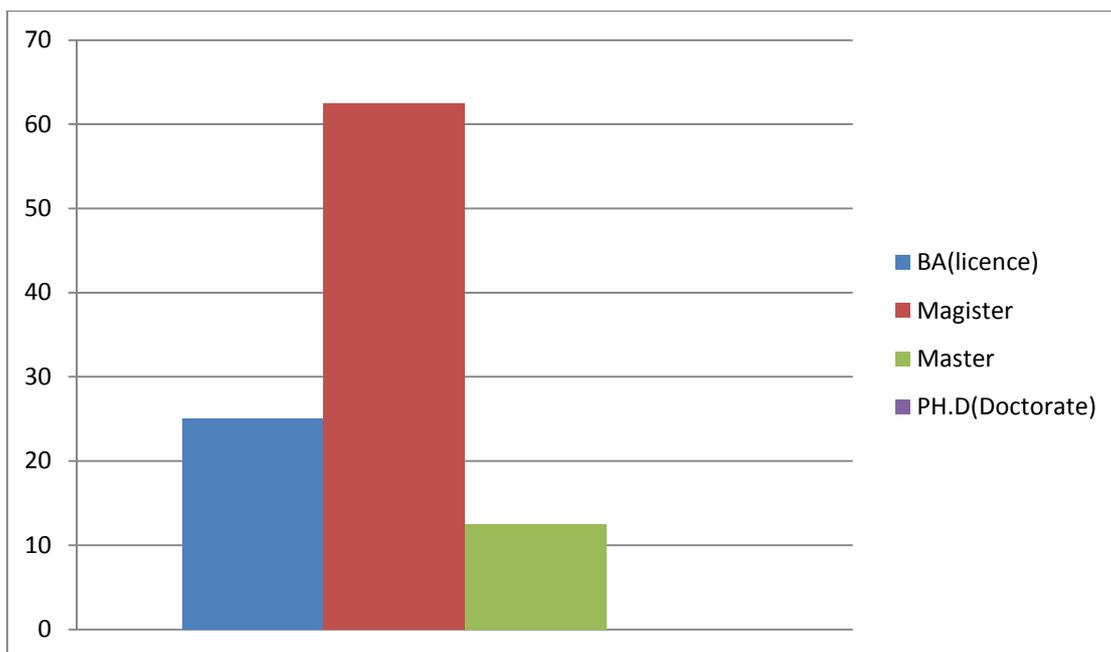
Figure.1. Teacher's Degree

From the table above, we notice that the highest degree is for teachers' who have got a magister (62.5%) and right after those who have a license (25%). Finally, 12.5% have a master degree. We do not distribute our questionnaire for PhD (Doctorate) teachers, but for more clarification, all these teachers who have a magister are preparing their PhD degree. We believe that the sample we have chosen is appropriate to the study we are investigating.

Item 2: Teaching experience.

Table.2. Teaching experience

Number of years	N	%
5	3	37.5%
6	1	12.5%
7	1	12.5%
2	1	12.5%
3	1	12.5%
10	1	12.5%
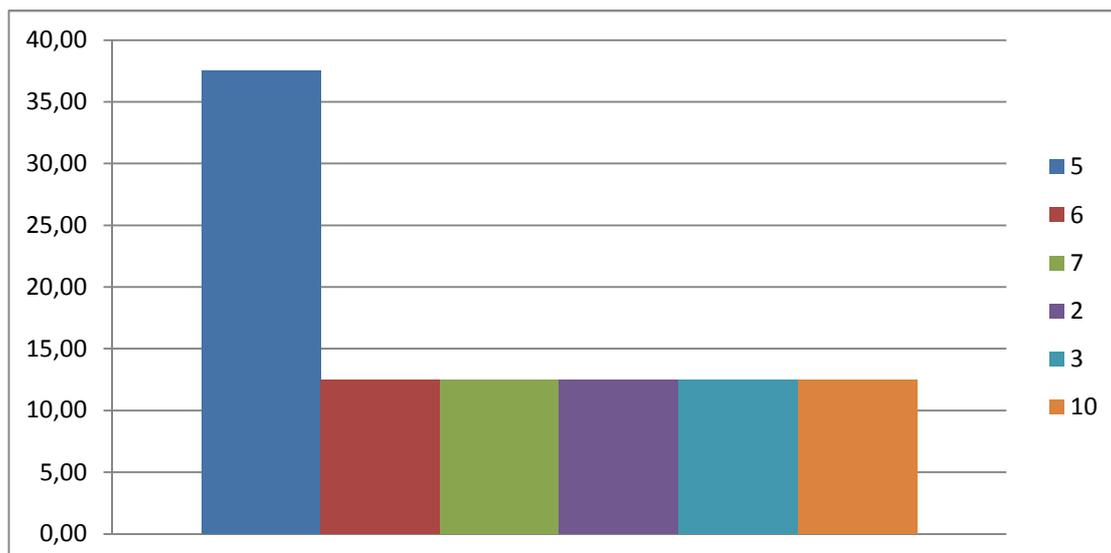
Figure.2. Teaching experience

The results of the table above reveal that most of the teachers have been teaching English for a long period at the university varied from three to ten years. This indicates that some teachers are more experienced than others. And as far as the teaching experience is concerned, teachers with more than three years' experience are familiar with teaching other modules and are successful at using different methods. The experience plays a major role in the teaching process. The last teacher who has only two years in teaching experience still need more time in order to be able to fulfill the needs of his students to enhance their oral proficiency.

Item 3: Teaching experience of oral expression.

Table. 3. Teaching experience of oral expression

years	N	%
5	2	25%
1	2	25%
2	2	25%
3	1	12.5%
6	1	12.5%
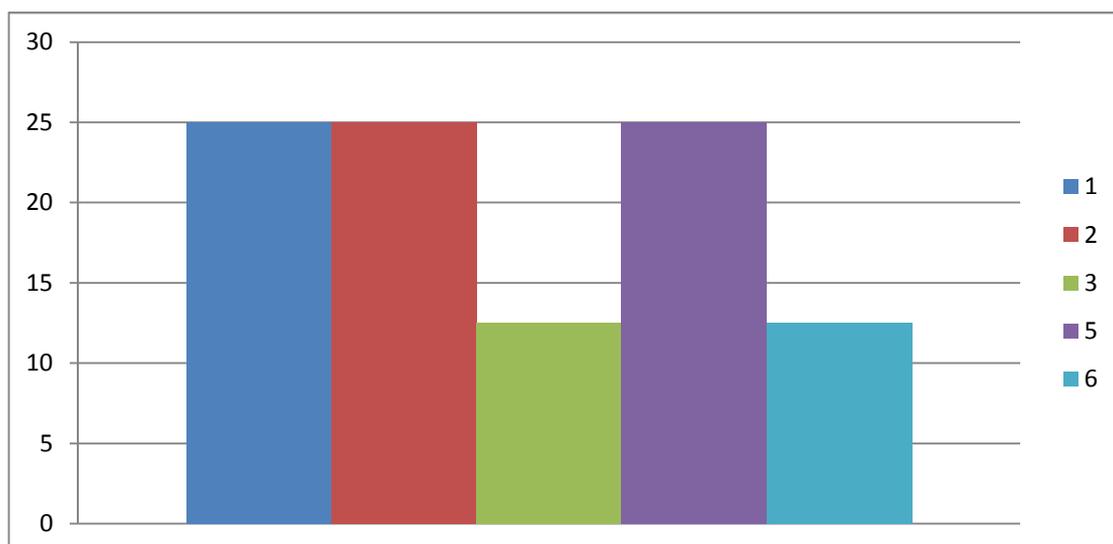
Figure.3. Teaching experience of oral expression

The table indicates that there is only one teacher who has been teaching oral expression for a long period of time since he has six years. And right after, there are two teachers who have been teaching this module for five years. One teacher has been teaching oral expression for three years. Also the table shows two teachers who have been teaching this module only for one year and other two teachers for two years. We come out that these teachers have a short experience in teaching this module.

Section two: Cooperative language learning

Item 4: The way learners work in the classroom.

Table.4. The way learners work in the classroom

item	individually	In pairs	In groups	a+b+c	a+c
N	0	0	3	3	2
%	0	0	37.5%	37.5%	25%
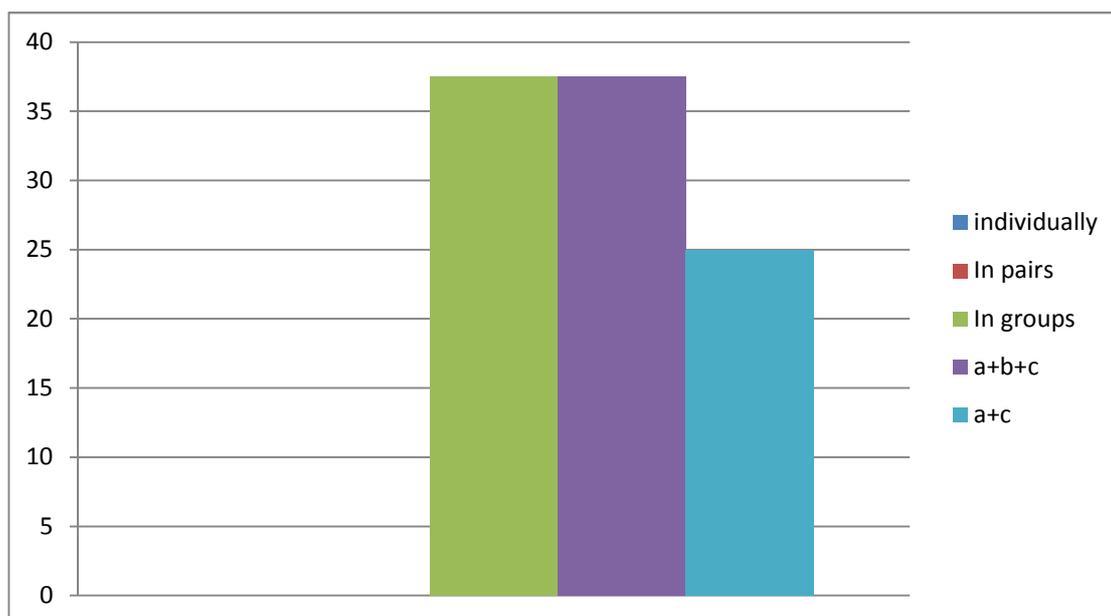
Figure.4. The way learners work in the classroom

From the table above, we notice that most of the teachers make their learners work either individually, in pairs, or in groups (37.5%). Other two teachers report that their students work individually and in groups. That is to say, the teachers who prefer make their students work in groups notice that they achieve better learning. For the teachers who employ the three techniques it depends on the topic they are going to study. 25% of the teachers report that their students work individually and in groups in order to increase their abilities.

Item 5: The number of times the teacher uses group work.

