The Conditions for a Communicatively Successful Speaking Course: The Case of 4th Grade Learners at 20 August Middle School Sétif

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DEDICATION

To all my family

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Abstract

Due to the progress in technologies of data collection and recordings as well as the increasing interest from individuals to acquire and master the speaking skill, many fields of applied linguistics and language education pay significant attention to the faculty of speaking. Researches are focused on its distinctive features, cognitive requirements and its typical pedagogical implications. Hence the present study suggests teaching the speaking skill by relying on the findings about the nature of the skill and the language that fits it. This involves the dynamic relationship between the speaking skill and the listening one, the cognitive requirement of verbal language production and the dependence to the context of language use. It is hypothesized, in this study, if the speaking skill is taught through the choice of suitable language, integrated with the listening skill and communicative strategies, it will be more communicatively effective. The study is carried out with a sample population of fourth year middle school teachers and learners trough questionnaires, interviews, and analysis of listening /speaking textbook activities. Data interpretation and analysis provide enough evidence to confirm the hypotheses, answer the research questions and provide pedagogical implications.

List of abbreviations

C.A: Conversation Analysis

C.C: Communicative Competence

C.P: Cooperative Principle

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

M.T: Mother Tongue

S.C: Strategic Competence

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

T.L: Target Language

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General Introduction

I. Statement of the Problem:

Decisions and choices in language pedagogy have constantly been influenced by the purposes for which it is originally set. The long era where foreign languages represent a mark of extensive knowledge and refined culture was characterized by the importance attached to the writing and reading skills. But with the modern life changes, the development of communication technologies, and the exigencies that ensue from them. More and more people become increasingly interested in mastering foreign languages and being able to converse in face to face discussions or through telecommunication means. These changes have reshaped language pedagogy and entailed a shift in emphasis towards the oral skills and the suitable classroom practices. However, this new interest in teaching speaking for its own right has for a long time been overshadowed by the traditional adherence to the written structures, genres and styles. Teaching the spoken skills are "largely conceived as teaching students to pronounce written sentences"(Brown and Yule1983:2). The blurred vision about the skill itself has deeply influenced the way both courses and materials are designed.

Rebecca Hughes (2002) traces this problem to the lack of researches conducted on the spoken language at all its levels ranging from its grammar to the genres mostly used in this skill. Commenting on this problematic situation, Hughes says: "there is a great deal of speaking going on in classrooms, but that is different from teaching speaking" (Hughes 2002:7). No doubt, much of the complexity attributed to teaching the speaking skill is due to ignoring the features distinguishing the skill. The most salient ones are: dynamism, context dependence, variability over time, occurrence in real time, unplanned nature and so on. It is through the understanding of these features that teaching speaking can be carried

out in a simpler and more effective manner than it actually happens in most speaking courses. To stress the paradoxical stance that language pedagogy has opted for in teaching speaking, Brown and Yule (1983) point: If native speakers typically produce short phrase sized chunks, it seems perverse to demand that foreign learners should be expected to produce complete sentences˝. (Brown and Yule 1983:8)

Another aspect that reflects the problematic situation in teaching speaking is the tendency of some curriculum designers and teachers to devote the speaking section of the program to reinforce other skills, mainly grammar and in other cases writing, reading, and pronunciation. In this respect, Scott Thornbury (2005) says:"All language teaching methods (apart from the most bookish) prioritize speaking, but less as a skill in its own right than as a means of practicing grammar"(Thonbury 2005:28). It follows from this that designed tasks barely serve to foster the oral skills, the fact that will result at length in unbalanced language proficiency. No wonder, then, if foreign language learners having such instructional programs will be proficient at grammar, writing and reading but weak at speaking.

II. Background of the Study:

Having been a teacher by profession for a number of years has offered opportunities to form a broad idea about how speaking lessons are structured, the objectives that are fulfilled in speaking lessons, and the main areas where these lessons have failed to attain their objectives. The syllabuses designed for teaching English in middle schools aim at providing the learners with the rudimentary knowledge about the language including the most frequently used vocabulary, and the basic grammatical structures. In spite of this, learners of English are still unable to use this linguistic knowledge in oral communication. The speaking abilities remain limited to repetition of the structures suggested by the

teacher or just to carry out substitution drills that lack creativity and do not engage the learners in spontaneous and autonomous interaction. When facing this problem, it is quite logical to think about the underlying causes to understand them and look for the alternative choices that help attain more communicatively effective lessons.

III Aim and Scope of the Study:

This study aims basically at detecting the weaknesses in teaching the speaking skill and advancing alternative ways to achieve effectiveness. It is suggested that this can be done by teaching learners the speaking skill for its own sake and not for rehearsing grammatical patterns.

For this purpose, we suggest to take into consideration the nature of the speaking skill which differs from its written counterpart. It is, therefore necessary to teach the spoken style which requires particular kind of vocabulary and grammar, and to integrate the listening skill with the speaking one, in the same way it actually happens in naturally occurring talks. Besides, learners should be encouraged to use some compensatory competences in case the linguistic competencies prove to be insufficient; the need for the strategic competence is more intense with learners having a low proficiency to fulfill a communicative purpose.

In addition to these main lines, further suggestions are advanced regarding some classroom techniques, such as: grouping, tasks, time devoted to this skill…and so on. It follows from the adoption of all these principles that the focus of such an alternative instruction is on the formation of successful communicators and not only good learners who internalize the largest number of rules. This in turn will enable the learners, in future, to carry out successful interactions outside the classroom settings, such as employment interviews, bargaining, lecturing and so on.

IV- Limitations of the Study:

In such studies that have direct relevance to language proficiency, gauging a given aspect or skill proves to be extremely difficult in that there is a multitude of factors interacting with each other, and a number of contested criteria which makes it difficult to decide upon the responsible factors for the situation or to opt for one set of criteria. Teachers' judgments, for instance, are based on subjective criteria and each teacher may have his/ her own set of features which are not identical to another teacher's, and this affects the reliability of the result and the consistency of the work in general. Moreover, some learners and even teachers find it difficult to situate themselves and formulate an opinion about a specific point either because they did not think about it before or because there are more than one opinion they think it is convenient to adopt.

Seen from a theoretical perspective, this study has other limitations which bear on the variations between Second Language Acquisition studies and those of Foreign Language Acquisition. Whereas some books deal with language pedagogy designed for the instruction of students who are living in a community speaking this second language, other ones are centered on foreign language acquisition, where the student's use of this language is limited to the classroom setting. Due to this fundamental distinction, many issues relevant to the speaking skill should be tackled with much caution and reservation.

V- Assumptions and Hypotheses:

The major concern of this research is to invite teachers and curriculum developers to found all their decisions that concern teaching the speaking skill upon one's understanding of the skill itself. This understanding cannot be achieved unless a study is conducted on the different facets that the nature of this skill may have. In doing this, the discrete constituents

of language proficiency will be given even importance, and thus the guarantee of developing a balanced language proficiency at foreign language learners will be greater.

Hence, we hypothesize that the speaking skill can be taught more effectively if the nature of the skill is taken into account. This implies the choice of the suitable language, the integration with the listening skill, and the use of communication strategies to fulfill the communicative need.

The second hypothesis that can be advanced is the following: teaching the speaking skill for its own sake and not for the aim of reinforcing other language elements ensures to a large extent the communicative effectiveness in the course.

VI- Research Methodology:

The nature of the topic we are addressing requires the examination and the description of the educational situation embedding the speaking skill instruction because this educational situation involves three basic elements interacting with each other, namely: the learners, the teacher, and the course book. Hence, we opted for a descriptive approach which allows us to draw a clear picture about the topic in question and ensures the collection of data with relevance to the three mentioned elements.

With respect to the learners, our aim consists of probing their readiness to learn the speaking skill within the conditions suggested in this research; so we need to know the main difficulties they are confronted with, the preferences they have towards a number of techniques, and the expectations for which they pursue their language instruction.

As for teachers, we need to discover the basic principles that guide them in their classroom decisions. It is also crucial to invite them to give any suggestions, as this would reveal the real conditions in which they hope to play their role of promoting the speaking skill.

The course book analysis permits to know the degree of conformity that the designed activities have with the criteria required for teaching speaking. A further reason for choosing the descriptive approach is the possibility to know facts which are not amenable to direct observation or to examination namely the learners' likes and dislikes and the teachers' positions and suggestions for better outcomes. Furthermore, it is difficult to conduct an experiment with learners who will have a written exam at the end of the year. This experiment may require a lot of modifications at the level of materials around which the speaking skill is centered, the type of grouping the class, as well as the time allotted to this skill, which may not be accepted neither by the school administration, nor by the teachers and learners.

VII-Population and Sampling:

The rationale underlying the choice of fourth grade, middle school learners is the linguistic proficiency they have acquired till this level. It consists of the rudimentary linguistic knowledge which allows them to engage into meaningful language production. At this stage, the learners have at their disposal an acceptable amount of vocabulary items, they master simple rules of sentence formation using auxiliaries, modals or verbs, they also know the simple tenses and some of the compound ones. However, speaking is more than knowledge; it is a skill, (Martin Bygate 1987) and although an important proportion of learners at this level do master the required knowledge, they cannot venture in spontaneous talks. Their oral production is limited to the reproduction of readymade utterances or the substitution of some parts in a transcribed speech event.

The purpose, then, behind conducting this research with the pre-intermediate level learners is to show that although teaching spoken interaction is not an easy pedagogical

objective to be attained with low proficiency levels, it is still possible if a set of criteria are met in the process of teaching.

A sample population of 87 learners which makes two classes is selected to be administered the questionnaire. To complement this study, six teachers having different degrees of experience and different backgrounds of formation are interviewed.

VIII-Data Collection Techniques:

As it is mentioned in a previous part, the field work of this study aims principally at describing the instructional context in which the speaking skill is taught to fourth grade middle school learners. This calls for adopting a triangulation where each of the three instruments is a source of information from one basic element in the educational situation.

* The learners' questionnaire:

Through some factual and attitudinal questions, information is elicited concerning the main difficulties learners are confronted with, their preferences as regards some classroom practices and the expectations they have from learning to speak a foreign language. The information yielded by this questionnaire is converted into statistical data to facilitate the analysis of the responses. .(see appendix I)

* The teachers' interviews:

Similarly, information relevant to the topic of this research is obtained from teachers by means of a number of questions, most of the them are open-ended, which allow for a qualitative analysis and a comprehensive view of the topic, the main principles underlying their teaching practices, and the suggestions that may yield more effective teaching of the skill.(see appendix II)

* The course book evaluation:

The purpose behind including this research instrument is to gauge the extent of conformity of the book's content with the principles and conditions advanced in this research. It is necessary to refer to a number of criteria suggested by some writers who dealt with course book evaluation; however there is a deliberate focus on the speaking skill and the section devoted to its teaching.

IX-The Structure of the Work:

The dissertation is structured into two major parts: the theoretical part in which we consider the contributions of eminent writers in revealing the multifaceted nature of the speaking skill, the second part is a field work which attempts to describe how some of those theoretical assumptions are implemented in the context of foreign language classrooms.

The theoretical part consists of three chapters: the first one deals with speaking as a skill having its own nature and sheds light on the features that distinguish it from the other skills, the way it is produced and the functions that is can serve. The second chapter of the first part, tackles speaking as a fundamental means of communication. This involves addressing the communicative competence as a notion advanced by a number of theorists and the methodological trends in developing the language proficiency. The third part deals with a set of tools and techniques constituting the major factors that influence the speaking course.

The field work is composed of four chapters. Chapter four and five present and analyze data collected from the learners' questionnaire and teachers' interview respectively. Chapter six present and analyze textbook activities most relevant to the speaking skill and

effective communication. Chapter seven suggests some pedagogical implications through the design of sample activities for teaching speaking with a communicative purpose.

Introduction :

The availability of recorded speech data and the new possibilities to submit them to direct analysis, allowed researchers to investigate many aspects related to the speaking skill. Psycholinguists and cognitivists addressed the question of speech production, its phases and the conditions that shape the spoken language. Discourse and conversation analysts studied the interactive features that characterise talks and the conventions interlocutors adhere to when engaged into conversations. Other applied linguists dealt with the differences between the written mode of language and the spoken one to highlight the influence of transmission medium on the type of language produced. In the present part of the study we will shed light on the main areas that applied linguists researches have tackled in an attempt to establish theoretical grounds that help investigate, in other parts, the communicative and pedagogical aspects of speaking.

1.The Importance of Researching Speaking:

The importance of studying speaking does not stem from one single reason but from a considerable number of motives. They range from historical reasons to more current ones and from theoretical grounds to more practical ones. The distinction made by Saussure and Chomsky between langue and parole, and competence and performance respectively has given rise to two major trends in the linguistics discipline. The adherers of the rationalist school were interested more in the investigation of the language faculty existing in the brain or the mind, and in defining the universal grammar. Their studies are essentially grounded on some " idealized and decontextualized example [of language use] which in turn fit better the norms of writing than speech" (Hughes 2002: 16). Chomsky is the major exponent of this school of thought; he rather prefers to investigate language and its

components in a "pure" and "abstract" form" (Stern 1983: 219) and leaves aside the varieties of language use in its spoken and written forms.