Table .5. The number of times the teacher uses group work

Item	Always	Often	Rarely	never
N	2	6	0	0
%	25%	75%	0	0
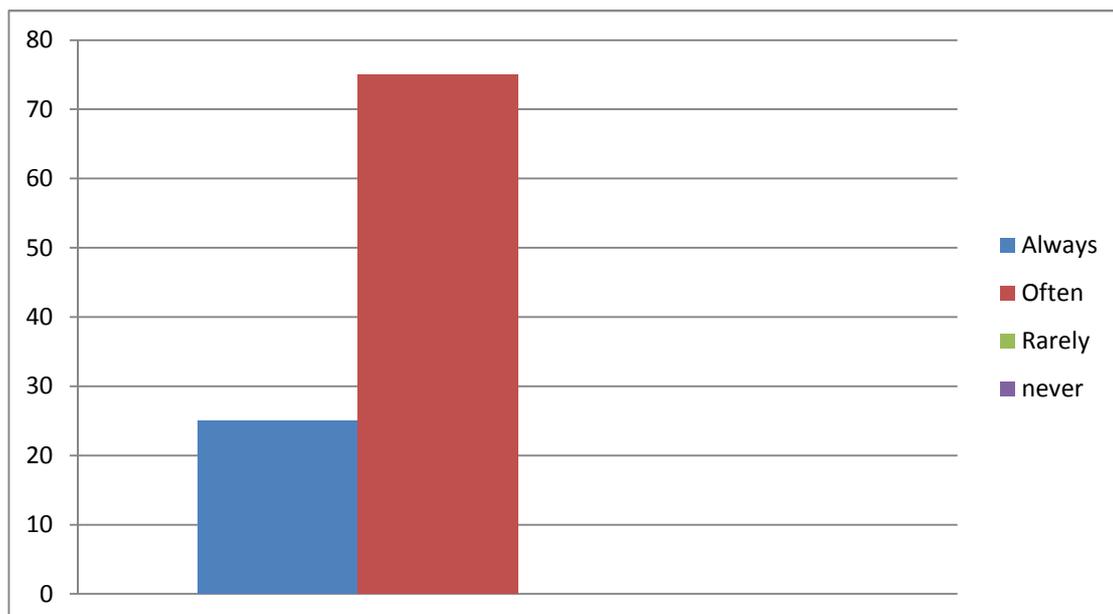
Figure.5. the number of times the teacher uses group work

Item 6: The structure teachers believe enhances learning.

Table .6. The structure teachers believe enhances learning

Item	Mixed gender	Separate gender
N	5	3
%	62.5%	37.5%
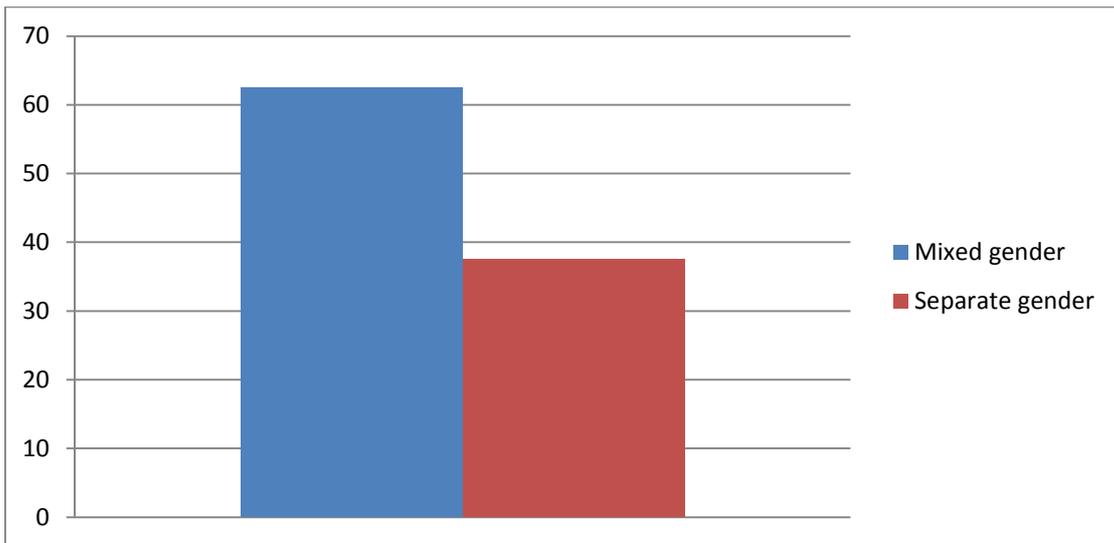
Figure.6. The structure teachers believe enhance learning

   This question aims at knowing which of the structures (mixed/ separate gender) enhances learning. The results in the table above indicate that most of the teachers prefer to mix gender when learning (62.5%). They believe that the two genders see the topic from different views, so it is a kind of challenge to prove their ideas right. They believe that when stating the two genders in one group, they will learn from each other and it is a good way to increase their individual skills and push them to work harder in terms of giving the opportunity to express themselves orally. Other teachers (37.5%) report that they separate between the two genders when working cooperatively, they relate the idea to the conventional norms in our country. They indicate that students are uncomfortable when working girls and boys; they are shy to interact with each other when being obliged to work together even though they believe that the best way to enhance students' learning is to mix gender. Some of them indicate that they don't give much importance to the gender of the students, but instead to that they focus on their capacities and potentialities in order to split them into groups.

Item 7: Ensuring whether the students like working in groups.

Table .7. Ensuring whether the students like working in groups.

Item	Yes	No
N	7	1
%	87.5%	12.5%
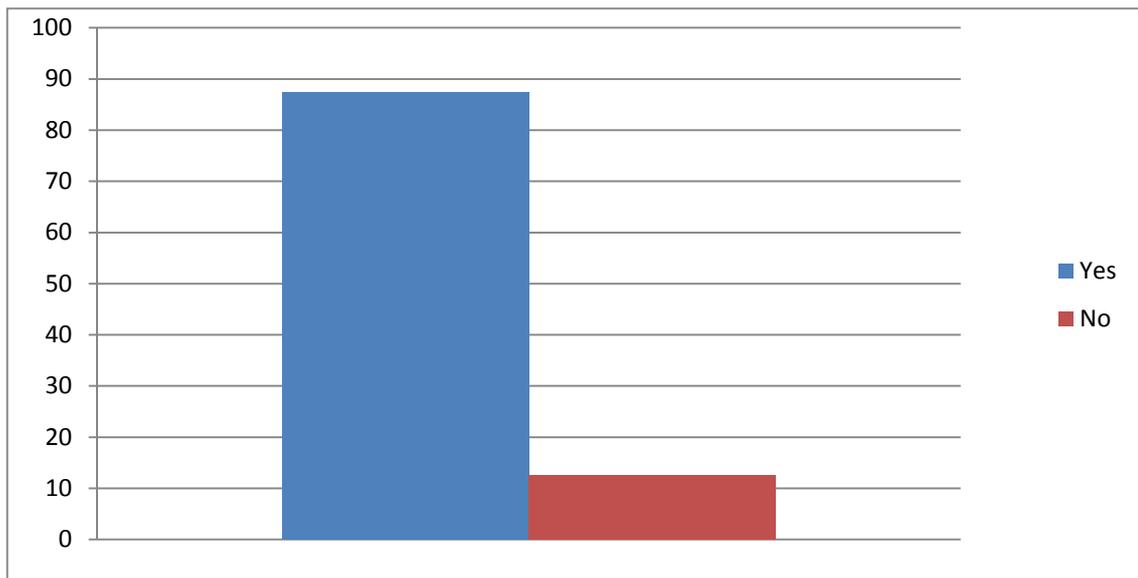
Figure.7. Ensuring whether the students like working in groups

The purpose behind asking this question is to know if the students like working in groups. The results show that the majority of the students enjoy themselves being in groups and they are motivated when working in groups (87.5%). Only one teacher (12.5%) states that his students find themselves more at ease when working alone.

Item 8: Teachers' perception of students' problems in groups

Table .8. Teachers' perception of students' problems in groups

Item	Yes	No	Somehow
N	2	2	4
%	25%	25%	50%
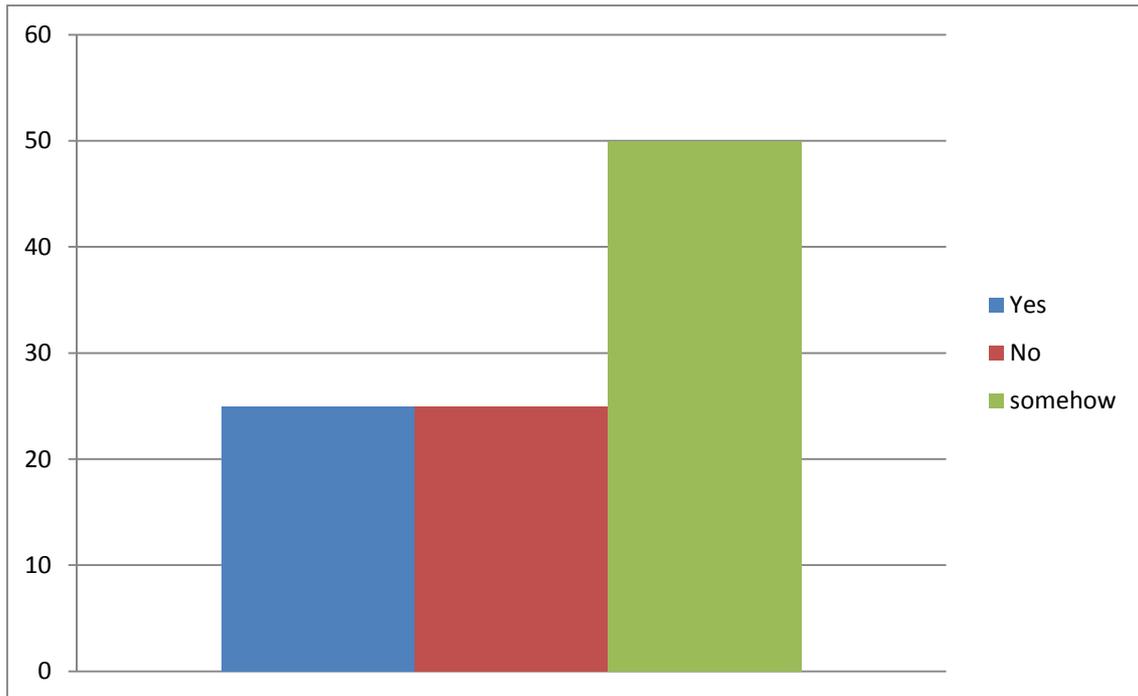
Figure.8. Teacher's perception of student's problems in groups

As it is visible in the table above, 50% of the teachers indicate that their students don't have a lot of problems when working in groups. Other two teachers affirm that their students don't have at all any kind of problems when they work together. Regarding the two teachers whose answers "yes" they do they seem to face obstacles when their students work together.

If "yes" explain why?

They justify their answers by saying that some of their students prefer to work individually for more concentration and report that some of them are not interested in the contribution; they prefer to listen more than to interact with their classmates. Another part of their justification is that the members of the group often have problems with the leader for he/ she being most of the time the only one whose ideas must be right and listened to so the problems begin.

Item 9: The way teachers manage group problems.

Teachers believe that in order to avoid problems in group, the group should be well balanced; there must be equilibrium while deciding who is going to sit with: good students should be split in all the groups. Students should be given the necessary information in order to deal with the topic. Teachers state that they should not cancel their presence for any clarification or explanation; they should give the impression that they are the responsible for initiating the orders and giving the instructions and moving around the groups to manage their behavior. Also the work should be divided fairly between the members of the group and keep observing anything during the whole period of work.

Section Three: Speaking Proficiency

Item 10: Teachers' evaluation of their students' communicative proficiency.

Table .9. Teachers' evaluation of their students' communicative proficiency

Item	Very good	Good	Average	Poor
N	0	2	6	0
%	0%	25%	75%	0%
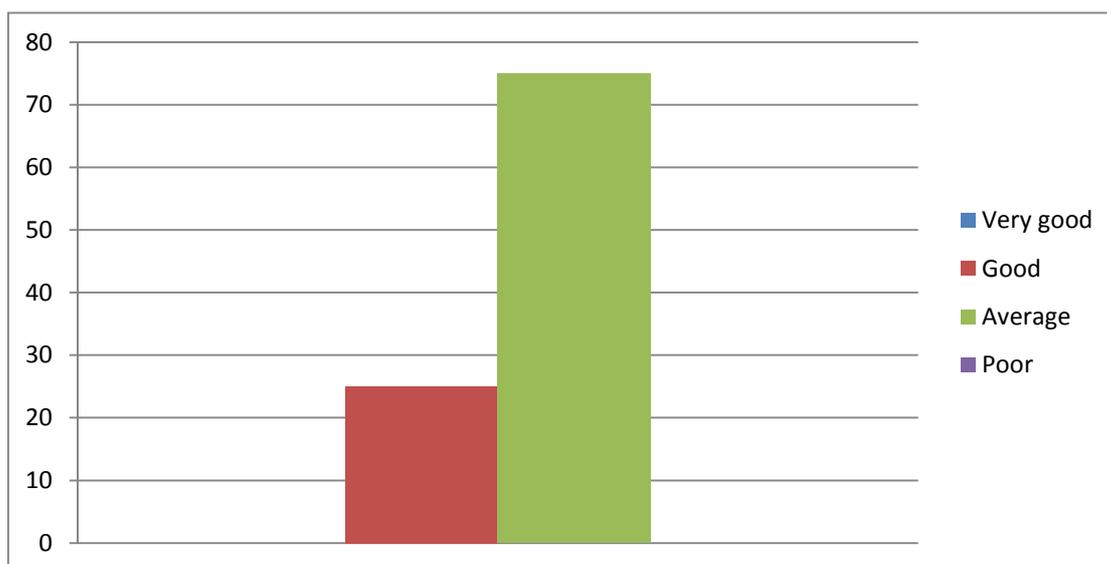
Figure.9. Teacher's evaluation of their students' communicative proficiency

53

Teachers, here, are required to describe the students' communicative proficiency. It appears to us that the majority of teachers (75%) believe that their students have an average degree in the oral production. However, 25% of the teachers describe their students' communicative proficiency as good. No one of them illustrates that their students' level is very good or poor. According to these results, we can interpret that the students need more communicative activities for their weak performance in the classroom. Teachers should encourage their students to practice more talking outside the classroom.

Item 11: Ensuring whether the students are motivated to speak.

Table .10. Ensuring whether the students are motivated to speak.

Item	Yes	No
N	5	3
%	62.5%	37.5%
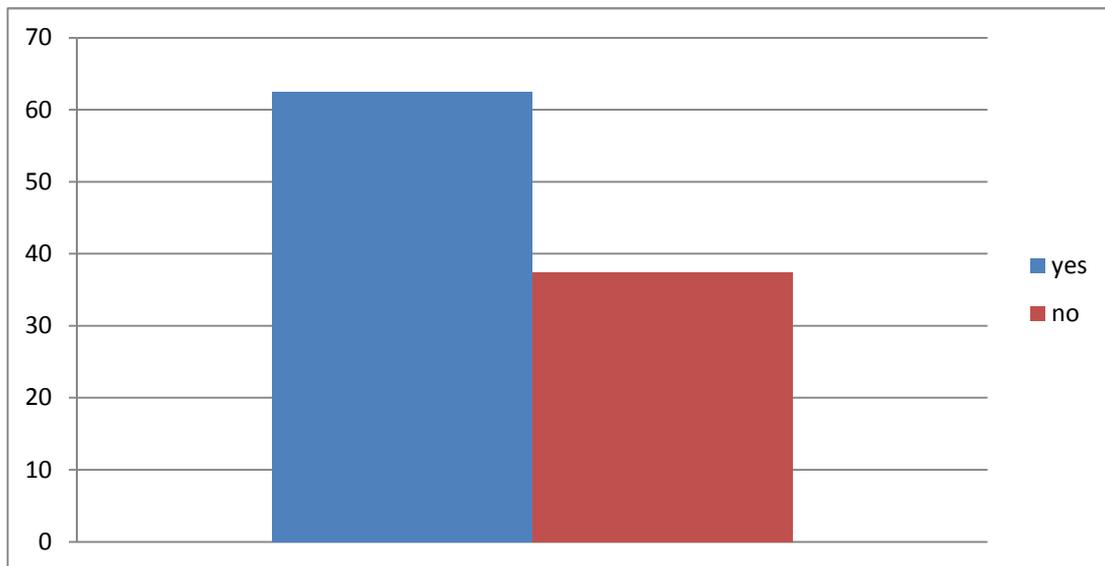
Figure. 10. Ensuring whether the students are motivated to speak

We notice that most teachers (62.5%) affirm that their students are motivated to speak in English language. 37.5% of the teachers indicate that their students are not willing to speak in English due to the psychological factors that inhibit many students to talk.

Item 12: Teachers' use of the teaching activities.

Table .11. Teachers'use of the teaching activities.

item	Group Work	Role play	Problem Solving	Free discussion	a+b+d	a+d
N	0	3	0	1	3	1
%	0%	37.5%	0%	12.5%	37.5%	12.5%
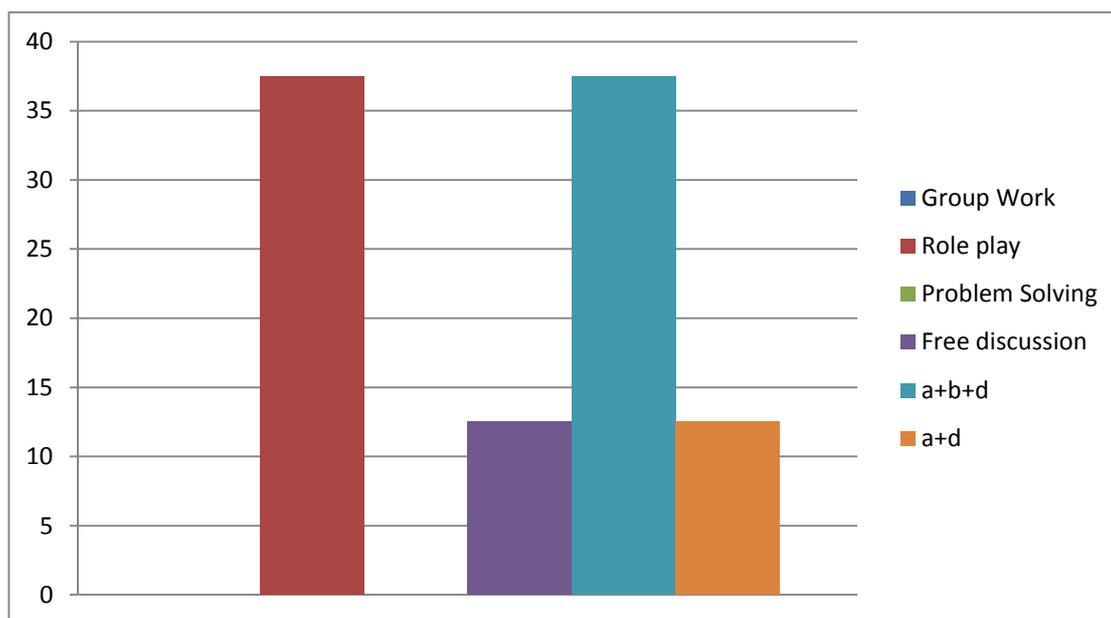
Figure.11. Teachers 'use of the teaching activities

There are many activities the teachers follow in order to enhance their students' speaking proficiency. The results in the table above reveal that the majority of teachers use most role play and group work, and problem solving and free discussion. 37.5% believe that these activities are the effective ones to enhance students' abilities; they are responsible for creating the interaction from which the students benefit more. On the other hand, one teacher (12.5%) affirms that fruitful activity for his students is achieved through free discussion in which they express their opinions, share their ideas, and learn more how to communicate. Other one teacher illustrates that in addition to free discussion, he uses most of the time group work; he clarifies that group work encourages more his students

especially the shy ones. Other teachers illustrate that they use monologue and storytelling as activities to enhance their students' speaking ability.

Item 13: The reason behind selecting the activities.

Table .12. The reason behind selecting the activities.

Item	Yes	No
N	8	0
%	100%	0%
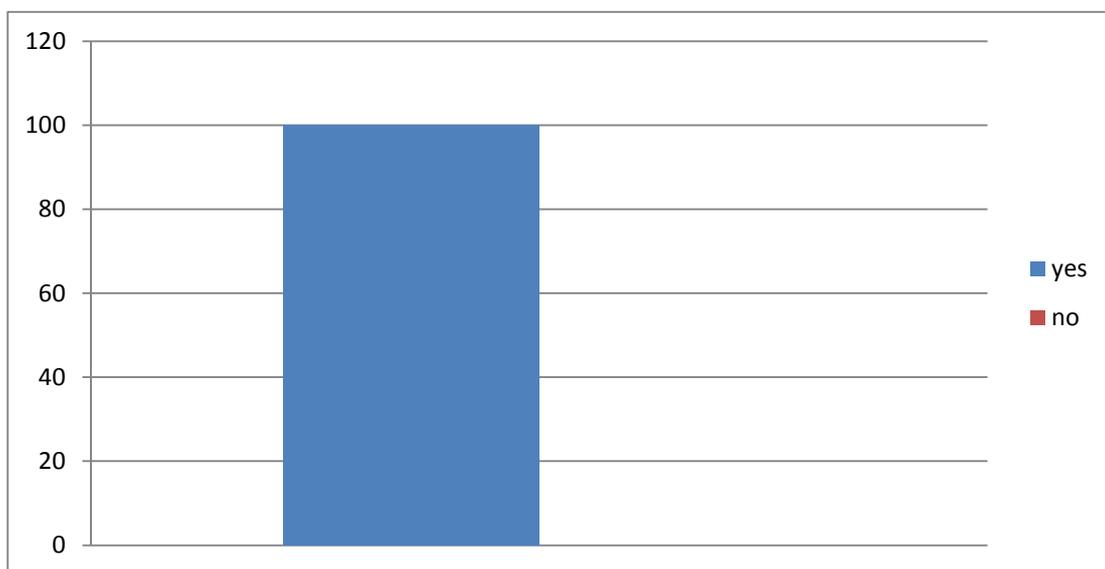
Figure. 12. The reason behind selecting the activities

As it is clear from the table, all the teachers select the activities that are based on their students' communicative needs. They justify their answers by saying that students need to have rich input in order to be able to express themselves, and in addition to that, they mention that the tasks should be related to real life situations and sometimes should be chosen by the students themselves to create a meaningful communication. Other teachers state that their students are motivated to master the language through the oral skills and they want to practice English outside the classroom. One of the teachers report that his students are divided into groups, in each group there is a leader as a reporter and

the others are exchanging the ideas to be represented by the leader. They argue that the students should understand the purpose behind their being in the classroom and especially the aim from the activity; speaking is the first step to acquire the language and to communicate a message before looking at the grammatical construction of the sentence.