At the other extreme point of the linguistic studies we find the trends that are interested in performance that is the actual spoken or written data with a tendency to focus more on the spoken data. Labov justifies this orientation as he states: "it seems natural enough that the basic data for any form of general linguistics would be language as it is used by native speakers communicating with each other in everyday life ". (Labov 1971: 153 cited in Stern 1983: 219).

The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of new fields of research sharing the fundamental assumption that any investigation conducted under the general cover term of linguistics should focus on performance. Conversation analysis, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics form instances of these newly emerging fields.

Another factor that has given momentum to spoken-data-based studies is the inventions of computers and recording materials. This has facilitated the handling of naturally occurring speech. Moreover, there has always been an implicit association of language acquisition as a whole to speech production. Be it in first language (L1) acquisition or second language (L2) acquisition, the notion of learning the language means essentially speaking it. A considerable number of key concepts used in language acquisition studies display this association, by way of illustrating let us cite: the silent period, input, output, scaffolding, input modification, negotiation of meaning and so on.

Seen from a more practical angle, the study of speaking came to the fore of applied linguistics scope with the flourishing of language teaching industry. More and more people are interested in acquiring the speaking skill of a foreign language (FL). The international market place requires employees who can communicate easily in face-to face meetings or on the phone.

Besides the commercial and economic motives, people aspire to master the speaking skill in a FL in order to get by in whatever speaking community they happen to live. Students who wish to carry out further studies abroad have better chances to succeed in their education or in the new living community if they know how to speak English (or the required FL). This need for the speaking skill as a means of communication explains to a certain extent the shift of FL learning pedagogies from the focus on pronunciation to the communicative aspect of language use (Brown and Yule 1983).

The motives that may prompt L2 learners to learn speaking an additional language are unlimited, the thing that gave rise to a key component in FL teaching which is the needs analysis. Syllabi, courses as well as textbooks are designed in accordance to the objectives the learner wants to achieve.

Another important incentive for both researching and learning speaking comes this time from applied linguists, As a reaction to the Input Hypothesis advanced by Krashen (1985 cited in Ellis 1997:47) and which states that a language is acquired when the learner is exposed to understandable input. Merrill Swain (1995 cited in Ellis 1997:49) views that practicing the language whether through the spoken mode or the written one is another important and effective way to acquire the language, her suggestion was termed the Output Hypothesis, its underlying principles can be summarized in three points:

The target language production allows the learner to notice the gap in his linguistic knowledge, when he intends to fulfill a specific communication need he does it with the readily available knowledge he owns. This may help him realize the lacking elements needed for successful communication or it may consolidate what has been previously acquired.

In addition to the consciousness raising role, language production gives the learner a chance to test the hypotheses he has formulated about the functioning of the language.

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Only by putting the rules he has inferred about the language into practice that a learner can decide about their correctness. The feedback resulting from such attempts of putting into practice language rules indicates whether these rules are correct or they need to be modified.

The third function of target language production is a metalinguistic one, learners usually discuss with their peers or with native speakers the limitations of their linguistic abilities and work together to find ways of controlling this linguistic knowledge.

Swain's suggestion forms, then, a powerful hypothesis about how language rules are internalized by learners. Nevertheless, it needs to specify the mechanisms through which learners will be given the chances to produce the target language within classroom contexts and this is exactly the target that pedagogical researchers are trying to attain.

As it has been said before, the importance of researching and studying speaking are so diverse and this led to approaching the skill from very different angles and creating an overlap of research issues shared by many disciplines.

2. Defining Speaking:

It is popularly assumed that the question:"do you know English ?" means:"do you speak English?". The importance of speaking, then, stems from its being associated to the general knowledge of the language, although some applied linguists have some doubts as regard this assumption, the particular status that the speaking skill occupies remains undeniable (Hughes 2002) . To understand what makes the speaking skill particularly important compared to the other skills, it is necessary to characterize its nature and consider the insights offered by applied linguists about it.

Fulcher (2003) defines speaking as: "the verbal use of language to communicate with others. The purposes for which we wish to communicate are so large that are

innumerable". (Fulcher 2003:23). Though this definition is so straightforward it suggests many key parts that need to be elaborated.

2.1.Inter-individual versus Intra-individual Aspects of Language:

 The language that is inside the speaker's mind before its being manifested into audible sounds has been referred to by many concepts namely: knowledge, competence, language faculty and so on. (Fulcher 2003). Many disciplines have attempted to describe this intra-individual aspect, analyze its constituents, explain how it is inherently present in every individual as a primary language and how it is acquired through teaching as a secondary language, when the language inside the individual is verbalized it results in communication and interaction with other members of his community. This inter-individual aspect of language has its own rules of co-construction, turn-taking, interruption etc, and it occupies a significant status in social relationships.

 Speech is essentially a verbal activity, it is characterized by the articulation of sounds, the concrete physical realization of the internal abstract knowledge as opposed to writing where graphics are the outward aspect of the same knowledge. The combination of these sounds bears some meaning according to some conventions proper to every speaking community. Given the fact that sounds are ephemeral and have to be processed "on the spot" a dynamic interaction occurs between interlocutors, they keep constantly exchanging roles, the speaker now is the hearer later and so on. The listening skill plays a significant role both for the understanding of the spoken utterances and for planning what to say next.

2.2.Language Functions:

If language is principally a means of communication, what do people aim at when engaging in talks? In other words, what are the functions of speaking? In his definition,

Fulcher (2003) claims that the purposes behind communication are limitless and closely linked to the "human needs and desires" (Fulcher 2003: 23).

Brown and Yule (1983) have attempted to categorize the functions of speaking in two big classes. They distinguished between the interactional functions and the transactional ones. By interactional functions it is meant "'the maintenance of social relationships" (Brown and Yule 1983 : 11).Some examples of chats that have social functions are succinctly summarized by Richards (2008) in these terms: "when people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talks, recount recent experiences, and so on because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others" (Richards 2008: 22).

In this kind of talk speakers are the focal point and what imports more is the sort of relationship they wish to establish rather than the message itself. This is the reason why:

"It is very noticeable that speakers in such chat do not typically challenge each other, do not argue, do not require repetition of something that the other person has said. If a participant in such an interaction does not hear exactly what it was the speaker said, he is quite likely simply to nod and smile". (Brown and Yule 1983:12).

The interactional talk is characterized by its variety in formality and politeness degrees. It gives many insights about the speaker's identity and requires an intention to co-construct the discourse from both sides of the conversation.

The other function that speaking serves is a transactional one. Here, people are either conveying some pieces of information, intention, or facilitating the execution of services. What imports in such talks is the message conveyed through words and not the participants. Hence, the need for negotiating the meaning and using communication strategies is strong.

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This brief elaboration of filcher's definition is far from being comprehensive; however it includes the most important aspects pertaining to the speaking skill.

3.The Generation of Speech / Levelt´s Model:

The articulated speech perceived by hearers as sound waves is the physical manifestation of verbal language. It constitutes the final phase in a whole process of language production and the outcome of other preceding preverbal stages. Psychologists have suggested many models to unveil and explain these non perceptible phases. Their researches rely mostly on introspections and evidence provided in anecdotal data (Scovel 2001)

One of the strongest models of language production is suggested by Levelt (1989 cited in Bygate 2009:407). It is initially proposed to explain L1 production, but researchers employ it to account for L2 production as well, taking into consideration, the variations between the two processes

This model has enlightened many aspects of language production, and has inspired researchers in pedagogy and language teaching to include some practical steps into classroom activities. Levelt (1983 cited in Bygate 2009:407) states that speech processing goes through four major phases: conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring.

3.1.Conceptualization:

It is the starting point from which the production of any utterance or even just a word begins. The speaker conceives a particular meaning to convey and intends to express it. For this aim, he makes choices of the relevant information and decides the order in which this information will be given. In this phase the speaker takes into account the appropriateness of his message with context. In more technically linguistic terms, he decides a given

pragmatic purpose, a discourse type and a topic (Bygate 2009). This set of mental activities constitute the preverbal message intended to be translated verbally. Hence, Scovel (1997) stresses the importance of considering this phase in mentalistic terms rather than relying on empirical evidence.

> "After all, speech does not start from nothing, and if it does not start with concepts, how else could it possibly begin? At the same time, we realize how difficult it is to actually define this stage in non-mentalistic terms". (Scovel 1997:29).

3.2. Formulation:

The next phase in language production is formulation. This is a process whereby the speaker prepares a plan of linguistic elements that should match the conceived meaning. In other words, the speaker chooses from all levels of the systemic language store the elements that enable him to map out his message. This store encompasses the lexical level, the morphosyntactic and the phonological ones. The formulation phase is divided into two processes, the selection of the lexical entries or the grammatical encoding and the sound processing or the phonological encoding.

 In the first process the speaker selects the appropriate words, or what is also called, lexical entries, lexical representation, lemma, from his mental lexicon. This store of lemma information includes the semantic information and the syntactic ones that determine the activation and selection of a specific word (Levelt 1983 cited in Muranoi 2007:53, Griffin and Ferrera 2006). A word is appropriate for selection if it matches the conceptual components of the preverbal message, and if it fits the socio-psychological context this will prevent any misinterpretation from the part of the interlocutor.

The second process in the formulation phase is the phonological encoding. Here the speaker decides the phonetic and articulatory elements that go with the planned lemmas.

He retrieves the necessary sounds, programs their accordance in either stressed or unstressed syllables and specifies the motor actions needed for the articulation of speech.

All these mental activities are supposed to be managed in a very limited space of time, the fact that makes the speaker appeal to chaining together short phrases rather than composing long subordinated clauses, this process is called add-on strategy. This explains why the spoken language has a fragmented nature; this fact is more perceptible in transcribed parts of discourse than it is in directly articulated speech (Bygate 2005).

3.3. Articulation:

The third phase is the articulation. This is the point in which all the preverbal mental processing is translated into an audible stream of speech. The motor decisions performed by the articulatory system are the realization of the lexicogrammatical and phonological plans. It is worth to note here, that all the suprasegmental features such as pitch, intonation and the changing loudness are encompassed in articulation not excluding the pauses that occur every now and then. Scovel (1997) draws an analogy between the articulation stage and the printing of a computer program as he says:

> "but this third stage of articulation is similar to what happens when all of those bits of information selected by a word processing program go from your computer to your printer ; unless vast amount of electrical data is articulated into letters of the alphabet and successfully printed, no message is received" (Scovel 1997: 41).

3.4. Self-monitoring:

The final phase in speech production is self-monitoring, this process is not an isolated step but it co-occurs with all the previous phases. It allows the speaker to check whether his planned and articulated messages are sén accordance with intended meanings and intentions. When conceiving a given message, the speaker may change his mind and

give it up if he realizes that it does not suit the socio-cultural context of the talk or that it may lead to possible misinterpretations. At the formulation phase, self-monitoring may result in a rephrasing of an utterance and a change in the layout of the lexicogrammatical and phonological plan. At the level of articulation if the word or a particular sound is pronounced wrongly, the speaker may correct himself and provide the correct version. However, if the process of self monitoring does not prevent the speaker from misusing the language, it allows him all the same to repair the mistakes by immediately providing corrections.

Pit Corder (1967 cited in Scovel 2001:83) argues that self-monitoring or the ability to correct oneself is an evidence that native speakers have a good command of the language emanating from the competence existing in their minds. Non-native speakers, in contrast, can't realize by themselves that they have committed errors and when informed about their existence, they try to correct the errors by appealing to the rules of language they have formulated and which constitute their interlanguage competence. These rules can be wrong in some cases and may thus lead to the substitution of an error by another one.

In the light of this account about language production, we can consider that speaking is a complex activity made up of a sum of mental and motor activities and which demands making choices at all the levels of language. This statement is practically applicable to both L1 and L2 production, and in order to understand the variation existing between both cases it is necessary to consider first the dichotomy of controlled versus automated processes.

3.5. Controlled versus Automated Processes:

Levelt (1989 cited in Muranoi 2007:55) employed the notion of controlled processing to refer to operations requiring conscious handling from the speaker; that is he

has to conceive an intention and focus his attention on a particular activity. However, automated processing refers to effortless operations that do not require any conscious concentration on what is being done, it is only through intensive and constant practice that a skill becomes automated.

According to Levelt (1989 cited in Muranoi 2007:55), conceptualization is the only phase requiring a conscious management, which means that the conception of any message should occur with the speaker's intention. However, formulation and articulation are automated given the fact that the speaker is already endowed with a full linguistic competence and that he does not need to focus his attention on the competence every time he wants to form an utterance.

For L2 speakers things are different. In addition to the attention focussed during the conceptualization phase, the speaker needs to control as well the formulation and the articulation phases. He should activate his knowledge of the L2 rules to plan the encoding of lexico-grammatical and phonological elements. The articulation of segmental and suprasegmental elements is an additional load for the non-native speaker (Muranoi 2007). Due to this fact, L1 speaking sounds smooth and continuous while L2 speaking is fragmented and full with hesitation and false starts, and only when the L2 speaker attains a level at which the formulation phase is proceduralized that L2 speaking becomes effortless and fluent.