Item 14: The degree oral expression courses help the students to raise their oral proficiency.

Table .13. The degree oral expression courses help the students to raise their oral proficiency.

Item	Much	Little	Not at All
N	8	0	0
%	100%	0%	0%
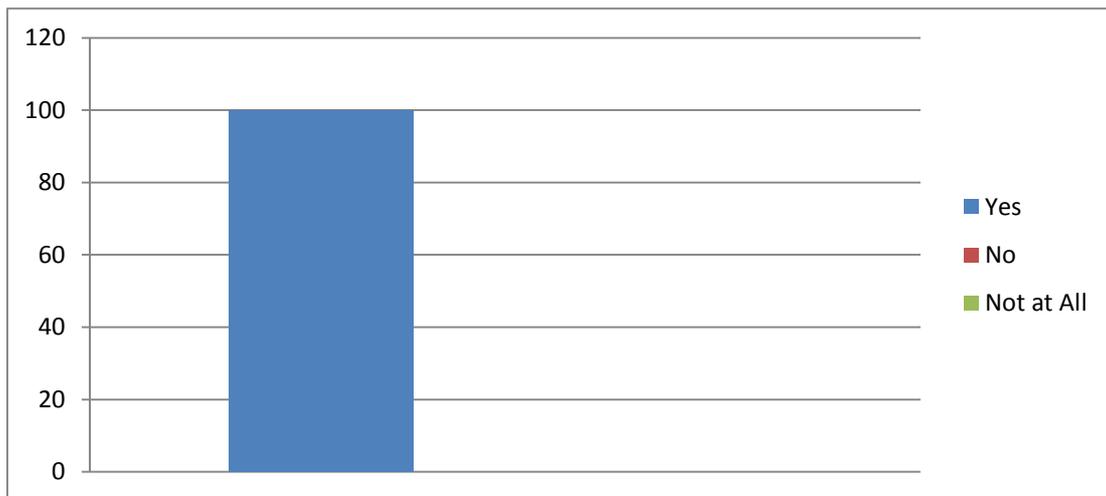
Figure. 13. The degree oral expression courses help the students to raise their oral proficiency

All the teachers indicate that the oral expression sessions help the students develop their oral production in which they interact, communicate, and share ideas.

Item 15: Teachers' perception about the use of small group work.

Table .14. Teachers' perceptions about the use of small group work.

Item	Yes	No
N	8	0
%	100%	0%
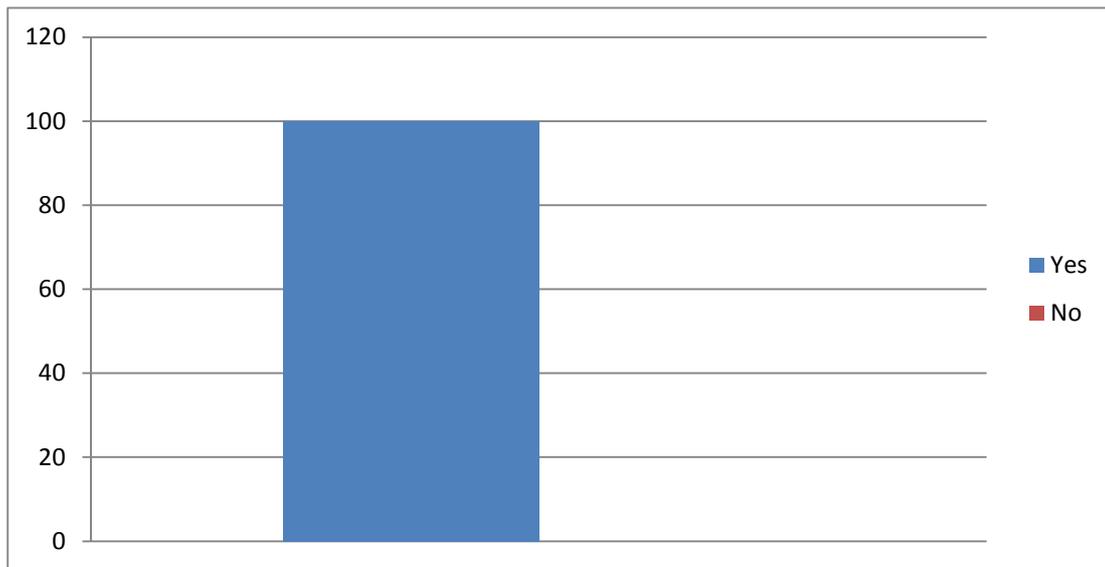
Figure. 14. Teachers' perception about the use of small group work

The purpose behind asking this question is to know whether the students' oral proficiency would develop when working in small groups. The results show that all the teachers ensure that a small group is an effective idea for better learning. They justify their answers by saying that in order to develop students' negotiation skills, there is no better than group work. Group work provides the students with opportunities to interact with each other and to prepare what to say in front of the whole group. Also they report that group work is a golden opportunity to improve their individual skills, they state that in group work students will avoid all sorts of fear, shyness, and confusion because they don't have to speak in front of the teacher or the whole class. Group work makes them feel more at ease when suggesting ideas, committing mistakes, and explaining to each other. All the

teachers argue that group work is a good idea to make the students express their ideas freely.

Item 16: Teachers' perception about the appropriate skill.

Table .15. Teachers' perceptions about the appropriate skill.

item	listening	reading	writing	a+b+c	a+b
N	4	0	3	3	2
%	50%	0%	0%	37.5%	12.5%
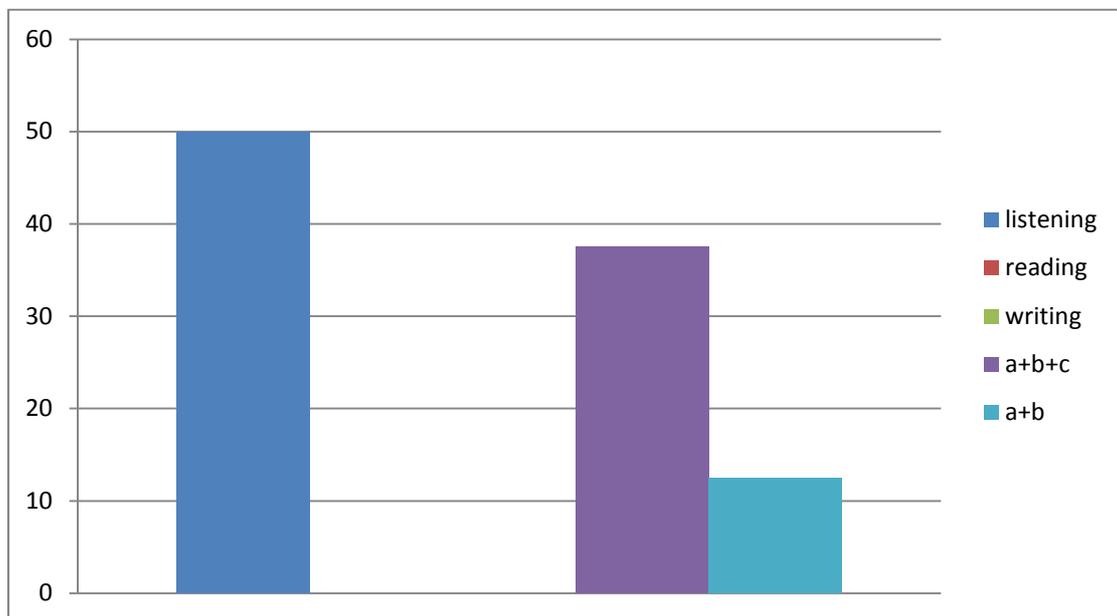
Figure. 15. Teachers' perceptions about the appropriate skill.

The results indicate that most of teachers show that listening is interrelated to speaking, they state that good listening creates good speakers and we listen to learn not the vice versa as many students think (50%). Other teachers (37.5%) indicate that listening, reading, and writing cannot be isolated from speaking; they believe that speaking is related to reading in terms of getting vocabulary, related to listening in terms of getting a tune of the words; your ears become familiar with sound of the word, and related to writing as a result of being able to speak. Other teachers indicate that spelling is based on listening and reading and both of them are result in a good style in writing. They ensure that each one of

the skills accomplish the others, they state that knowing the linguistic competence is not enough for them. Students should know how to use the linguistic competence in order to be competent communicatively and this will be achieved via focusing on the productive and receptive skills. The last teacher (12.5%) illustrates that speaking needs to be more developed with two main skills which are reading and listening, he states that good readers are good speakers and good listeners become accustomed to the foreign language they learn.

2.3.2. Students' Questionnaire

a) Aim of the Questionnaire

We have devised this questionnaire for the sake of sorting out what sophomores students at the Division of English need to improve/ enhance oral proficiency via using the peer work technique.

b) Description of the questionnaire

The Questionnaire was handed to second year students at the Division of English Biskra University – as a sample. Two groups were required to answer the questions bearing in mind that the number of the students in a single group was thirty five and they are of mixed gender. The Questions were very clear to every student; they were given the purpose behind answering the questions and the instructions about how to answer the questions. The Questionnaire was conducted at the end of the year for more validity. The questions took from the students' time less than half an hour. Their participation was very appreciated and important for us as investigators taking into consideration that the students were not obliged to write their names in the Questionnaire and they were not allowed to talk to each other while answering the questions. We guarantee that our investigation was under a very good atmosphere and the data gathered are valid to our study.

C) The Analysis of the Results

Background Information

Students' age

Table .16. Students' age

Age	N	%
19	4	5.71
20	22	31.42
21	26	37.14
22	14	20
24	2	2.85
25	2	2.85
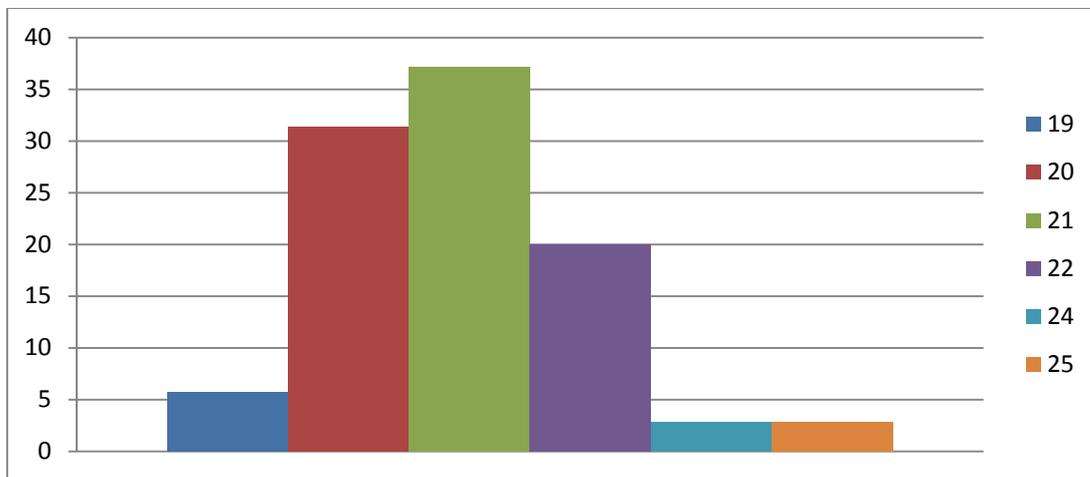
Figure. 16. Student's age

From the results, we remark that the majority of the students are at the same age.

Students' gender

Table .17. Students' gender

Option	Male	Female
N	23	47
%	32.85%	67.14%
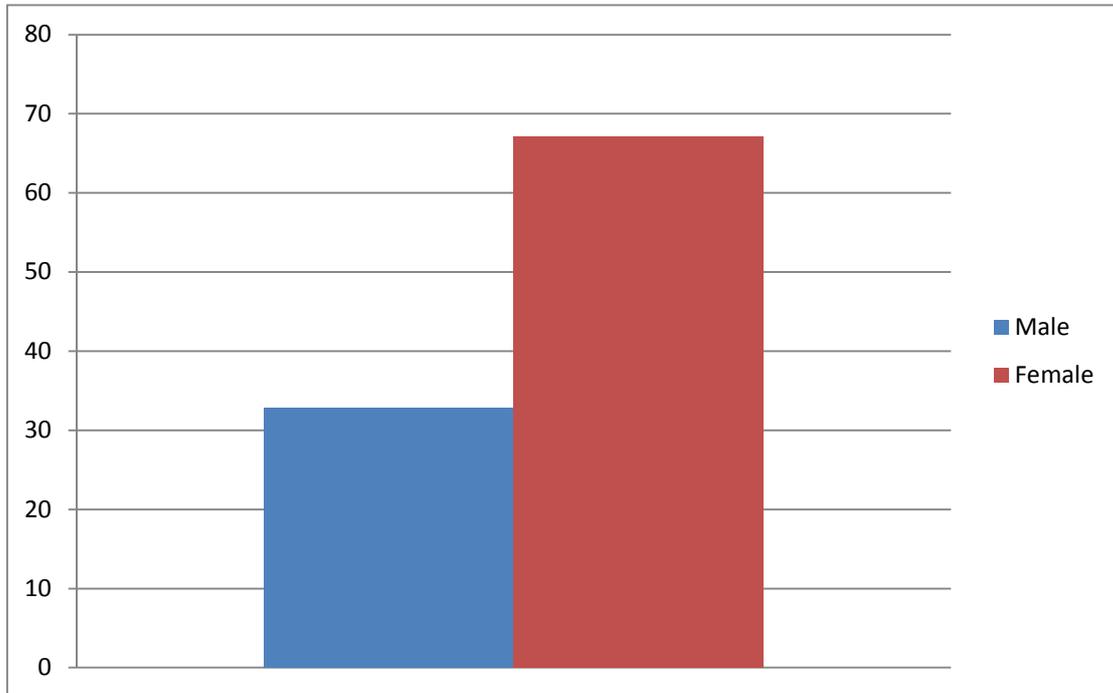
Figure. 17. Student's gender

From the results, we notice that the females' number is higher than the male's one. That is

to say, in our country females take the large part in speaking rather than males.

Section one: Speaking Proficiency

Item 17: English importance for the students.

Table .18. English importance for the students.

Item	Very Important	Important	Not Important
N	40	23	7
%	57.14%	31.42%	10
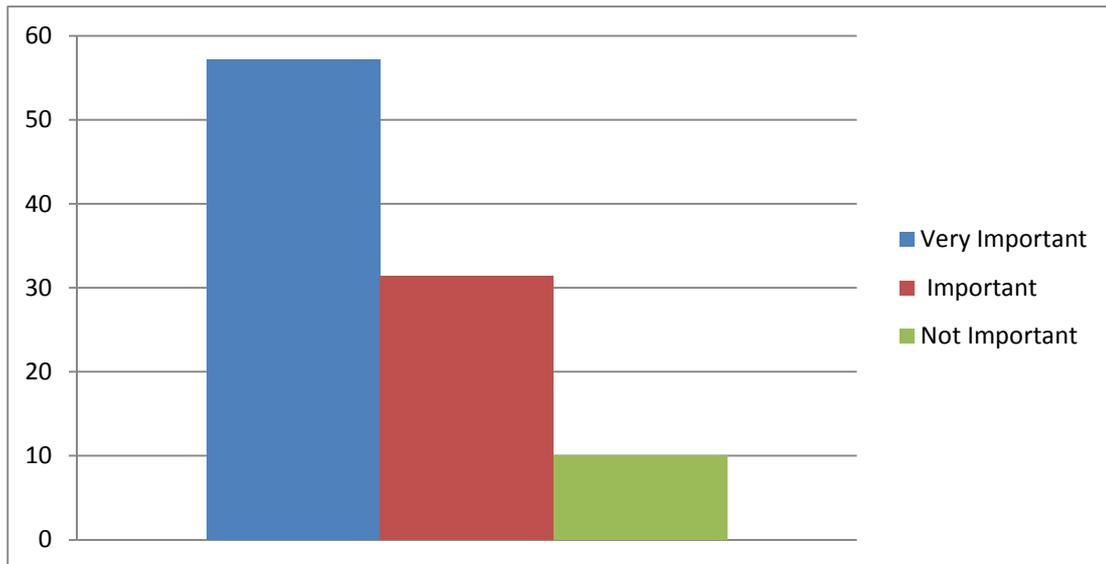
Figure .18. English importance for the students

From the results, we notice that 57.14% from the students answer that learning English is very important for them. The number expresses that the learners like to communicate with the English language. On the other hand, the results indicate that some other students are trying to have a background in English (31.42%). 10% of the students, as the table above indicates, consider that learning English does not constitute the big interest for them.

Item 18: The purpose behind studying English.

    A. Need it for career.

    B. To make you more educated.

    C. To add to your social status.

Table. 19. The purpose behind studying English.

Item	a	b	c
N	31	24	15
%	44.28%	34.28%	21.42%
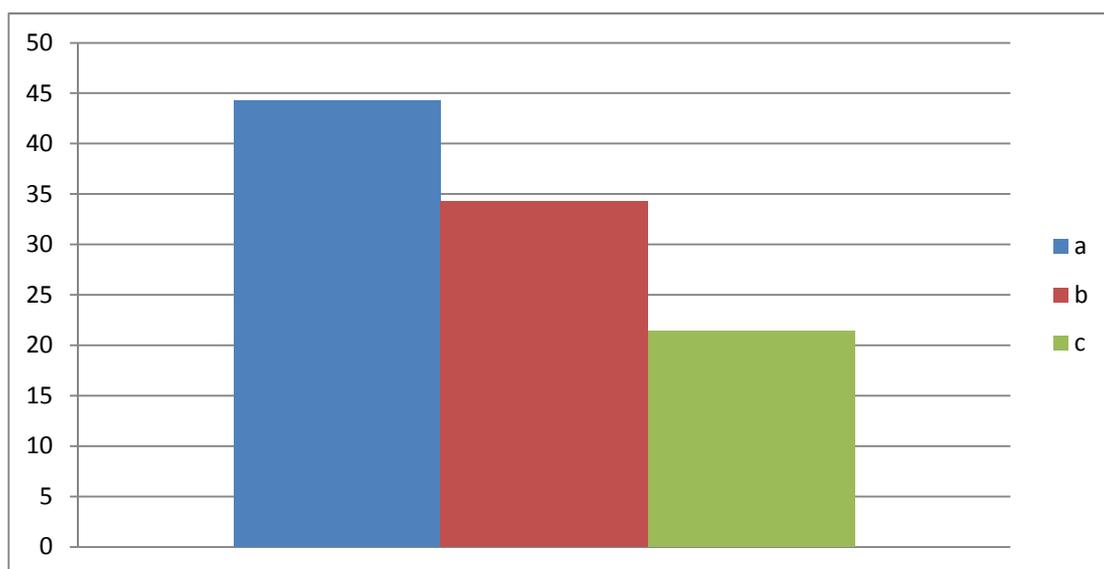
Figure. 19. The purpose behind studying English

The results in the table reveal that the students mainly share the same reason for studying English that is represented in the need for the career. That is to say, the learners view English as source for guarantying their financial life in the near future (44.28%). However, some students (34.28%) claimed that they learn English to gain knowledge and expand their language skills. The last few students (21.42%) indicated that they are studying English for their prestige in the society.

Item.19. Students' ways to improve their level in English.

The purpose behind asking this question is investigating what the learners are able to do to enhance their level in English language. The students' answers are approximately the same. It is represented in reading different books to acquire more vocabulary, listening to music in order to get the tune of the word until they become familiar with the field of the pronunciation, and check the songs' lyrics for better understanding. Other learners claim that they have favorite programs to watch on TV and affirm that the best way for enhancing their level is watching movies. And some of them added that they devote most of their time on the internet to chat rooms where they interact with native speakers as they receive an immediate feedback and it allows them to know about the different dialects and

accents existing abroad. The students also focus on reading online newspapers. The rest of the students claim that one way for achieving success in learning the English language is to write in English (Diaries, Poems).

Item. 20. Students' level in speaking.

Table .20. Students' level in speaking.