Seen from a perspective of automaticity, a task is proceduralized if it moves from a nature of declarative knowledge (facts, things) to the one of a procedural knowledge (skills, habits...). If, for example, a non-native speaker is supposed to name things in the plural form, he has to refer to his declarative knowledge about the target language and more precisely to the rule stating that plural forms are obtained by affixing the "s". The speaker, then, has to attend to the operation of adding the "s". However, if a lot of practice

is done, the speaker will no more need to activate this rule again and again, instead he will unconsciously affix the "s" to the names. At this point, we can say that his knowledge, about plural formation is proceduralized. (Dekeyser 2001)

3.**6. Criticism of Levelt´s Model**:

Although Levelt's model has proved to be very influential since its elaboration, and has suggested many insights to the field of language teaching, it has been criticized for not including the collaborative aspect of language production that is how participants contribute together in shaping the talk. The planning of that intended meaning relates closely to the participant's expectations and to the manner they wish the conversation should be managed.

This view has been expressed by Bygate (2009) as he states; "the use of communication strategies depends on the joint identification and resolution of a problem with speaker and listener effectively plotting the direction of the discourse, and each anticipating upcoming meanings and appropriate ways of expressing them". (Bygate 2009: 408).

One of the researchers who have studied the generation of discourse from the perspective of joint construction is Wilkes-Gibbs (1997 cited in Bygate 2009:408). She arrived to the conclusion that:

"Speakers do not merely formulate their messages in terms of conceptualization that they have privately established. Rather messages are selected and formulated in the light of what they consider their interlocutor needs to understand. Hence, they take bearings on their interlocutor likely relevant states and where possible, on the interlocutor's likely relevant intentions or purposes". (Bygate 2009: 408).

Wilkes-Gibbs views do not contradict Levelt's model of speech production, they rather reveal the multifaceted nature of the speaking skill and that the topic can be viewed from many angles.

4.The Dynamic Relationship between Speaking and Listening:

Speaking occupies an important part in people's daily life. Unless, it is the case of an audience attending a speech, a conference or a lecture presentation, where the speaker is producing long non-interrupted stretches of speech, it is the norm that participants in conversations keep constantly exchanging roles of speaker and hearer. They also mutually strive to direct the talk towards a particular purpose which can be having a service done, exchanging opinions or just chatting. By doing so, they jointly shape the structure of the discourse and its content as well.

4.1. Conversational Organisation:

4.1.1. Turn- Taking Rules:

The participation in any interaction with one or more than one addressee involves taking turns to get equal opportunities to speak. The points at which a speaker and a listener exchange roles are the key elements that shape the structure of an interaction.

Harvey Sacks (1974 cited in Lee 1979:236), with the collaboration of some colleagues, proposed a model which explains how conversations are structured into sequences of "turn-taking". Although it was suggested in the early 1970's it is still a classic model to which everyone should appeal to understand conversational analysis. The premise underlying Sack´s (1974 in Lee 1979:236) model is that what makes conversations organized in terms of turn-taking is a two-part system: a turn-constructional component and a turn-allocational one. The turn-constructional component is responsible of

constructing the utterances that compose the speaker4s turn. Whereas the turn-constructional component is a set of rules that are responsible of deciding who the next speaker will be. These rules operate mainly in transition relevance places (TRP) which are the indications of speaking turns ends.

According to Sacks (2004) in more than two participant conversations, the allocation of the next speaker is done through two techniques. In the first one, the speaker himself chooses the next speaker by producing an utterance that requires a response from a particular addressee, such as asking a question and wait for an answer,or giving a compliment and receive an acceptance or refusal. These are just illustrative examples of what make up the adjacency pairs. In this kind of structures, the first part often decides the following one. Adjacency pairs constitute relatively a considerable part of common conversation structures. The second technique whereby a next speaker is selected is the self-selection by any participant; so, any one of the conversing group can contribute to the talk by simply deciding to take the floor.

Another equally important element for the understanding of conversational organization is the idea of one-party-talking-at-a-time, which implies that speakers should minimize the occurrence of "gaps" or 'overlaps'. An overlap occurs mainly when a listener notices the indications of a TRP which can be of a syntactic or phonological nature, as it can be the uttering of the first part of an adjacency pair. The current listener who decides to become the new speaker before the other ends his talk results in an overlap. A gap, however, may occur when the current speaker expects another to select himself for the next turn but this one for some reasons would not do, and this results in a silence.

Sacks (2004) insists in this regard, on being clear when using the terms of gap and overlap. A 'gap' may be confused with a 'pause' both terms constitute "the two ways that less-than-one-speaker-at-s-time occurs, (Sacks 2004: 40). While a gap is a silence that

occurs between two turns, a pause is a silence happening within the same turn. The other distinction is made between an 'overlap' and an 'interruption'; these are "the two ways more-than-one speaker at-a-time occurs" (Sacks 2004:40). An overlap is an engagement from the part of the hearer in a turn before the speaker has completed the utterance with the intention of avoiding a gap whereas interruption is meant to start talk and occupy the other interlocutor's turn.

It is, nevertheless, worthy to note that the question of tolerating gaps and overlaps does to a certain extent relate to cultural dimensions. The length of silence is tolerated in some cultures and even appreciated; it is regarded as a sign of politeness and respect from the speaker as he avoids overlaps. In contrast, for other cultures silence is avoided within the flow of a conversation it causes embarrassment and obliges interactants to say anything just to fill the silence gaps. (Celce-Murcia, Olshtain 2000)

4.1.2. Openings and Closings

Another point which pertains to the structure of conversations and which reflects the joint construction of meanings is the one of openings and closings used by the participants to begin and end their talks. Openings usually take the form of greetings or introductions to the topic. Closings indicate the end of the talk, but they need to be preceded by one or more than one pre-closings. A speaker may say: "well, okay ..." and uses a falling intonation to show his intention of ending the talk soon.

In some situations, where the participants do not belong to the same social status, closings should be made in a very subtle way. A teacher for instance, brings his lecture to an end by saying this: "right, okay, you've done well and we can continue tomorrow, bye" (Fulcher 2003).

4.2. Least Collaborative Effort:

The account advanced so far sums up the most important elements that reflect how participants in a conversation shape together the structure of their talks. Starting from the same assumption, that is seeing the listener in a communication as an active partner, not just a passive receiver of messages, another model has been suggested by Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs. (1986 cited in Schober and Brennan 2003:128).

According to these two authors, conversational interaction is a joint action which demands two active parties performing in coordination communication exchanges. The least collaborative effort, a notion proposed by these authors, is the key principle of the collaborative aspect of conversing. It states that when speaking, interlocutors not only do their best to minimize the effort employed to produce talk, by appealing to short and simple phrases, but they do as well try to minimize the effort they employ together as partners in order to make the message understood. The mental efforts interlocutors do aim at establishing mutual agreements on the common ground that allows them to decode each other's messages(Wilkes-Gibbs and Clark 1992).

This principle is adopted by all participants in conversations but its use is remarkably intense when interlocutors do not have equal linguistic abilities. If a native speaker is addressing a non-native one he has to take into account that intelligibility requires the use of certain type of utterances. (Schober and Brennan 2003). Among speakers of equal linguistic abilities, the presence of "least collaborative effort" is noticeable in many cases, such as when referring to an object, unknown to the interlocutor, for the first time. The speaker may use long noun phrases to describe this object so that when mentioning it in subsequent turns there would be no need to describe it again.

The collaborative aspect of face to face conversation is also felt when interlocutors ask for their partners' help by stopping at a given point to be completed by the other

speakers. The help may take the form of a word that they have a problem in finding it, or more than a word to complete an utterance.

Schober and Brennan (2003) illustrate this fact by providing an example taken from Wilkes-Gibbs (1986) corpus.

A: Every time I get on the elevator when it comes from the fifth floor it has this funny smell.

B: I've been using the ......uh.

A: Stairs ?

B: stairs.

A: yeah.

(Schober and Brennan 2003:124).

In other cases, speakers may reformulate their utterances relying on the interlocutor's signals of confusion and provide more clarifications to the intended meaning. It is worth to note here that the listener's feedback may be verbal, as it may consist of a gaze or a nod of the head. Alternatively, speakers may stop before the utterance is completed when they find that the interlocutor has already figured out the meaning and that the conversational goal is already achieved.

In the following example, the listener does not behave as a passive recipient who waits for the speaker to finish his extended turn to start his contribution. Instead, he contributes in shaping his interlocutor's utterance and acts as a co-creator of speech.

A: we really just disagree on one thing.

B: which is ...

A: which is that he wants to use terms like 'mind and I do not think that they are necessary'.

(Wilkes-Gibbs 1986 in Schober and Brennan 2003: 124).

4.3.Clark and Krych View:

Evidence from corpora about the dynamic relationship between speaking and listening are innumerable, the fact that has prompted researchers to study this relationship from a variety of perspectives. Thus, there is an implicitly agreed upon point which is: each of the speaking and listening skills should not be explored from a unilateral view. In other words, accounts on speaking should not stop at explaining how talk is produced by an individual through stages of conceptualization, formulation articulation and self-monitoring. Nor should the study of listening stop at attention, parsing and interpretation of utterances. Both skills cannot be accounted for if treated as being autonomous. Hence, a need to bilateral accounts for each of the processes is manifested.

Clark and Krych (2001) stress the importance of researches based on a bilateral view in this statement:

"In dialogue, then, the participants work together in determining the course of each utterance. They rely not only on each other's vocal signals, but on each other's gestural signals ... they use the signals to create projective pairs by which they ground what they are currently saying ...Models of language use that are limited to only part of this process are necessarily incomplete and, for many purposes, incorrect". (Clark and Krych 2001: 79).

Starting from the idea of studying the kind of relationships that may exist between speakers and listeners, a distinction is made between interactive and non-interactive communications.

Interactive or multi-party communication can take the form of, talks between friends, shopping exchanges, job interviews, and so on. Non-interactive communication or monologues can be, journalist reports, academic lectures, politician speeches.... In this second category it is obvious that there is no monitoring of the listener's understanding by

the speaker given that the feedback is delayed or is not provided at all. It is, then, necessary before any elaboration of accounts pertaining to the speaking skill, to note first whether it concerns dialogues or one-way talks.

4.4. J.C. Richards´ View:

Within a pedagogical framework, Jack C. Richards (2008) contributed useful insights on listening. He suggests that this skill has two primary roles to play, and both roles have some repercussions on the speaking skill. The first function is the facilitation of understanding speech, the second one is the facilitation of language acquisition.

The interpretation of spoken discourse is achieved through listening and it represents the fundamental goal of the listener. But this cannot be attained unless he consciously directs his attention to the speaker, activates his prior knowledge and schema; and uses the listening strategies that enable him to approach and manage his listening.

It is important when dealing with listening as comprehension to see it as a sum of sub-processes and not as a single step: the recognition of words, the identification of cohesive devices and the sorting out of key words constitute examples of these sub-processes.

The first function of listening is, therefore, the decoding of spoken discourse, a step without which the listener won't be able to contribute his next turn when engaged in a talk. The second function is similarly linked to the speaking skill but in a different manner. Richards (2008) asserts that in addition to comprehension, listening provides an important means of language acquisition, the linguistic input presented in pedagogical or social environments is a key element in acquiring a target language, Schmidt (1990 cited in Richards 2008:15) points to the importance of "noticing" and "conscious awareness" in

language learning and argues that only with the help of this mental process can input (what is heard by the listener becomes intake (the noticed parts of the input).

Features of language which have appeared in that input and which through the process of noticing have been detected will subsequently be incorporated in the speaker's production. These features may take the form of new words, grammatical structures, cohesive devices and so on. It is, then, through listening to language that a learner of target language can speak it.

4.5. Grice Cooperative Principle:

In the field of pragmatics, a consistent theory revolving around the idea that interlocutors strive together to reach successful communication is advanced by Grice (1975in Bloomer, Griffith and Merrison2005). In normal circumstances, individuals speak to strengthen the social ties or to ensure the transmission of information in a successful manner. They engage into speech for some shared purposes they cooperate   together to achieve. This premise is fundamental to the notion of cooperative principle (CP) that Grice has developed.

Relevant to the suggested notion are   the four maxims of conversation; the first maxim states that interlocutors should be sufficiently informative to help fulfill successful communication. They do not need to say more than it is required from them and surely should not say less. The second maxim requires the interactants to say only what they believe is true and rely on strong evidence. Thus, if they are not sure of the quality of their talk they can show their uncertainty about the truth of the information by saying for instance: 'I am not completely sure, but it can be ... '.The third maxim reflecting the cooperative attitude of speakers necessitates being relevant to the topic and the last one is to be clear.

Grice's view is an additional evidence that the speaking skill cannot be explored fully and extensively without reference to the listening skill. Accounts on this topic are so numerous and varied that cannot be all mentioned in such a context. However what has been dealt with so far constitute the fundamental assumptions that will have some pedagogical implications and that will explain the theoretical premises underlying any methodological choices in second and foreign language teaching.

5. Differences between Speaking a Primary Language and Speaking a Secondary One:

Before getting into the details of this topic, it is convenient to clarify the meaning of the adopted terminology. The term primary language is used here to refer to mother tongue (MT) or native language, and the term of secondary language is used to denote second language or foreign language.

The dimensions taken into consideration when using all these terms involve some ambiguities and overlaps owing to the various connotations applied linguists have attributed to these terms from the one hand and the multifaceted nature of bilingualism from the other hand. The term primary language may involve the following meanings: the language acquired during early childhood, or the language dominantly preferred by the speaker for everyday use, as it can imply the language on which the speaker has a full and perfect command. The term of secondary language may suggest meanings such as: the language acquired after the L1 or the language on which the speaker has a limited command (Stern 1983).