Item	Very good	Good	Average	Poor
N	6	37	23	4
%	8.57%	52.85%	32.85%	5.71%
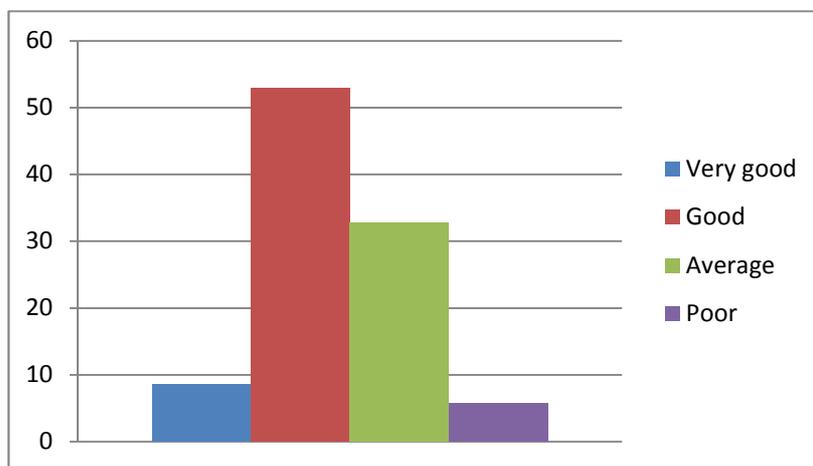
Figure. 20. Student's level in speaking

The question aims at assessing learners' speaking ability. They are required to identify how well they speak English: very good, good, average, or poor. According to the results revealed above, we come out that the majority of the students describe their level as good (52.85%) and average (32.85%). The good students show that they are able to employ some communicative rules. The other students who claim that they have an average level seem to have some difficulties during communication and this leads us to understand that the students are willing to carry on with their level. Few students (8.57%) assess themselves as fluent speakers, which means that they are competent enough at using the linguistic competence of the language. The last students (5.71%) indicate that their level is

poor, that means that their contribution in the classroom is very low maybe due to the lack of interaction or because of the extinction of the communicative competencies.

Item.21. The practice of English outside the classroom.

Table .21. The practice of English outside the classroom.

Item	Yes	No
N	46	24
%	65.71%	34.28%
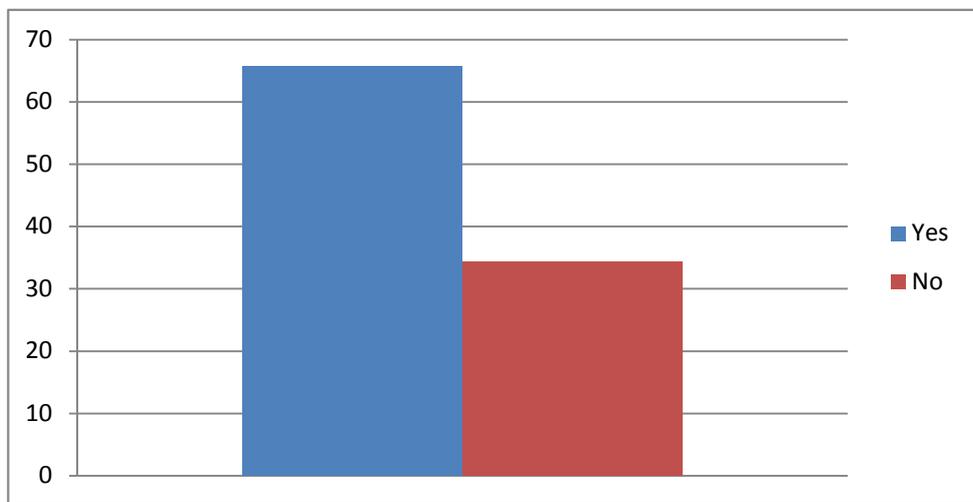
Figure. 21. The practice of English outside the classroom

The results in the table above indicate that (65.71%) of the students are motivated in using English outside the classroom because they enjoy practicing it in more real life situations. The remaining students (34.28%) state that they never use English because they see it only in the academic setting.

Item.22. Students' participation in the classroom.

Table .22. Students' participation in the classroom.

Item	Yes	No
N	47	23
%	67.14%	32.85%
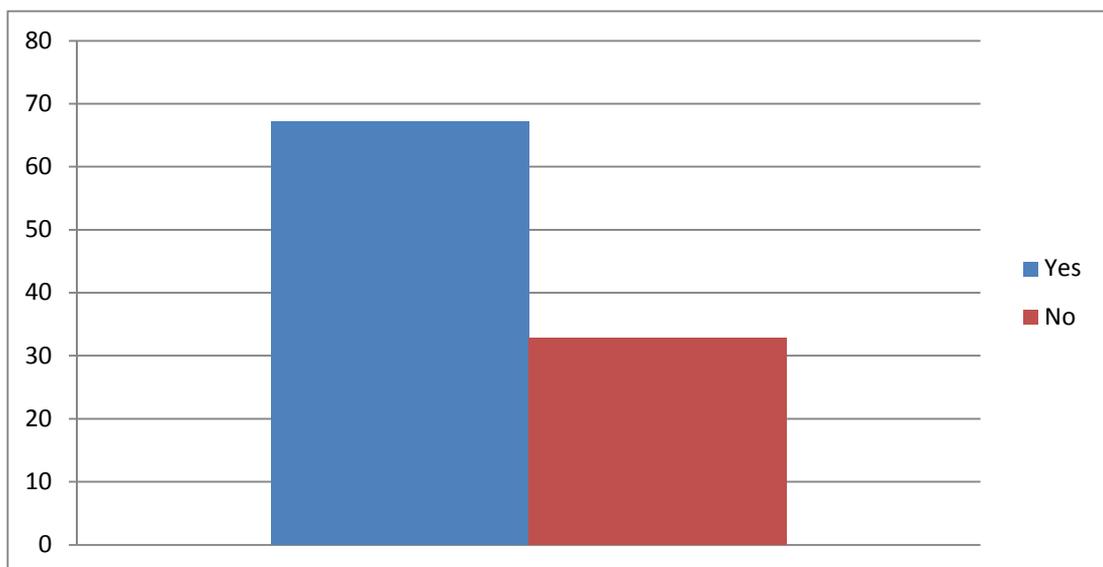
Figure.22. Student's participation in the classroom

   The results indicate that (67.14%) of the students like to contribute and to be talkative in the classroom. This leads us to understand that the students who participate in the classroom are often aiming at expressing their thoughts and to get new knowledge in order to develop their speaking ability. The rest of the students (32.85%) prefer to be silent in the classroom and this will affect them producing orally.

If "no" why?

   The majority of the students who state that they do not participate in the classroom explain their views towards this issue from different perspectives. Some of them consider that when they speak in English, they will be criticized by the students as well as by the teacher; they believe that while speaking they do mistakes for which the teacher is going to blame them and thus causing embarrassment for them in front of their classmates. Other students claim that they are not encouraged to speak and this reveals the fact that they feel shy which is due to a psychological factor. Other respondents relate their non-participation to the large number of the students in the classroom that inhibits giving opportunities for each student to express themselves orally. The last reason was represented in listening rather than speaking. That is to say, some of them prefer to listen without interacting

because they are not competent enough to raise their voices in the class room (the lack of the vocabulary).

Item.23. The most desired skill to be mastered.

Table. 23. The most desired skill to be mastered.

Item	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	b+c	a+b	a+c	b+c+d	c+d
N	10	31	4	7	6	5	4	1	2
%	14.28%	44.28%	5.71%	10%	8.57%	7.14%	5.71%	1.42%	2.85%
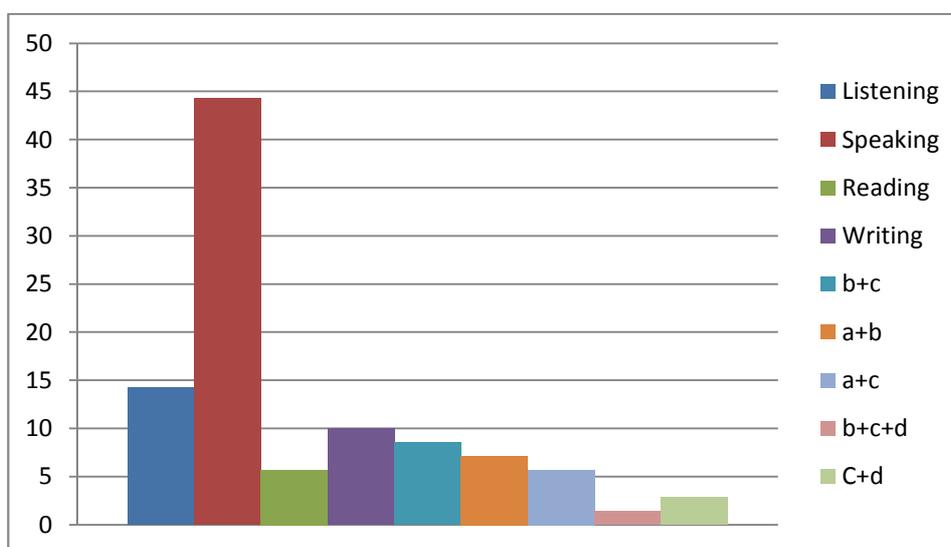
Figure. 23. The most desired skill to be mastered

The results indicate that 24.28% of the respondents prefer to master the speaking ability in order to communicate in English; they add that they need speaking abroad with tourists or at work in the near future. Also they claim that the speaking ability is the only way to interact with the other people. Other students (14.28%) hope to master the listening skill to get the tune of the word in order to be able to imitate the pronunciation of the native speakers. Other students state that they need to master the writing skill in order to be able to produce what they want in a written form (10%). Few students (5.71%) claim that their interests are towards the reading ability, they believe that reading enhances their vocabulary and corrects their pronunciation. The results also show that some students (8.57%) hope to master the two skills; they indicate that speaking and writing are the main

interest for them because they believe if they can speak well, they will express well their ideas in written form. Other students (7.14%) clarify that without listening their oral production will be poor; they add that they are interrelated and we cannot be good speakers if we are not good listeners. They are convinced that success in life depends on how well we listen to others. Also other students (5.71%) show that reading and listening are their fundamental focus, they clarify that if we listen a lot we learn how to read and we will be able to imitate their way in reading. The table above also indicates that some students (1.42%) hope to reach the three main abilities that are speaking, reading, and writing. They affirm that each one of the three main skills accomplishes the other ones. The last students prefer to master more reading and writing skills because they are interrelated according to their perceptions.

Item 24: The preferable activities for the students to improve their speaking skill.

Table .24. The preferable activities for the students.