5.1. Speaking the Mother Tongue:

Speaking one's mother tongue is a matter which is "taken for granted" (Fulcher 2003: 22) as all healthy individuals acquire their first language during the early phase of

their age. The process of acquisition is so easy and smooth that people do not notice the efforts done to learn it. Children pick up their mother tongue via communication with their social environment. Before being able to utter full sentences, children go through a number of stages: to begin with, a silent period is an unavoidable step during which children are just recipients of the language produced by their parents or caretakers.

After about one year of vocalisation that have no linguistic meaning, toddlers start labelling objects or summarizing a whole sentence into just one word. Then, two-word or multi-word utterances appear, here functional words and inflections are omitted and the order of words is not stable. A gradual progress lasting for three or four years allows eventually children to use full utterances with correct grammatical patterns and varied lexicon.

By attaining the age of schooling, every child would have acquired the ability to convert thoughts and ideas into audible speech. This ability will form the means through which individuals communicate with their environment in their daily life. (Crystal 1976). Fluency is, therefore, a guaranteed matter in primary language speaking, though not all individuals are endowed with the same degree   (Thornbury 2005).

5.2.1. Fluency:

Before going any further in this account, it is necessary to discuss what the term fluency denotes. This word occurs in every-day use within sentences like this: "she is fluent in English, French, German and Italian", to mean that; "she knows all these languages". This general meaning does not specify the components nor the limits of this knowledge, this very point has become one of the applied linguist's concerns.

When employed as a technical term fluency" has both a broad meaning and a narrow one. The broad meaning is equivalent to speaking proficiency. The narrowest meaning

involves some criteria which themselves need more precise definitions, the most important one is the rate of speech. If a speaker is fast in his delivery, this means that he manifests a sign of fluency.

Other signs may be the absence of excessive pausing and hesitation, long utterances, connected speech, and the use of small words such as: really, I mean, oh... to gain time for formulating and producing more talk (Hasselgren 1998 cited in Luoma 2004:19).

There is a wide agreement among researchers about the features that characterize fluent speech, but this consensus needs to be extended to include precise definitions of each feature. What are the parameters that delimit the length of utterances? What are the limits of the tolerated hesitations and pauses? And how can "smooth talk" be described? Furthermore, judgements of the listeners may really reflect properties of the speaker's talk as they may just translate their own perceptions. Two speakers may hold opposed judgements concerning the same speaker's talk (Luoma 2004).

Cognitivists associate the term of fluency to automaticity; when the speaker's ability to produce language reaches a certain level and becomes automatized, it will be easier for him to plan and retrieve the appropriate lexicon and grammatical patterns to convey his messages. Thus, there will be no more need to pause in the midst of the turn to focus one's attention on how to reformulate the utterance or to look for the more precise word (Fulcher 2003).

5.2. Speaking a Secondary Language:

Fluency is accessible for L1 speakers seeing that they have a good mastery on the linguistic knowledge. However, in secondary language contexts things are different. To understand this point we have to go back to how a secondary language is learned. Fulcher summarizes the fundamental difference existing between both processes in this

statement:"learning (or acquiring) a language as a child is something that happens; learning a language slightly later in life is something you do".(Fulcher 2003: 22)

In the same respect, the author argues that only teachers know how much effort and time are spent to learn a secondary language and particularity speak it. Dekeyser (2001) supports this viewpoint when he says: "learning a new language in adulthood is a slow and frustrating process"(Dekeyser: 2001: 125). In spite of the wide agreement upon these statements, they prove to be rather broad and general; hence, a more detailed accounts is needed.

Thornbury (2005) explains that what makes the speech of a secondary language learner dysflulent is the lack of automaticity. This deficiency compels the non-native speaker to focus his attention on every minute component and sub-component of the skill (Dekeyser 2001).

The cause of this lack of automaticity is mainly the insufficient amount of practice. Little chances are presented for secondary language learners to use the target language in genuine conditions. The speaker's use of the language is limited to a practice of correct grammar and vocabulary patterns in artificial conditions. All this gives rise to a feeling of anxiety and lack of confidence as soon as the speaker is required to take part in real interactions.

The cognitive study of language production does not reveal any significant differences in the mental activities involved in the process of production, be it a primary language or a secondary one. In order to convey a message, a speaker of secondary language has to conceptualize ideas, formulate the syntactic and the phonological patterns and eventually articulate speech. A process of self-monitoring accompanies the three steps. What differs, then, is the linguistic knowledge itself.

In most circumstances, the linguistic knowledge of a non-native speaker is considerably inferior to that of his primary language. Much effort is made to find the right structures and retrieve the exact words.

Even the non-native speakers, who master the target's language grammar and vocabulary, find it difficult to access to this knowledge, they desperately look for words but they don't come to their mind. The knowledge in their possession needs to be integrated so that it becomes accessible.

A further factor that makes of speaking a secondary language a difficult task is the appeal to translation from primary language. The message is initially formulated in the native language, then, it is translated into the target language. This will certainly take twice as much time as when the message is directly formulated in the secondary language.

Because of the fear to commit any errors while speaking, non-native speakers tend to over use the self-monitoring process, they focus their attention on every component of the skill from the conceptualization of ideas to the articulation of sounds. They produce utterances under the pressure of avoiding to misuse the language. Yet, this anxiety exacerbates the situation where it is supposed to improve it (Thornbury 2005).

The image of secondary language production is not always as obscure as it is depicted in the previous lines, for this account was meant to summarize the major problems faced by non-native speakers and which prevent them from producing fluent speech. However, non-native speakers who try to learn a target language and speak it do not constitute a single homogeneous category. They can be classified into two categories, each of which involves more distinctions to be made.

5.2.1. Differences between Speaking a FL and Speaking a SL:

Speaking a second language is similar in many respects to speaking a foreign language, but there are some points of divergence needing more clarifications. The major distinction between both cases is characterized by Stern (1983) as follows:

"In contrasting second and foreign language there is today consensus that a necessary distinction is to be made between a non-native language learnt and used within one country to which the term second language has been applied, and a non-native language learnt and used with reference to a speech community outside national or territorial boundaries to which the term foreign is commonly given ". (Stern 1983:23).

5.2.1.1.The Environment

The environment in which language is learnt and used represents, then, a fundamental area of difference. Since our focus here is the use of language, and more precisely the verbal use, we will deal with how the speaking skill is affected by learner's environment.

Through the full exposure to the target language second language learners get more chances to know both the language as a system of rules and the sociocultural frame in which it is used. However, the foreign language learners' exposure to the target language is limited to the few hours spent weekly in the classroom. From the outset, this may imply that SL environment is the ideal milieu which guarantees the acquisition of language competencies including the oral proficiency. Yet, unless a non-native speaker benefits from the available opportunities to practice language, there will be no question of favorable conditions. Thus the responsibility has to be taken by the learner otherwise the matter does not exceed to be a potential capacity (Kecskés and Papp 2000).

Stern (1981 in Kecskés and Papp 2000:4) claims that from the difference of environments that frame   the language learning and use ensues the dichotomy of learning

language functionally and learning it formally. Functional learning (and use) of language occurs within the target language community, under natural conditions where the non-native speaker is compelled to participate in real interactions to meet certain real communicative needs rather than instructional aims.

Stern (1983) points out to the mechanisms of learning through exposure in this statement: "within the target language environment are opportunities for absorbing or acquiring the language not unlike the acquisition of the first language in infancy" (Stern 1983: 391).

However in classroom settings, the use of language is based on language analysis and is deliberately directed to meet pedagogical needs. Stern (1983) considers the distinction between both processes similar to that made by Krashen (1978, 1981 in Stern 1983) that contrasts language acquisition to language learning. By 'acquisition' Krashen refers to SLA the conditions of which are very similar to those in which children pick up their first language. The language is acquired naturally without any systematic study of its components. Learning, in contrast, is a conscious process where formal teaching intervenes. It is usually carried out in classroom settings. Krashen's distinction between acquisition and learning has been adopted by many researchers afterwards and it formed the basis on which SL and FL learning are differentiated.

5.2.1. 2.Motivation:

A further dimension that should be taken into consideration when dealing with variation between SL and FL use is the degree of motivation for learning and practicing the target language. In this respect, Littlewood (1998) says:

"the primary motive for learning a language is that it provides a means of communication. A person is therefore most likely to be drawn toward learning a second language if he perceives a clear communication need for it. The extent of the communication need depends to a considerable extent on the nature of the social community in which the person lives " (Littlewood 1998: 53-54).

For non-native speakers who learn a SL, the target language is a necessary step towards a better integration into the community where they live. The necessity to fulfill the constantly urging communicative needs is a strong motive which prompts non-native speakers to produce language in real-life situations. However, FL learners do not experience such functional stimulations. They are rather learners of the systemic knowledge of the target language with perception of its potential communicative value. The scarce opportunities that allow them to realize the communicative aspect of this language are limited to conversations carried out with outsiders, or to the use of this language outside the boundaries of their living community. (Littlewood 1998).

The account elaborated so far on conditions of SL production as compared to those of the FL production may give the impression that SL environment is much more efficient than FL one. However, the environment factor is just one element of the complex and multifaceted process of language learning. Drawing conclusions from the study of a single element may lead to a blurred vision of the whole image. Stern (1983) stresses the necessity to avoid favoring one form at the expense of another as the says:

" Making the distinction between these two main conditions of language learning, or language teaching theory must avoid apriori a bias in favour of one or the other. Ideally, of course, the natural language setting and the educational treatment should complement each other". (Stern 1983: 393).

5.2.1.3. Instruction:

Up to now, this discussion has dealt with two dimensions: the first one is the settings in which language is produced and the amount of opportunities they offer for the non-native speaker to use the target language. The second is the degree of motivation that stimulates the learner to use the target language. An equally important dimension is the kind of language that non-native speakers learn.

In SL environments, the learner picks up a regional variety having its own manners of pronunciation and patterns of grammar and vocabulary. The differences may be slight when compared to the standard language, nevertheless, they reveal a belonging to a particular region. In FL learning, the language taught in the classroom is the outcome of long studies conducted by methodologists and researchers in pedagogy and ELT. The grammar books and course books adopt a language which is not proper to a particular region but which is conventionally selected to be the language of instruction. The teacher himself is not a native speaker and has been formed in the same language he is teaching his students to use (Brown and Yule 1983).

Again, seen from this angle, no one of the two forms can be thought of as more efficient than the other as long as the kind of language used by non-native speakers in both cases serves their aims and meets the needs which have urged them to learn this language.

5.2.1.4. Feedback:

A further area where FL speaking differs from SL speaking is the type of feedback engendered by the addressees in both cases. In SL settings, when a speaker is trying to have one of his daily services done such as inquiring about directions or buying something, he draws upon the reduced linguistic system at his disposal. The addressee who is a native

speaker in most of the cases focuses mostly on the content of the message and attaches little importance to the form. They negotiate the meaning   to get the service done without insisting on providing a corrective feedback.

In FL classrooms, corrective feedback constitutes an integral part of the lesson. It can be provided by the teacher as it can be given by the peers. Teacher's feedback can be a response to the   content of the student's performance it can consist of praise, a modification of the delivered message or a criticism of what has been said. However, in language classrooms, the main focus of the teacher is to direct his corrective feedback to the form of the utterance. He may localize the error and expect the student to correct it by himself or explain the type of error made and provide the correction. (Lightbown and Spada 1999,Richards and Lokhart 1994).

6 .Differences between Spoken Language and Written Language:

Advances in technology and precisely in electronic documentation such as computers and record players have suggested new perspectives to applied linguists. The long era of studies and analyses based solely on written data came to an end and a distinction is made between written language samples and spoken language ones. Researchers who relied on computer-aided analysis of spoken corpora were mostly interested in finding out the frequencies of vocabulary use and the kind of patterns in which this vocabulary appears.

The meticulous researches conducted on this field have arrived to the conclusion that people do not converse in the same way they write. Hence, the teaching objectives should be set when teaching the speaking skill to FL learners, should teachers teach language as it is spoken by lay people in natural contexts or the language that is used in academic prose? (Hughes 2002). For a better understanding of this dilemma it is convenient to consider the major differences existing between both modes. But, before this, an explanation of the

conditions under which each of the skills in produced is necessary as it reveals the underlying causes of these differences.

6.1.Time and Place Factors:

The major factor that determines the features of each mode is the time factor. Spoken words are decided and formulated at the same time of articulation. The duration that separates the organization of the message and its physical manifestation is to be counted with milliseconds. The time constraint imposes a given degree of complexity and length of the utterances. (Bygate, 1987).

Another determinant factor is the physical presence of the listener who is supposed to process the speaker's utterances in real time too. The production of speech should, therefore, fit the capacities of both the speaker's and listener's working memory. In other words, the oral production of language in a limited space of time is performed within the limits of the working memory of the speakers who can't plan and handle too much information at the same time. The hearers working memory as well are not capable of processing long utterances loaded with much information (Hughes, 2002).

Concerning the written language, the writer has enough time to decide upon his message, produce it, and edit it if necessary. He benefits from the factor of time availability and from the opportunities provided to the working memory to process as much information as it is desired. The abundance of the planning time affects the kind language writers use, and influences the choice of structures and vocabulary.