Item	Storytelling	Role Play	Problem Solving	Free Discussion	a+b	a+b+d	a+c+d	b+d	a+c
N	11	38	4	4	3	2	2	3	3
%	15.71%	54.28%	5.71%	5.71%	4.28%	2.85%	2.85%	4.28%	4.28%
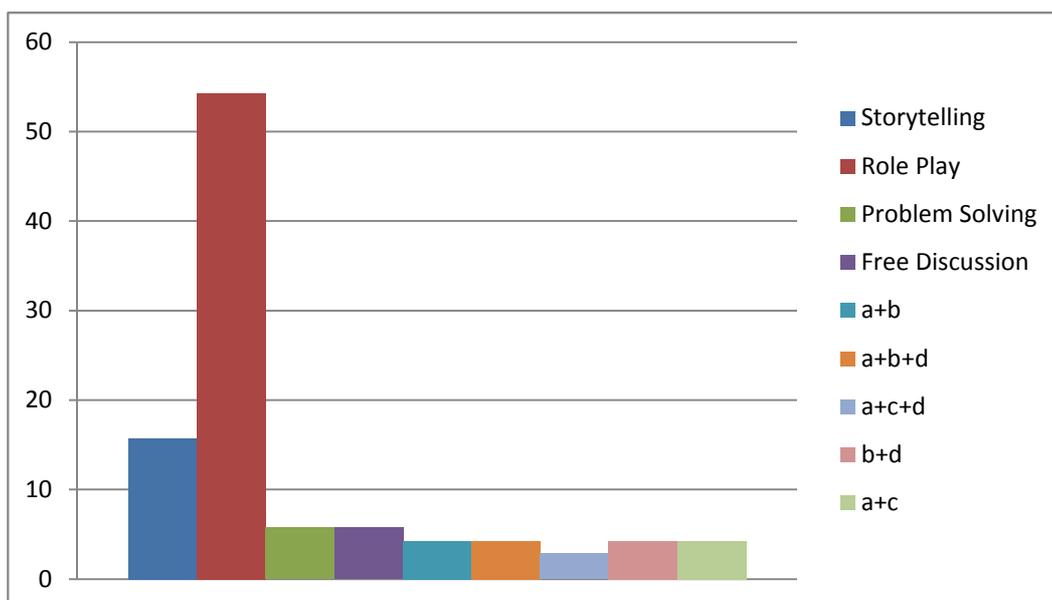
Figure. 24. The preferable activities for the student's

The current question aims at looking for the best activities that the learners prefer to work on. As far as the results obtained, we notice that most of the students' preference (54.28%) is "role play" to improve their speaking ability. And as can be noticed in the table above, there is a second main selection that is "story telling" (15.71%) while "Problem solving" and "free discussion" share the same rate which is 5.71%. Without being astonished, some students (4.28%) select two activities they prefer to work on: storytelling and role play. Others mix between three activities they like to perform during the oral session: storytelling, role play, and free discussion which are described by the rate 2.85%. Also some students, are described by the same previous rate, connect three other activities they like to practice in the classroom which are: storytelling, problem solving, and free discussion. The last two groups of students like to work on two activities. The first group prefers to work on problem solving and role play. The second group prefers to work on storytelling and problem solving. They were described by the rate 4.28 %. Other students tend to suggest other activities they wish to practice in the oral sessions which are "group work and monologue."

Section Two: Peer Work Interaction

Item 25: Students' preferences.

Table .25. Students' preferences.

item	individually	In pairs	In groups
N	15	19	36
%	21.42%	27.14%	51.42%
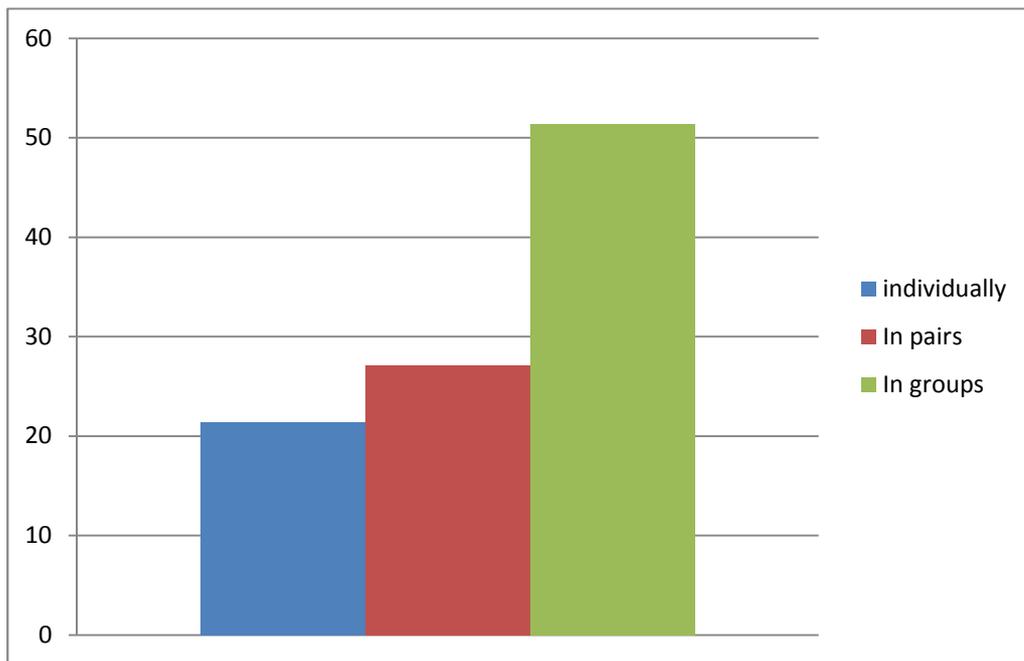
Figure. 25. Student's preferences

In this question, the respondents are required to indicate whether they prefer individual work, pair work, or small group work. As it is revealed in the table above, the majority of the students (51.42%) prefer to work in small groups. They justify their answers by indicating that small group work provide them with much more opportunities to learn in terms of interaction among them, sharing ideas, getting new knowledge, extending their vocabulary, and maintaining the social relationships. And right after, a considerable number of students (27.14%) prefer to work in pairs. They indicate the same reasons mentioned above in addition to one single difference that is in small groups there will be

different views they may not tend to share. However, the remaining participants (21.42%) like to work alone. They state that while working with others, they lose concentration and they will have problems with the leadership. They add that when learning with some good students, they may state something wrong and this would affect them in front of their teammates. Also they state that they feel more comfortable when doing the task individually. Indeed, other students report that they like competition rather than cooperation; they believe that cooperative tasks would affect their individual skills.

Item 26: Ensuring whether the teacher uses group work in the oral session.

Table .26. Ensuring whether the teacher uses group work in the oral session.

Item	Yes	No
N	64	6
%	91.42%	8.57%
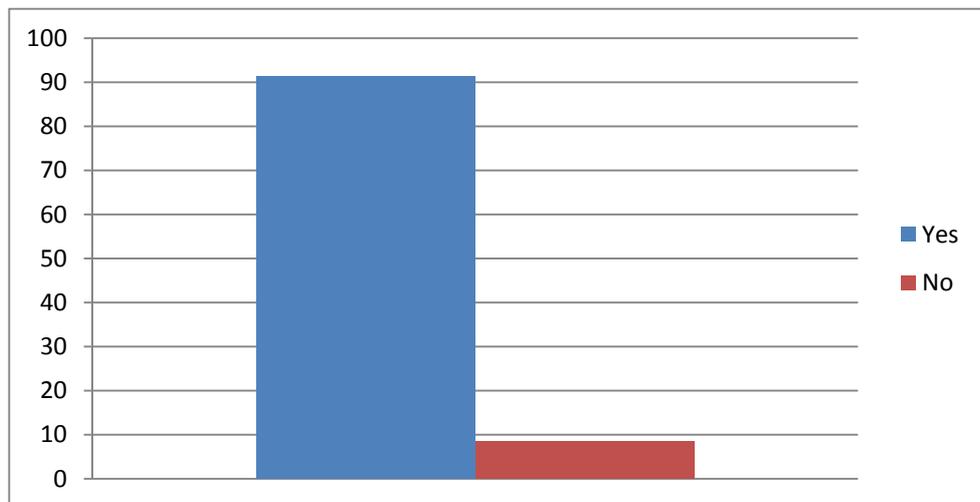
Figure. 26. Ensuring whether the teacher uses group work in the oral session

The majority of the students (91.42%) report that their teachers use group work in the oral session. On the other hand, other students (8.57%) affirm that their teachers do not use group work in the oral sessions may be because they do not attend the oral session.

Table.27. the number of times devoted for implementing this technique

Item \ Yes	Always	Often	Rarely
N	16	45	3
%	22.85%	64.28%	4.28%
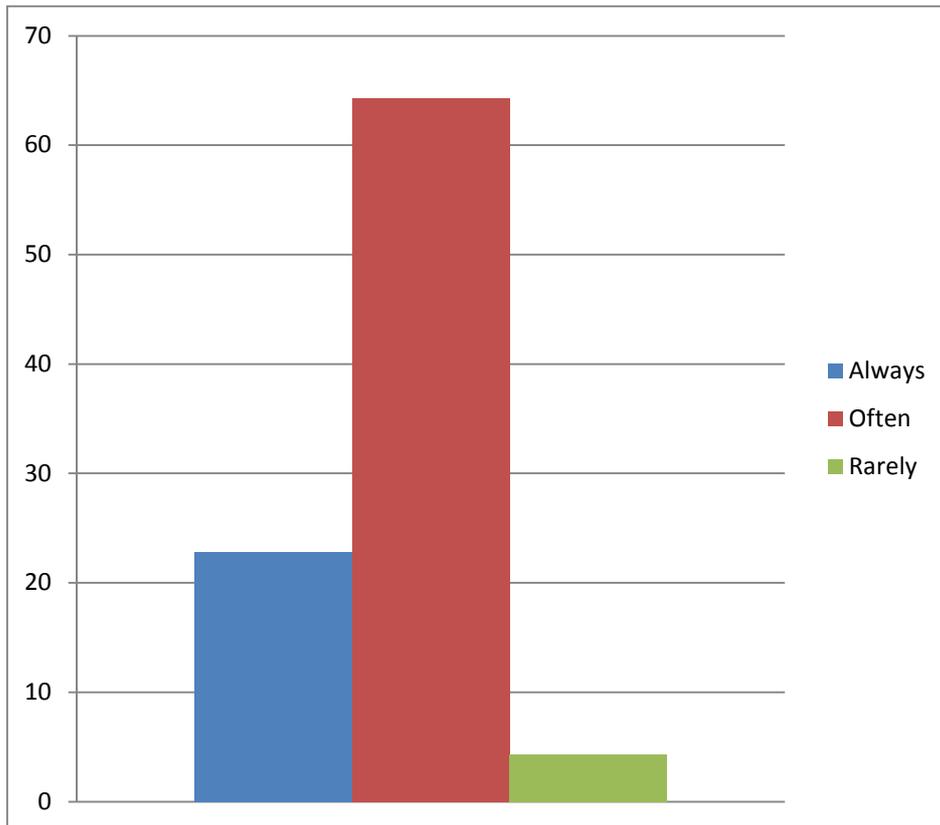
Figure.27. the number of times devoted for implementing this method

According to the results obtained in the table above, we notice that the teachers of oral expression often use this technique (64.28%) whereas others indicate that their teachers always use this technique (22.85%). The last few respondents (4.28%) report that their teachers rarely use this technique of group work in the oral sessions.

Item 27: Ensuring whether group work help the students to improve their

Table .28. Ensuring whether group work helps the students to improve their communicative skills

Item	Yes	No
N	59	11
%	84.28%	15.71%
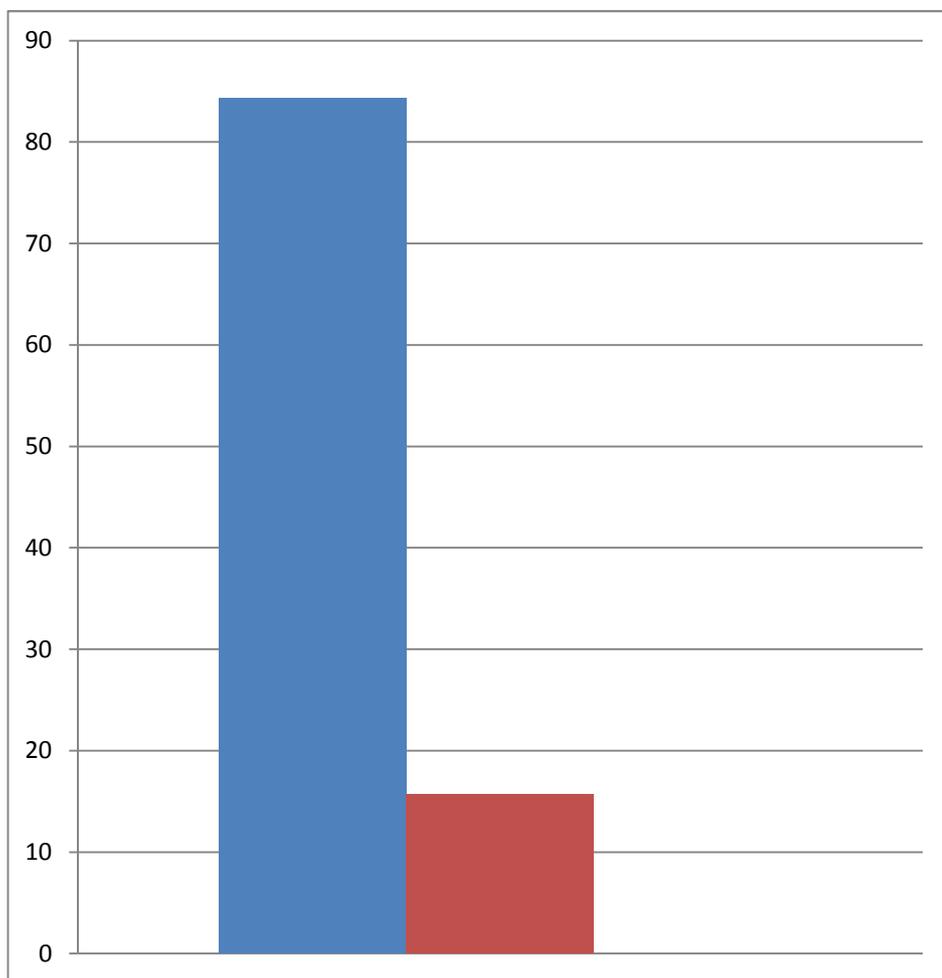
Figure.28. Ensuring whether group work helps the students to improve their communicative skills.

The aim of this question is to know whether group work helps the students improve their speaking ability. Thus, the majority of the students (84.28%) answer with "yes". They clarify their answers by saying that group work provides them with many opportunities to learn, when they ask and answer questions, they report that they benefit from group work when they learn how to listen and respect others' opinions, interact with the teacher and with their classmates, and maintain the social relationships. The remaining participants (15.71%) state that group work would affect them negatively in terms of losing concentration, the domination of some competent students, and the use of the mother tongue when negotiating some topics.

Item 28: Ensuring whether group work helps the students to improve their communicative skills

In this question we have reported that the majority of the students (84.24%) do not have problems when they work cooperatively. This indicates that they master some rules of the communicative competence. 15.71% state that they do not stand much group work for some difficulties encounter them. Among these difficulties, the interference of the mother tongue when debating some topics. Also they report that group work seem to them noisy and disruptive. The last difficulty is described in the hegemony of the dominating students that decreases the opportunity for the participation of other weak members in the group.

Conclusion

The present study aimed at knowing to which extent peer work interaction helps in developing students' oral proficiency. The questions were designed for both teachers and learners surrounding these main criteria: background information, favorite activities, and other activities the learners hope to practice in the classroom to enhance their oral production.

In this investigation, we arrived at discovering that the teachers and the learners share the same idea about the notion of studying a foreign language. They do understand that knowing language is not a matter of knowing its' linguistic competence, but a matter of knowing how to communicate using this language. Educationalists should provide the learners with much time for debating their communicative needs in order to be able to precise their students' difficulties in the communication.

The results indicate that the use of small group work and other activities especially in the oral sessions play a major role in developing students' communicative abilities. The research recommends the following suggestion in order to enhance students' oral proficiency:

- As future English language teachers, we should leave space to the interaction in our classrooms.

- Teachers should use the techniques of working in groups and encourage students to work cooperatively.

- Teachers should encourage students to participate in the classroom in order to enhance their oral production skill.

- The right selection of the activities plays a major role in motivating students to do the task.

- Teachers should understand the psychology of their students in order to be able to fulfill their needs.

Harmer (1983, p.210-1) recommends the following:

- Teachers should not go to the class unprepared:

Students have the ability to identify teachers who are not sure what to do. Even though the teacher is not preparing his lesson, he should be intelligent in presenting the topic that is going to be the focus of the session.

- Teachers should not be inconsistent:

If the teacher tells his students about the instruction that should be respected in the classroom, he should not return back about what he has said. The teacher should be consistent otherwise he will lose respect among the students.

- Teachers should not issue threats:

The way of threatening students is not an efficient idea to impose what he wants or to push them to do the task. This way of behaving with the students will affect their psychology and make them demotivated to study.

- Teachers should not raise their voices:

One of the basic mistakes the teachers do is to establish control through raising their voices and shouting because this will have negative impact on the students. Very often quiet voice is far more effective.

- Teachers should not give students boring class:

Teachers should create a nice atmosphere in the classroom when presenting his lesson.

- Teachers should not be unfair:

Teachers should deal with their students equally. They should not prefer some good students and ignore the others. He should be fair with all his students to enhance them learn more.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix .A. Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

We would be thankful if you could answer the following questions for the sake of gathering information about the role of peer interaction in developing students' oral proficiency. Your answers will be of great help for the completion of this work.

Please put a tick (√) in the corresponding box and make full statements whenever necessary. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section One: Background Information

1. What is the educational degree(s) held currently?

   a. BA(License) ☐

   b. MA (Magister/Master) ☐

   c. PH .D (Doctorate) ☐

2. How many years have you been teaching English at university?

   ……………… years.

3. How many years have you been teaching oral expression?

   ……………… years.

Section Two: Cooperative Language Learning

4. How do you make your learners work?

   a. Individually ☐

   b. In pairs ☐

   c. In groups ☐

5. How often do you use group work in teaching oral expression?

    a. Always ▢

    b. Often ▢

    c. Rarely ▢

    d. Never ▢

6. When forming groups, which of the following structures do you think enhances more learning?

    a. Mixed gender ▢

    b. Separate gender ▢

- Justify your answer:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

………………...………...…………………………………………………………….…………

………………………………………………………………………………….......................

7. Do your students like working in groups?

    a. Yes ▢

    b. No ▢

8. Do your students face obstacles when working cooperatively?

    a. Yes ▢

    b. No ▢

    c. Somehow ▢

- If "yes", explain why:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………….………..…………………………………………

………………………………...

9. How do you manage group problems?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Section Three: Speaking Proficiency

10. How do you evaluate your students' communicative proficiency?

    a. Very good ☐

    b. Good ☐

    c. Average ☐

    d. Poor ☐

11. Are your students motivated to speak?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

12. During the oral courses, which of the following activities do you use most?

    a. Group work ☐

    b. Role play ☐

    c. Problem solving ☐

    d. Free discussion ☐

    e. Other: …………………………………………………………………………………...

13. Are the activities used in class based on your students' communicative needs?

    a.   Yes

    b.   No ☐

- Justify your answer

…………………………………………………………………………………………...

……………………………………………………………………………….………

…………………………………………………………………………………………...

14. To which degree oral expression courses help your students to raise their oral proficiency?

    a.   Much   [ ]

    b.   Little   [ ]

    c.   Not at all   [ ]

15. Do you think that the use of small group work would enhance students' oral proficiency?

    a. Yes

    b. No   [ ]

- Explain why?

…………………………………………………...

……………………………………………………………………………………………

16. In addition to speaking, which of the following skills need to be more developed to reach communicative proficiency?

    a.   Listening   [ ]

    b.   Reading   [ ]

    c.   Writing   [ ]

- Justify your answer:

……….………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Thanks for your help

Appendix. B. Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are cordially invited to answer this questionnaire about the impact of Peer work interaction in developing students' oral production. The purpose of this dissertation is to identify some important factors that affect peer work effectiveness in learning English, the learning process, and classroom environment in the EFL classes at the Division of English at Mohamed Khieder Biskra University.

Please read each question carefully, and respond as accurately and candidly as you can.

Personal information

Age: ....

Gender: ....

Section One: Speaking Proficiency

1. How important is it for you to learn English?

    Very important ☐   important ☐   not so important ☐

2. Why are you studying English?

    - Need it for career   ☐

    - To make you more educated ☐

    - To add to your social status   ☐

    - Other, please specify:

        ....

        ………………………………………………………………………………...

        ………………………………………………………………………………...

        ………………………………………………………………………………… .

3. What do you do to improve your level in English?

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

4. Your level in speaking English is:

Very good ☐   Good ☐   Average ☐   Poor ☐

5. Do you use English outdoors the classroom

Yes ☐   No ☐

6. Do you participate in the classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

- If "no", why?

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

7. What is the skill that you want to master more?

- Listening   ☐

- Speaking   ☐

- Reading   ☐

- Writing   ☐

- Justify your answer:
....
....
....

8. Which of the following activities you prefer to improve your speaking skill?

- Story telling ☐

- Role play   ☐

- Problem solving ☐

- Free discussion ☐

- Other:

....

....

Section Two: Peer Work Interaction

9. Do you prefer learning

Individually ☐ in pairs ☐ in small groups ☐

- Justify your answer:

....

....

....

....

10. Do your teachers use group wok in oral expression sessions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- If "yes", how often does he/she use this technique?

Always ☐ Often ☐ Rarely ☐

11. Does group work help you improve your communicative skills (speaking)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- Please explain why:

....

....

....

....

12. What are the difficulties you encounter when working in groups?

....

....

....

....

Thanks for your help