6.2.Discourse Structure:

Given the contrasts that distinguish each of the modes production, some variations have resulted and characterized each of the modes with specific features. The main difference that characterizes speech is its construction. Whereas writing is composed of

sentences, idea units form the building blocks of speech. These are short phases or clauses linked through the use of additive ordering, that is by employing, and, or, that, or but. In some cases the phrase are just juxtaposed without any link word or with a pause made between phrases.

It is evident, then, that the structures used by speakers are much simpler than those used in writing. In the written mode it is more frequent to find long complex sentences. Dependent and subordinate clauses are the linguistic carriers of information. Idea units, generally last for two seconds and are composed of less than seven words (Chafe 1985 cited in Luoma 2004:12). They usually occur between two silence pauses or between hesitation markers. Because of the dynamic nature of spoken discourse an idea unit may be started by a speaker and completed by another. Or it may bear lot of elisions given that both interlocutors share some elements of knowledge.

6.3. Vocabulary:

A further distinguishing feature is the type of vocabulary employed in each of the modes. In most circumstances, speakers are under the pressure of time when groping for the right term. Furthermore, they know that if a word is uttered there is no chance to prevent the listener from receiving it. The subsequent repair is by no means comparable to the editing which is possible in writing. For this reason, the speakers' vocabulary is less rich and precise than the writers'. Non-specific words which can bear a wide range of meanings are opted for in many situations.

The choice of vocabulary may as well be determined by factors of appropriateness, most conversations are carried out within a social frame where participants are ordinary people who may be friends, relatives, neighbors or colleagues. This kind of conversations demands an informal level of language. In contrast, university lecturers, journalist and

politicians are obliged to use literary styles where the vocabulary is well selected. (Chafe and Danielewig 1987 in Hughes 2002:12).

The variations that have been discussed so far and which involve choices at the level of grammatical patterns and lexis may be very minimal or inexistent at all in some cases where speech is planned before its delivery. Such cases may encompass: conference presentation, politicians speeches, and academic lectures. In similar cases, the speaker benefits from the available planning time which precedes the day of delivery. He selects carefully the structures more needed to convey the content of his talk. Utterances, then, are longer and contain more subordinations and complex syntactic structures. The ideas are organized with phrases like: "in the first place, in the second place, at the end …" the choice of lexis is well studied and explicit terms are used where necessary, the speaker may even edit his talk several times and rehearse it repeatedly before it is presented in front of the audience. This type of spoken discourse has rather the properties of the written language. It is 'spoken writing'. (Yule and Brown 1983, Bygate 1987).

In spite of the differences pointed to earlier, between speech and writing, it would be fallacious to pretend that each of the modes is governed by distinct grammatical and lexical systems, it is rather the realizations of a single system which differ. In this sense, Carter and McCarthy (1997 cited in Rost 2002:30) claim: "Linguists now assert that written and spoken languages, while based on the same underlying grammatical and lexical system, simply follow different realization rules". (Carther and Mc Carthy 1997 cited in Rost 2002).

6.4. The Pedagogical Implications:

Researches done on the description of spoken discourse and the features that distinguish it from written one do not stop at the level of working out the differences but

go further to analyze the implications that such findings might have on teaching the spoken form of language. Consequently, dozens of questions come to the fore: what kind of grammar should be taught, is it the spoken grammar or the written one? Does teaching the spoken form of language as it occurs in everyday circumstances, with its elisions, general words … fit the learner's needs from the one hand, and the teachers orientations from the other hand? Which dialect is going to be adopted for instruction if the decided choice is favorable to the spoken form of language? To what extent should the teaching materials be authentic and reflect the patterns that really occur in natural conditions?

Attempts to answer these questions have resulted in the emergence of different trends that perceive the above mentioned issues in different manners. According to Yunzhong (1985 cited in Hughes 2002:62). The major feature characterizing the spoken form of discourse is just the use of a register where the speaker articulates words with a slur, elides parts of utterances and employs an informal vocabulary. The written discourse, on the other hand, requires a "'high-flown" style and more elaborate patterns of language use.

This trend opposes the idea of incorporating into formal instruction the features that distinguish the spoken discourse. A model that adopts such features can't be generalized for all conditions of language use. Furthermore, these pedagogical orientations will consider the learners' needs who is, in most of the cases, interested in formal styles of language. Neither the teacher is enthusiastic to implement similar practical realizations into colloquial conversations, but they will be studied as a subsidiary content rather than constituting a core element the linguistic knowledge.

The other view, however, claims that speech needs more researches through the analyses of corpora and the investigation of the spoken grammar and lexis. Only by doing this, can researchers in pedagogy explore new choices of language use and bring new suggestions into the language classroom. Proponents of this thought believe that the variety

in language choices fits the emerging varied demands of the learners. The range of structures dealt with by teachers must prioritize the spoken form of language. This one must occupy an essential part in the whole teaching matrix. (Carter and Mc Carthy 1997 in Hughes 2002:62).

The investigation of the structural choices available to pedagogical researches entails another issue, namely the selection of a particular standard or language form. Brown and Yule (1983) draw the attention to this problem when they say: "Spoken English appears very variable, and it is very different from one dialect area to another. Even between speakers who mostly speak standard English there is a different emphasis in their selection from forms in standard English". (Brown and Yule 1983: 3)

There should be, then, some criteria on which the selection of a particular dialect should be grounded. Hughes (2002) thinks that any decision related to the question of standardization is influenced by native speaker's judgments on what is correct and appropriate for instruction, some forms and dialects are regarded as highly esteemed due to the cultural and historical considerations. Standard English for example is conventionally accepted to be one of the southern England dialects (Hughes 2002). Although judgments of this kind are highly subjective, they fit all the same the learner's desire to acquire the language used by the educated class and which includes prestigious forms of language.

Another fundamental issue that relates to the distinction between spoken and written forms of language is the choice of the teaching materials for classroom use. The question that may be asked in this context is: can extracts taken from casual speech be employed as teaching materials? What has been used so far as instances of language is mostly derived from traditional sources which are closer in their structures and vocabulary to the written form of language than to the naturally occurring speech.

The adoption of authentic spoken materials offers better opportunities to raise the learners' awareness of the pragmatic component of the oral proficiency to stress the collaborative aspect of conversation building. It is, nevertheless, difficult to decide whether some particular instances of language use can be taught to learners. Hughes (2002) provides some of these instances and stresses the difficulty of making such decisions in this statement:

"Would you, for example teach the following to your students if they were learning English? If you were learning a language would you want to learn similar expressions in the target langrage ?

1- 'ain't'

2- 'blooming thing'.

3- 't' window' (instead of the window),

4- 'the man I told you about, his brother's wife's bought my car',

5- 'good job you told me',

6- 'he's a nice man, Harry is',

Investigating the distinguishing characteristics of the spoken discouse and the written one is not an end in itself but it is a necessary step to shed more light on the choices available for course designers, teachers and learners. It helps to make important decisions that meet both learners' expectations from the one hand, and the teachers and syllabi designers tendencies from the other hand. The range of decisions that can be made affects many aspects of the teaching process, namely: structures of grammar and vocabulary, the focus on interactional properties of language, and the materials for introducing the language data.

Conclusion

Due to the multifaceted nature of speaking, research in this skill has been undertaken from a number of perspectives and for diverse purposes. In spite of this extensive focus, little importance is given to speaking as a discrete skill having its own cognitive implications and its own linguistic particularities. In most of the circumstances it has been dealt with as a synonymous concept of language acquisition. Consequently, the speaking skill needs to be more thoroughly investigated at the different levels involved in verbal communication and the interrelated fields that can bear on this area. This can be done by taking as points of departure the innumerable insights coming from different academic disciplines and by exploring them till a more ample picture is obtained about this skill.

Introduction

Communication is a broad concept involving many modes and systems where language production and particularly speaking constitute one central element in this concept. An understanding of the mechanisms whereby verbal communication is achieved necessitates an exploration of the communicative competence. This notion is coined to capture all the linguistic and communicative abilities that enable an individual to speak with others. Although communicative competence has become a fundamental notion necessary for the understanding of many issues in applied linguistics, methodologists hold some divergent views as regards how to acquire it in classroom contexts. This chapter tries to elaborate the different aspects of the communicative competence and displays some of the main views on enhancing language proficiency and particularly the oral one.

1. Communicative Competence:

One of the major concerns of researchers in language pedagogy is to delimit the components of the target language. In so doing, it will be possible to set clear objectives for the design of curricula in general and courses in particular. Over the four last decades specialists in language teaching researches have drawn theoretical frameworks to give clear definitions to the language proficiency and how it can be taught.

The key concept which has guided all the researches is the communicative competence. This term has been used to mark the end of an era characterized by its emphasis on the language grammar and its contention that languages are systems that should be handled separately of their speakers. The advent of some revolutionary ideas has caused a shift in the perception of things. Their central premise is to consider language users as integral

parts that should not be neglected if the study of language and communication is approached (Celce-Murcia 2008).

Hyme's (1971 cited in Peterwagner 2005:11) theoretical views were the starting point from which other researchers have been inspired. This sociolinguist was unsatisfied with the Chomskyan concept of competence. For him it focussed only on the linguistic aspects and ignored the sociocultural dimensions of speech events. Context was a primary requirement for appropriate language use, and incorporating it into the study of language is highly important.

Hyme's views were very abstract but they acted as a catalyst for other authors to design more concrete models. Bachman and Palmer's (1996 cited in Luoma 2004:99) model is an illustrative example of these models. Their basic assumption is that language use can be thought of as a system that involves the interaction of language users with the language system itself as well as with the context of language use.

Hence, language proficiency is no more regarded to be consisting of only linguistic elements but it goes beyond that to include pragmatic, sociolinguistic and strategic components. In other words, language should not be presented "as a set of forms (grammatical, phonological, lexical) which have to be learned and practised 'but' as a functional system which is used to fulfill a range of communicative purposes" (Tarone and Yule 1989: 17).

Bachman and Palmer's (1996 cited in Luoma 2004:99) framework of communicative language ability encompasses two big parts; the language competence and the strategic competence. The former is static whereas the latter is dynamic. The language competence in turn consists of two components: the organizational competence and the pragmatic competence.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Communicative competence            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Language knowledge │          │ Strategic knowledge │
└─────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Organizational knowledge │     │   Pragmatic knowledge    │
└──────────────────────────┘     └──────────────────────────┘
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Grammatical knowledge	Textual knowledge	Functional knowledge	Sociolinguistic knowledge
-Vocabulary	-Cohesion	-Ideational functions	-Dialects/varieties
-Syntax	-Rhetorical and conversational organization	-Manipulative functions	-Natural or idiomatic expressions
-Phonology/ Graphology		-heuristic functions	-Cultural references and figures
		-Imaginative functions	of speech

Components of Communicative Language Competence diagram, Bachman and Palmer's Model (1996 in Luoma 2004:100)

The organizational knowledge is the category including all the formal elements needed to produce and interpret grammatically acceptable sentences or utterances and texts. Within this category two kinds of knowledge are distinguished: the grammatical knowledge and the textual one.

The grammatical knowledge is the set of abilities required in what Widdowson (1978 cited Bachman in 1990) calls the language usage, namely phonology or graphology, vocabulary, morphology and syntax. As for the textual knowledge, Bachman (1990) defines it as:

"The knowledge of conventions for joining utterances together to form a text, which is essentially a unit of language – spoken or written – consisting of two or more utterances or sentences that are structured according to rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization". (Bachman 1990: 88).

It ensues from this definition, that conversational conventions such as how to establish, maintain and end a conversation as well as how to get the listener's attention, start a topic and develop it are all included within the textual knowledge.

Conversations and written texts have their particular devices whereby cohesive relationships are marked and in both modes a knowledge of these devices is necessary for organization of discourse be it spoken or written.

In addition to the organizational knowledge, the other subcategory of which the language is composed is the pragmatic knowledge. This type of knowledge involves the interaction of language as a system of signs with the speaker's communicative purpose and the context in which the speech event occurs. Under the heading of pragmatic knowledge two types of knowledge are distinguished: the functional one and the sociolinguistic one.

By functional or illocutionary knowledge it is meant the competence with which language users decide upon, produce, or interpret a given speech act. This knowledge is responsible of specifying the functions for which language will be used. These functions can be classified into four classes which are: the ideal, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative ones (Celce-Murcia 2008). The biggest part of language functions has an ideational nature, that is, these functions express the language user's experiences pertaining to the real world. Instances of this kind of use are: the transmission of knowledge through lectures or written articles, or the expression of one's feelings and emotions to a friend.

Utterances with manipulative functions are those intended to affect the world surrounding the language users such as formulating requests to get someone perform an

action. Other examples can be: the use of language to regulate people's behaviour, and to establish particular relationships with the others.

The third type of functions in the heuristic one. Utterances used by people when teaching, learning, memorizing facts or solving problems are instances of how a person extends his or her knowledge of the surrounding world including knowledge about the language itself.

The last function is the imaginative one. It helps people employ language creatively to establish aesthetic or humorous effects. The use of figurative language, telling jokes or reading poetry are different manners by which the imaginative dimension of language is translated.

This listing of functions does not imply that a language user accomplishes only one distinct function in every sentence or text, instead multiple functions can be performed simultaneously in one language use.

Besides the functional knowledge, the second subcategory comprised within the pragmatic knowledge is the sociolinguistic one. This knowledge allows the language users to be sensitive to the context and speech situation. The form of the produced language should be appropriate to the language use situations in terms of dialects, cultural and religious beliefs, register…and so on. Conventions that characterize a given variety are appropriate only to particular situations and language use may sound inappropriate if, for example, a standard language is used among close friends or in the street within ordinary people.

Equally important is the appropriateness to register, that is the set of variations existing within a given variety, and the appropriateness to the cultural contexts. A background knowledge about the cultural aspects of the language use guarantees to a certain extent a correct interpretation of sentences or utterances.

So far, the discussion has focused on the areas of language knowledge which constitute only one part of the notion of language ability. The second part is the strategic competence. This concept refers to the dynamic process whereby language users assess the information related to the language use situation and negotiate the meaning to fulfill the intended communicative need. It also denotes the capability of compensating and coping with the limited linguistic competence to avoid breakdowns in communication.

Bachman (1990) states that a representation of language ability components in a hierarchical mode does not exclude the interaction of all these areas in real language performance. The author explains the necessity to display the different components in that way and she points out the drawbacks that ensue from this representation:

> "This 'tree' diagram is intended as a visual metaphor and not as a theoretical model, and as with any metaphor; it captures certain features at the expense of others. In this case, this diagram represents the hierarchical relationships among the components of language competence, at the expense of making them appear as if they are separate and independent of each other. However, in language use these components all interact with each other and with features of language use situation". (Bachman 1990: 86).

It is, then, the interaction of language ability components with the language use situation that constitutes the hallmark of communicative competence. This aspect was ignored in the grammar-focused theories which prevailed during the era that preceded the introduction of the communicative competence concept.

The models suggested by other authors have a lot of overlaps with the model explained so far and share the fundamental assumption that in order to communicate one needs a knowledge about the language and the ability to use appropriately this knowledge. The discrepancies existing between all the models are due mainly to the hierarchical

presentations of the communicative competence components rather than any differences in the conceptualization of the notion in question.

It is worth to note that terms denoting this concept vary also according to its users. Language ability, communicative language ability, language proficiency… are more or less different versions of the same basic concept. Hence, in the present discussion we need a more detailed picture of language proficiency components. So, we will not adopt any of the hierarchical frameworks provided by different authors, instead we will suggest an eclectic framework consisting of a set of the most agreed upon abilities.

1.1.Pronunciation:

This involves phonetic and phonological choices that a speaker can make to perform an intelligible oral discourse. For a number of reasons, the criteria against which pronunciation is judged to be good have changed. It was popularly assumed that a good pronunciation means a native-like one. But this perception is criticized by some researchers. Luoma (2004) for example, states that it is difficult to decide upon the variety that should be adopted for instruction and thus for being a model. Another reason for not having the native-like pronunciation as an objective is the difficulty to achieve such a standard. Speakers of a foreign language may try hard for a long period of time, to make their pronunciation sound like that of native speakers but in vain. Moreover, many learners do not mind, and even prefer having a characteristic accent that reflect their identity and their origin. Therefore, what matters is mainly the comprehensibility and the efficiency of pronunciation and not the compliance to a particular standard. In other words, communicative effectiveness should be the norm that speakers strive to obey.

According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), in order to achieve effective oral communication, speakers need to control both the segmental elements of the language and

its prosody. The importance of mastering the supra-segmental elements lies in the fact that they can help listeners to infer the meaning from ambiguous sentences. One example provided by Gramley and Pätzold (1992) is a sentence which may have different interpretations but only the contour it has can indicate the intended meaning:

-Can you speak Spanish or French?

-'Can you speak either one?'

-'Which of the two?'

-'Or may be another one?'

-'Do you know any foreign languages at all?'
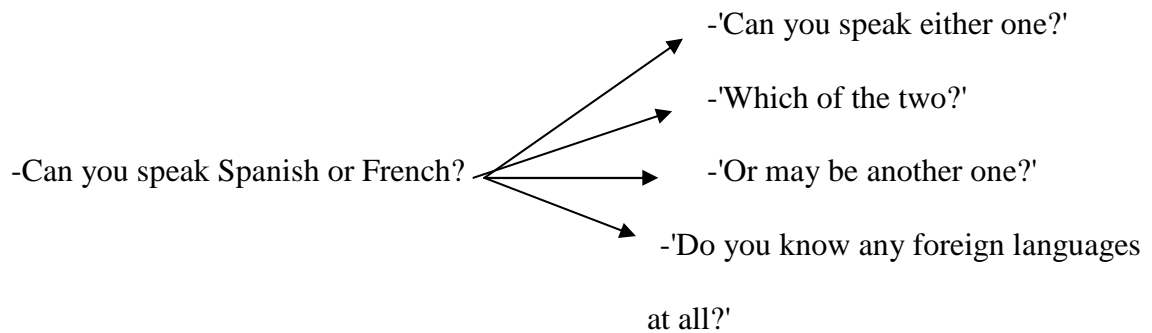
(Gramley and Pätzold 1992: 90).

Prosody can also reflect the degree of politeness, that a speaker wants to show and his conformity to the sociocultural norms. A further role is pointed out by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain:

"In a speaker's controversial performance, matters such as relinquishing the floor to another speaker, taking a turn, interrupting, or asking a confirmation question as opposed to making a statement are all things that are often signaled by prosodic features…" (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000: 31).

Accordingly, the knowledge of phonology is more than knowing the vowels and consonants of the target language, it is the faculty of manipulating the segmental and suprasegmental elements to fit the contextual considerations and serve the communicative goal.

1.2. Vocabulary:

One of the core components of language proficiency is the knowledge of words, lexical phrases and routines that a language is composed of. This means that in order to perform a communicative goal, everyone needs a given amount of words that, in turn, can be classified into given categories of vocabulary items.

It is generally estimated that speakers need about 3000 words and phrases to be able to carry on informal conversation. It is worth to note here that speakers use only a limited number of words as compared to the bulk of items they know. A distinction is, then, made between receptive vocabulary and productive one. The former refers to the words that can be used, whereas the latter refers to the words that can be both understood and used by speakers. This implies that in productive skills it is not enough to know what words denote, but vocabulary items should be readily accessible when we need them to speak. Owing to this fact, "teachers should be selective when deciding which words deserve deeper receptive and/or productive practice" (Hunt and Beglar 2002: 261).

Findings in corpus linguistics have shown that there are some categories of words more frequently employed than others. Inspired by this fact, pedagogical researchers suggest that instruction should focus on the most frequently used words with a special emphasis on items that enhance fluency. Nation (2002) gives examples of the mostly needed vocabulary items, "these include numbers, polite formulas, items for controlling language use (for example, to ask someone to repeat, speak more slowly and so on) time, and periods of time and qualities" (Nation 2002: 270).

One of the words that are thought of to be useful for L_2 learners is the discourse marker "well". In English informal conversations, this word is used to "shift the orientation of talk in some way" (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000: 87). This word reoccurs many

times in native speakers' talks and offers more flexibility to spoken discourse. It is, thereby, necessary to develop the learners' awareness of the presence of similar words.

Since the objective of teaching speaking is to develop fluency in a target language, it is more advisable to get learners to make the best of the vocabulary they know instead of limiting instruction to the study of vocabulary as isolated linguistic elements (Nation 2002).

1.3.Grammar:

Knowing the grammatical structures of a language is essential to the development of a communicative competence. The combination of words needs some rules to be applied in order to result in meaningful and correct utterances. Whether these rules are taught implicitly or explicitly they must guarantee the accuracy of language production.

When deciding whether it is preferable to use a particular structure or another, contextual factors should be taken into consideration. This implies that there is no single grammar that goes with whatever situation or whoever addressee. In this respect Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) advise that

> "knowledge of grammar should include not only sentence-level ordering rules and options but also an awareness that phenomena such as word-order choices, tense-aspect choices, and use of special grammatical constructions are in fact pragmatic, discourse-level choices that speakers and writers make" (Celce-Murcia and Olshtein 2000: 68).

Furthermore, it is thought that "descriptions of English language and of English grammar, in particular, have been largely based on written sources and on written examples" (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy 1989: 67) this has caused to judge the correctness of oral language production against criteria pertaining to the written mode. Few illustrative examples of these differences are given by Biber et al (1999 cited in Hughes

2002) "Nouns and prepositional phrases are much more common in news than in conversations, whereas verbs and adverbs are much more common in news than in conversations" (Biber et al 1999: 11 cited in Hughes 2002: 31).

It can, be deduced that spoken grammar is much simpler than written one and this advantage can be benefited from to encourage participation in the classroom. Learners will be less reticent if they know that they are expected to use an easy and accessible language (Ur: 1996).

1.4. Discourse and Genre Knowledge:

Knowing how to combine words into correct and meaningful utterances is not enough to ensure communicative effectiveness. Speakers should also possess the competence of knowing in which genre they are engaged in. By genre it is meant "a purposeful, socially-constructed, communicative event"(Nunan 1991: 44); political speeches, casual conversation and nursery rhymes are examples of genres. When speakers engage in a conversation, a genre imposes itself depending on the general purpose of the conversation whether it is transactional or interactional, whether the nature of talk is interactive on non-interactive, and whether it is planned or unplanned.

In each genre, it is likely to find some regularities. Hence, some patterns of moves can be attributed to particular genres and not to others. Speakers should be aware of this fact and should make the right choices concerning the required generic structures.

Discourse knowledge enables speakers to connect separate elements in order to get coherent stretches of discourse. The appropriate use of discourse connectors, such as: "well, I mean, you know…" ; the ability to organize speaking turns and give signals to one's interlocutor whether he can take over the speaker's role or carry on listening ; all these can be included, too, within the discourse knowledge (Thornbury 2005).

1.5.Pragmatic Knowledge:

This refers to the ability to draw upon contextual information to formulate messages and understand them. It involves a number of notions:

•Speech acts: some actions are actually performed with utterances, congratulating, requesting, and greeting are examples of theses actions. So, talk does not serve only to inform about things but also to have some functions. Then, when someone says: "there is a car approaching" or if he simply shouts: "car!" he is performing a warning. A more explicit warning can be expressed by saying: "I (hereby) warn you that a car is approaching (Bloomer, Griffths and Merrison 2005).

Knowing how speech acts or functions are realized and how they can be interpreted is part of the pragmatic knowledge. The interpretation of speech acts is possible by reference to the context. This means that sometimes the literal meaning of an utterance is not what is intended by this speaker but something beyond it and which can be determined by contextual data.

•Cooperative principle: this principle reflects the readiness of interactants to maintain the flow of exchange between them and direct the conversation towards achieving a common goal. The speaker, then, wants his message to be well interpreted and the hearer wants to be a proficient decoder of the message. This principle is suggested by Grice (1975 cited in Bloomer, Griffths and Merrison 2005) together with four maxims to ensure the efficiency of natural conversation.

The maxim of quantity: refers to the amount of information required by the hearer. The speaker should be sufficiently informative, not more nor less.

The maxim of quality: a speaker should not say what he believes to be false or not sure. He may start his utterance with: "I'm not absolutely sure…", "as far as I am concerned" to show a lower degree of certainty.

The maxim of relevance: here the speaker should make his contribution relevant to the context and purpose of the interaction.

The maxim of manner: the speaker is supposed to be clear, brief and orderly. He has to avoid ambiguity and obscurity.

In some situations, though an answer to a question seems on the surface to be inappropriate and bears a violation of the maxim of relevance, it turns out to be relevant and appropriate in that it embeds an additional conveyed meaning, called implicature, as in this example:

 -Let's go for a walk, this afternoon.

 -I haven't finished my exposé about macrobiotics.

The answer b is seemingly irrelevant but it does imply that the invitation is refused because of the work on an exposé.

•Politeness: knowing the norms of politeness ensures the efficiency of communicative events and helps attain social harmony. In pragmatics' studies, the concept of "face" is fundamental for the understanding of politeness.

Face refers to the public self-image and the sense of self worth. Every member in society expects from the others to recognize this emotional and social sense of the self. When someone says to a person: "get me a Coke", he is actually performing an order which requires a social power. If the speaker lacks this supposed higher status he is in fact producing a face-threatening act, while if the speaker says: " If you're going to the machine, could you possibly get me a Coke while you're there please?". "Could you" and

"please" lessen the possibility of any threat to the other's self-image and, thus, the request can be considered to be a face-saving act or a polite request.

Politeness norms differ from one language to another and similarly from one culture to another. In some cultures, directness is valued and preferred. So, if someone overuses the marks of politeness he may be considered to be unsure or vague. Whereas if someone performs his request in a direct way in a community that values politeness he may seem rude and impolite (Yule 1985, Bloomer, Griffths and Merrison 2005).

1.6.The Sociocultural Knowledge:

This includes knowledge about the social values and the norms of behaviour appropriate to every social community. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) state that having a shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener about the sociocultural rules of appropriateness prevents them from violating such rules. This knowledge does not imply only to adjust what one wants to say, but also to control the duration of silence between turns and the degree of politeness required with interlocutors depending on their age, sex, and social status.

By providing this account, it does not ensue from it that every person should learn all the sociocultural rules of any society, but instead, to be aware of the differences existing between cultures and the necessity to take them into account when communicating.

1.7.Strategic Knowledge:

When the speaker's linguistic resources prove to be insufficient such as in cases where he can not find the right expression or word or having trouble in deciding upon the right pronunciation, recourse can be made to some communication strategies. This prevents the speaker from abandoning the attempt to transmit his message (Yule and Tarone 1989).

An inventory of compensatory strategies is provided by Oxford (1990) "to make up for the inadequate repertoire of grammar and, especially, of vocabulary" (Oxford 1990: 47).

•Borrowing words from the mother tongue without making any change on them. In "Il y'a des birds sur l'arbre", the speaker switches to his mother tongue because the translation of "birds" is not available for him. One form of borrowing from the L_1 is the affixation of endings proper to L_2 to words from the mother tongue.

•Appealing to someone else's help by giving the word in the mother tongue and asking for translation. This can also be done by showing the object that the speaker means or by using mimes and gestures.

•Avoiding the message or part of it if it requires the use of some difficult structures or if the speaker is not sure of the vocabulary. It is also possible to alter the message and omit parts of it so that the information will be simpler and more manageable.

•Selecting the topics that allow to the speaker the manipulation of familiar and more accessible grammatical structures and vocabulary.

•Coining new words such as creating the word: "Keys holder" for "Key ring".

•Providing a circumlocution, that is using a whole phrase to explain a concept such as: "the piece of furniture where we put books" for the bookcase.

Bygate (1978) mentions two other strategies which are:

•Foreignizing a mother tongue word: that is pronouncing it in a manner that makes it sound like a target language word.

•Providing the literal translation like in the use of 'crescent' to refer to "croissant" (Bygate 1987: 44).

According to Oxford (1990), strategies adopted to compensate the linguistic limitations are useful both in receptive and productive skills. However, they are mostly associated to the speaking skill. For this reason, "communication strategies" is a term whose use is

restricted to conversional production. Oxford (1990) criticizes the implication that communication is limited to the speaking skill and clarifies that it actually occurs with the four skills.

2. Methodologies of Teaching Oral Production:

Any teaching activity aiming at enhancing the learner's language proficiency and ability to use language skills should start from systematic theoretical grounds. Views on the teaching of speaking in particular and language production in general are various and even controversial due to the differences in the approaches that researchers in pedagogy adhere to.

2.1. Accuracy versus Fluency

One of the most debated issues that have resulted in the existence of opposing approaches is the question of accuracy and fluency. By accuracy, it is meant the correct use of language in terms of its sounds, vocabulary and grammar. Fluency on the other hand, is the ability to convey and receive messages easily (Ur 1996).

Some approaches are based on the assumption that only after learning the language forms that an individual can speak it. That is the emphasis in teaching should start from accuracy then shift to fluency. However, other approaches are premised on the view that practising the language leads to the acquisition of its rules. This implies that fluency should be the primary objective, then, accuracy will take care of itself.

The first view is generally referred to as the form-focused approach, the audio-lingual method is one instance of this orientation. Learning, according to this approach, goes through three stages: presentation, practice and production. Discrete items of grammar and language forms are presented to learners through listening to dialogues on the tape-

recorder or performed by the teacher. Then, learners repeat that dialogue including the features intended to be taught. Tasks requiring language production come at the very end of language courses and result, generally, in a very artificial use of language.

In accuracy-driven approaches, learners spend an initial stage acquiring the rules of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. It is only when learners have mastered the linguistic system that production comes. The reason behind delaying production to a further stage is the assumption that learners are not ready to talk if they have not acquired the linguistic structures.

On the other extreme point, we find the fluency-driven approaches; these have evolved owing to the frustrating effects of form-focused approaches, this alternative approach suggests that there is no point in delaying the phase of language production as the excuse of readiness is a myth rather than a fact. Evidence from first language acquisition and second language acquisition, in natural settings, show that language users do not postpone their contribution in talks until they have a complete command over the language rules. They often get by with the available resources. Furthermore, it is difficult to determine an agreed upon level of linguistic proficiency required to start production. A newly emerging view has also softened the attitude towards errors, it is thought that errors allow language users to infer the correct and appropriate use of language (Thornbury 2005).

A further argument supporting fluency-driven approaches is advanced by Littlewood (1981):

"In our everyday language use, we normally focus our attention primarily on the meaning of what we say or hear, rather than on its linguistic form. For example, if we are asked to recall what another person said, we can often remember the message, but not the exact words that were used." (Littlewood 1981: 88-9).

2.2. Input versus Output

Another idea on the basis of which a number of methodologies are premised is the question whether learning a language is essentially due to the exposure to this language's input or to the learners' attempts to produce output.

Proponents of the input-based instruction regard input as the starting point from which a language is learnt and acquired. The premise underlying their stance is Krashen's Input Hypothesis; which states that a language is acquired if the learner is exposed to an input containing the language patterns that can be understood by the learner but which also represents a slightly more advanced level than that of the learner (Krashen 1985 cited in Ellis 1997:47).

When learners are provided with samples of the target language such as authentic texts or conversations, they infer positive evidence on the language and its use. Comprehension activities as well allow the learners to notice features of the language and hence, promote the acquisition of explicit linguistic knowledge. Input flooding and input enhancement are illustrative examples of techniques permitting to raise the learners' awareness of the language elements. Hence, limited exposure to language input is not enough to result into the process of generalization, it is from repeated provision of input that this process ensues and leads to learning language items.

In some cases, the input-based instruction is grounded on the premise that a language is acquired when learners are prompted to use it. Production activities involve the learners into careful thinking on ways whereby a message can be conveyed. Confirmation and clarification requests reinforce these mental processes and promote learning. Output-based instruction can rely solely on eliciting learners' output as it can rely also on the input that follows the efforts to produce language. The point in making input succeed output is to get

learners notice the missing elements in their linguistic repertoire, then provide them with the relevant samples of language use.

Helen Basturkmen (2006) explains the difference between input preceding output and output preceding input in this way:

> "provision of input in advance of students' themselves recognizing a need for it is similar to expecting someone to be interested in filling a crack in the plaster work on the wall before they have perceived that there is a gap to be filled". Helen Basturkmen (2006:127)

In addition to accuracy versus fluency and input versus output ideas, there are other bases on which given methodologies are built such as: teacher-led instruction versus strategies-based one or top down learning versus bottom up learning.

The importance of having a methodology guiding the instruction practices is indisputable. However, there are some voices (Stern 1983, Allright and Bailey 1991) which claim that the search for a satisfactory methodology is an obsession that characterized the previous decades and there must be a shift of interest to other directions. Allright and Bailey (1991) suggest the following:" In order to help our learners learn, it is not the "latest method" that we need, but rather a fuller understanding of the language classroom and what goes on there"(Allright and Bailey 1991: xviii).

Conclusion

It is widely accepted now that what makes verbal communication effective is more than the knowledge of language system rules. It requires the knowledge of how to use language in different socio-cultural situations and how to overcome deficiencies in one's linguistic knowledge to reach communicative effectiveness. This shift in conception of language from a system of rules to a communication medium has entailed some pedagogical implications; pedagogical researchers and curriculum designers have drawn

upon the new theoretical premises to suggest more efficient classroom practices. In the post method era, teachers need more than a methodological framework to start from; they need to consider and employ a number of pedagogical techniques to cope with the dynamic nature of the teaching process and the innovations which are constantly proposed.

Introduction

Apart from relying on a particular approach or an eclectic one, effective instruction depends as well on a set of influential factors. Tasks, teaching materials, class grouping, interaction and feedback are key elements that help the teacher discover the effective teaching practices. They are not proper to any of the approaches on which much debate is aroused. Instead, they represent a space where consensus from a considerable number of methodologists is felt. Although these elements will be discussed in separate parts, they are in fact interrelated and the explanation of one element leads to an unavoidable approaching of another.

1. Tasks:

Skehan (1998 cited in Beglar ant Hunt 2002:100) defines a task as "an activity in which meaning is primary, there is a problem to solve, and a task is closely related to real-world activities". So, the use of correct language is not an end in itself, but a means to convey meanings. By solving communicative problems in the classroom settings, learners are being prepared to handle genuine communicative needs in real-world situations.

In a speaking course, the primary objective of tasks is to elicit as much speech as possible from learners. This will allow the learners to extend their communicative competence and will permit the teacher to gauge his student's achievements, find the limitations in their communicative competence and hence, will provide feedback accordingly.

Teachers are confronted with the challenge of choosing or designing tasks that should serve the pedagogical goals and at the same time be productive, interactive and purposeful. Moreover, the speaking tasks are thought of to be particularly difficult due to the exceptional nature of the skill itself.

Contrarily to the other skills, where students can listen together to a piece of auditory material, read together a text on their course books, or write a composition on a specific topic, speaking tasks require only one participant speaking while others are listening. There is no possibility of practising the skill collectively at the same moment. Concerning this problem, Ur (1996) makes the following observation:

"Only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard; and in a large group this means that each one will have only very little talking time. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all".
(Ur 1996: 121).

Due to the same cause, that is the fact that only one student talks at a time, fear to be exposed to an audience and to commit errors inhibits the learners and lessens their contributions to talks. Ur (1996) regards even participation of all classroom students, high motivation and high amount of the students' talk as characteristics of a successful speaking course to prompt all the students to take part in tasks using all the possible means to arouse their interest and diminish their fears.

Nunan (1991) has also provided a perspicacious insight concerning the speaking tasks' difficulty. He assumes that the success of a speaking activity is determined not only by the speaker's communicative skills but by his interlocutors as well. The communicative goals are achieved if all the interlocutors are collaborating to convey or interpret messages through negotiation of meaning. Nunan (1991) suggests that this "interlocutor effect" should be taken into account when both researching task difficulty and testing the speaking skill.

In order to cope with the problematic nature of the speaking tasks, many researchers in language education has suggested ways to maximize their effectiveness and success. Ur (1996) advances a number of ideas that can be applied to elicit more talk. Teachers should

guide the students to use an easy language in their production of talk. Learners hesitate to speak mainly to avoid making mistakes, but if the language is accessible for them, that is "easily recalled and produced" (Ur 1996: 121) there will be more willingness to contribute in talks. One practical way of facilitating the retrieval of the relevant vocabulary is to teach it before the activity is started.

Another idea of equal importance is to encourage students to use only the target language. The teacher must constantly play the role of the reminder in case learners have recourse to their mother tongue. Generally, learners tend to speak their mother tongue because it is easier for them and safer in terms of error making. It also spares them the affective pressure that speaking a foreign language causes or the feeling to be "extremely exposed in discussion situations" (Harmer 2003: 272).

The choice of topic is another factor that can maximize the effectiveness of speaking tasks. Teachers should ground the topic selection on the objective of motivating learners because when the topic is interesting learners feel more involved and this guarantees a greater degree of productivity.

Harmer (2003) thinks that there are two ways by which a teacher can find interesting topics. The first one is to be guided by one's instinct, the second is to use interviews and questionnaires to know from the students what interests them most. Obviously, the second way proves to be more reliable than the first one and offers better opportunities to decide jointly upon classroom practices. It is, however, possible to turn unpromising topics into interesting ones, this can be achieved through different techniques. "Buzz groups" discussion is one of them. In such situations:

"Students have a chance for quick discussions in small groups before any of them are asked to speak in public. Because they have a chance to think of ideas and the language to express them before being asked to talk in front of the whole class." (Harmer 2003: 272)

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Beglar and Hunt (2002) suggest to allow learners to have more control on the choice of topics and they contend that: "learners have been found to benefit more from the discourse which results from self-and peer-initiated topics than from topics nominated by outside sources, such as a text or their instructor" (Beglar and Hunt 2002: 100)

This view is shared by Ellis (1990) and Slimani (1992 cited in Green, Christopher and Lam 2002:226). For both authors, language acquisition is proved to be enhanced if learners have more opportunities to select topics.

Novelty and variety of topics are also important when designing tasks; the more topics are varied the more students are involved in language production. Novelty sustains the students' enthusiasm and prevents it from fading. In this respect Harmer (2003) says:

> "Variety as a cornerstone of good planning does not just apply to activities we ask students to be involved in. It is also important to vary topics we offer them so that we cater for the variety of interests within the class. Our chances of organising successful language production activities over a period of time will be greatly enhanced if we provide a varied diet of topic and activity" (Harmer 2003: 253).

Another related point which can be discussed within the heading of speaking tasks is the tasks taxonomy. These can be classified according to many criteria: the pedagogical objective, the number of the participants, the place where it is to be done, the level of the learners' proficiency…etc. A comprehensive exploration of all task types would be impossible in such a context. However, it is convenient and possible to mention some of them as the purpose from doing this is to provide illustrative samples of what can be designed and assigned in speaking courses.

•One-way tasks versus two-way tasks: an activity that requires from the learner to summarize orally, say, a story presented in cartoon pictures is one way information gap task. That is only one "speaker has all the information which must be conveyed to the

listener" (Nunan 1991: 40). A two-way task, on the other hand, is an activity which requires both participants to transmit information to each other. Here it is either the partner who asks for a particular piece of information or it is the other speaker who deduces that his partner needs it (Bygate 1987, Nunan 1991). The task is considered successful if both participants manage to convey the available information to their partners who ignore it.

•Topic-based activities versus task-based activities: Ur (1996) brings a distinction between topic-based activities and task-based activities. The former requires the participants to contribute in a talk involving a controversial issue, and in which they draw upon their own experiences and knowledge to advance their arguments. Clearly, the topic should yield genuine controversy where there is no overwhelming majority holding one belief as this will result in even participation. In this type of tasks, what imports more is the discussion process and not the nature of the argument or the opinion. Students who are fond of debates and free discussions appreciate this type of tasks and show a high degree of commitment to the activity.

The latter type of task, that is task-based activity requires the participants "actually to perform something, where the discussion process is a means to an end" (Ur 1996: 123). Such tasks are centered on a goal which can be: ordering a list of items according to their priority, rearranging scrambled items, drawing a picture, or performing an oral summary. This final result is achieved through interaction between the participants and should be accomplished within a limited period of time. Most students find this kind of tasks more enjoyable as they are challenging and have a game-like aspect.

•Classroom tasks versus outside-class tasks:

This distinction holds only for second language teaching, where the learners can use the target language outside the limits of the classroom. The basic difference between both

types lies in the nature of the language used and the possible error treatment. In classroom tasks, teachers use artificial communicative needs to create contexts that are likely to be encountered in real life use. The learner is expected to use a language that is within the limits of his linguistic competence and if he fails to convey his message or misuses the language his instructor may come to his help by providing the appropriate feedback. In outside-class speaking, the "language is not presented step by step" (Lightbown, Spada 1999) by the native speakers, conversely, it may include a lot of vocabulary and structures unknown to the learner. Also, it rarely occurs that native speakers correct learners, as long as they have understood what they are saying. One example of outside-class task is asking for direction to a given place (Lightbown, Spada 1999, Cowan 2008).

Nunan (1996) mentions also open tasks which require more than one correct answer, while closed tasks demand a unique and precise correct answer. Divergent tasks, as the term suggests, can be debates or discussions which encourage varied and controversial views whereas convergent tasks assume only one   view shared among all students.

The criteria against which tasks can be classified are endless but this does not imply that every task is to fall in a unique and precise category. One task may embody many features at the same time provided these features are not contradictory. The following part will treat some of the most administered tasks.

• Communication games: in most cases communication games consist either of missing information to be transmitted, that is information gap activity, or of instructions requiring actions to be performed by partners or both. A student may listen to his partner who is providing information about a specific matter, say, a description of a picture then, compares these information with those represented in his picture to find out the similarities or differences (Ur 1996).

"What's my country" is a game in which the participants guess the name of the country written on a card. They ask the student who has this card questions that guide them to discover the country in question.

In "describe and draw" tasks, however, the final result of the task is not an information to be transmitted but an action to be performed. As it is clear from the name of the task, students listen to their mate describing a picture in a sequence of sentences, at the end of description students will have a picture completed.

Similarly in "describe and arrange" tasks, students follow the instructions of their mate to arrange or change positions of objects such as rods or match sticks to get at the end a particular structure (Bygate 1987).

Communication games aim primarily at provoking communication and thus achieving fluency, and at the same time entertaining and amusing learners. The fact that at the end of the task there will be a winner or a best scoring student is a motivating factor. Hence, this type of tasks may be needed mostly with young learners who have no clear goal from their instruction and thus lack the internal drive which pushes them to reach academic achievements (Harmer 2003).

•Discussions and debates: Thornbury (2005) includes discussions with the category of tasks that can be assigned when learners achieve a certain degree of autonomy and self regulation, that is when they are ready to speak confidently without relying utterly on the guidance of a better other. Paradoxically, students are often reluctant to take part in such discussions. Harmer (2003) justifies this reticence with the affective pressure felt when facing the whole class to express one's opinions, and the uncertainty of mastering the linguistic means that enable them to verbalize these opinions. As it was explained in a foregoing section, to cope with this problem buzz groups can be set before any pre-planned discussion is to be started.

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Discussions and debates may be planned for their own sake, that is, to elicit talk centered around a topic nominated by the teacher. Or they may precede and follow a reading or listening course. Students are asked to say all what they know about a specific topic pertaining to the text to be read, as they may be asked, after the reading section, to give their opinions and reactions (Thornburry 2005).

It is, however, preferable according to Thornburry (2005) to encourage spontaneous talks that may occur between students "either because of something personnel that a learner reports or because a topic or a text in the course book triggers some debate" (Thornbury 2005: 102). This results in more enjoyable and communicative speaking. A mild attitude should be adopted as regard errors in such discussions, so that talk will have a real-life like nature rather than a formal instructive task. The opportunities to come across such discussions are not abundant, hence teachers should rely on their store of devices and techniques that help them practise discussions.

•Simulations and role play: a simulation is a term denoting a task in which "the individual participants speak and react as themselves, but the group role, situation and task they are given is an imaginary one". (Ur 1996: 132).This kind of tasks is usually performed among small groups and does not require necessarily an audience. Generally, in this task the students draw upon their store of personal experience to make decisions about what to say. They may simulate a business meeting or an interview in which they have to act as real participants and not as students (Jones 1982 cited in Harmer 2003:274).

Role-plays, on the other hand, are tasks in which students adopt someone else's personality such as a customer in a cake shop, a passenger in a train station or a celebrity. They, hence, have to think and feel accordingly. Here is an example of role cards that students refer to in order to get the necessary information:

Role card A: you are a customer in a cake shop, you want a birthday cake for a friend. He or she is very fond of chocolate.

Role card B: you are a shop assistant in a cake shop, you have many kinds of cake, but not chocolate cake. (Porter-Ladousse 1987: 51 cited in Ur 1996: 133)

Simulation and role-plays are actually a kind of drama practised in the classroom, and though they have lost much of their popularity in recent years, they prove to be very productive in terms of speaking a language especially when the students are confident and show a lot of readiness for cooperative learning. Thornbury (2005) adds a further benefit that can be derived from these tasks and which concerns mainly learners of a target language in second language settings:

> "speaking activities involving a drama element, in which learners take an imaginative leap out of the confines of the classroom, provide a useful springboard for real-life language use. Situations that learners are likely to encounter when using English in a real world can be simulated, available in classroom talk" (Thornbury 2005: 96).

Communication games, discussions and simulations are just examples from a long list of speaking activities. The list includes, too, storytelling, show and tell talks, questionnaires, information-gap activities… Knowing a wide range of these activities is a factor that helps any teacher to vary his teaching materials and gives more reliability to his decision-making especially when it comes to the degree and kind of interaction he wants to achieve.

2.Class Grouping:

The teaching of the speaking skill involves different work-forms in the classroom. The matter is related mainly to the type of activities that are done by the whole class as one group as there are group works, pair works and individual works. No form of grouping is preferable to the others, each has its own advantages and drawbacks.

•Whole-class activities or teacher fronted situations allow the teacher to provide the same input for all the students. It also gives him control and authority over the whole class. When giving instructions or presenting some auditory or visual materials, there is no need to do the same thing repeatedly like when the class is divided into small groups. It is, however, difficult in this type of classroom organization to ensure a satisfactory degree of involvement. Bygate (1987) assumes that "there is a connection between the degree of freedom to negotiate and the number of people involved" Bygate 1987: 96). This statement implies that larger groups yield lesser talk. Furthermore, (Brumfit 1984 cited in Bygate 1987) views that in naturally occurring talks the number of participants does not attain that of a classroom.

•Groups work: a group work may include three, four, ten up to half of the class students, they are suitable for discussion of issues that must end up with a group decision. According to Long and Porter (1985 cited in Bygate 1987) small group works are very productive in terms of interaction owing to the availability of time to negotiate and check the meaning. It is also more encouraging to promote the autonomy of the learners because a degree of freedom is allowed comparing to full class works, in which the teacher is the dominant decision-maker. In spite of these practical advantages, teachers may be reluctant toward group work, they prefer to avoid the noise that accompany them and to maintain control over the whole class. (Harmer 2003).

It is worth noting that the choice of group elements is an issue which has been treated by many authors. The question that is asked is: to what extent should the group be homogeneous or heterogeneous in terms of oral proficiency, cultural and linguistic background, and personality features? The views concerning this issue are varied and even contradictory is some cases.

Lynch (1996) assumes that communicative tasks would be more productive and yield more negotiation and interaction when the group elements come from different first languages. However, since most languages classrooms in the world are constituted of learners sharing the same background culture and the same mother tongue, it is then convenient to form groups whose elements differ in terms of language proficiency. According to Porter (1986 cited in Lynch 1996:115), "the more proficient learner gets practice in producing comprehensible output; the weaker partner gains experience in negotiating meaning" (Lynch 1996: 115). Though this statement regards basically mixed level pairs, it applies to mixed level groups as well.

Green, Christopher and Lam (2002) provide another insight as regards this issue it is based on the assumption that language learners can either be extrovert or introvert. In groups formed to conduct discussions, it is preferable to group extrovert learners together and introvert ones together instead of mixing them together. The same authors argue:

> "If heterogeneous groups are formed, introverted personalities may well feel crushed by the more expressive participants, and lose the little confidence they process, while the confident ones might feel that no satisfactory progress is being made, and so become bored and discouraged" (Green, Christopher, Lam 2002: 226)

The teacher should, therefore, be aware of the results that his choices may have and should keep in mind that his ultimate goal is to increase opportunities to interact using whatever devices possible.

•Pair work: in this work form, students can perform dialogues privately or publicly. No matter what the learners' level of proficiency is, dialogues can be an efficient activity that enhances interaction and enriches the learners' vocabulary and ready-made expressions. (Ur 1996)

Information-gap activities are another example of tasks that require two participants. It consists of exchanging information with each other. Similarly, finding out the differences or the similarities that exist between two pictures is an effective technique to increase talk and achieve enjoyment between two learners (Ur 1996).

•Individual work: in the preceding work forms, interaction and the exchange of meanings are the purpose on which all the focus of teaching is placed. Individualized learning serves other purposes. This may include what Littlewood (1981) calls pre-communicative activities, that is practice of isolated elements of the linguistic knowledge that help perform communicative activities in later stages. It is also possible to organize work in activities that aim for more autonomy on the part of the learner. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) suggest, for example, to get learners listen individually to their oral production on an audiotape to evaluate their own learning and to discover their limitations.

3.Materials:

In order to teach a language and stress its functional value teachers must use the materials that can contextualize it. Though the term of materials is widely understood to be a synonym of course books, that is any printed resource used to guide teachers. In the present context, we will use it to denote any resource whether printed or non-printed and whether originally designed to be used in instruction or for other purposes, which can be used for the following objectives:

•To provide an input of language use, whether spoken or written, in a contextualized form.

•To stimulate output and provoke new ideas for communication.

•To create an enjoyable and effective learning environment (Crawford 2002, Richards 2001).

Materials used in speaking courses can be classified in two categories: auditory materials and visual ones.

3.1.Auditory materials: Teaching how to speak successfully a foreign language cannot be achieved without providing models of language use performed by more experienced speakers. This raises a crucial issue namely that teaching speaking is inextricably bound to the listening one. Right from the onset, interest in the listening skill was triggered in the 1930's and 1940's when spoken language started to be regarded as a reference to formulate ideologies pertaining to foreign language learning (Rost 2002). Bloomfield (1942 cited in Rost 2002:115) for example, held the belief that what enables an individual to acquire the faculty of understanding and speaking a language is essentially the imitation of the language produced by others and perceived through listening.

During the early 1970's, the general orientation that prevailed was far from being behaviorist, still, interest in the listening skill did not fade; instead it gained more importance. It was viewed that language acquisition is triggered by listening (Rost 2002). Noticing the gap activities is one of the teaching practices that reflect this idea. A learner notices that his inability to fulfill a given communicative need is due mainly to a gap in his language proficiency. Listening to performances of more skilled speakers allows him to set comparisons between what he wants to say and what others are actually able to say

The importance of auditory material is, then, a settled matter. However, much debate is fuelled by the question whether authentic materials are better than created ones in serving the pedagogical aims or the opposite.

Authentic materials are all the teaching resources which were not originally prepared for instructional purposes. This means that language in these resources was used for a real purpose in a real context. Authenticity is preferred by some when a choice is to be made concerning teaching materials. The reasons behind this choice are multiple. Authentic materials are more motivating and succeed in stirring the learner's interest better than created materials. They also carry the cultural features of the target language which help the learner understand the other dimensions of language use. The view that language is basically a social practice is supported when materials provide real instances of native speaker's beliefs, social practices, linguistic and behavioral aspects. Authentic materials permit also an exposure to realistic language, that is to the structures and vocabulary native speakers actually use. Turn-taking, back-tracking, repair and pause fillers are other aspects that can only be found in authentic materials. In a sense, this satisfies the learners' needs to acquire the kind of language with which they will communicate in real situations.

However, proponents of created materials advance their own arguments which are not less compelling than those of authentic materials proponents. They view that created materials are more interesting and can satisfy youth preferences. Moreover, the language used in authentic materials is difficult and contains a vocabulary which does not meet the learners' needs, and may distract the teachers by taking too much time that could be spent on more useful linguistic elements. The fact that created materials were originally designed to facilitate the implication of a given syllabus and thus cover all teaching items is an advantage which authentic materials do not have. Teachers may also complain about the

difficulty of locating sources from where they can get authentic materials which is a time consuming activity (Richards 2001).

A compromise, then, needs to be made in order to ensure a maximum of the advantages discussed so far. Teaching materials should preferably incorporate characteristics of real talk and at the same time fulfill the pedagogical needs. Most foreign language learners need to be presented models of talk and exchanges where communicative effectiveness is attained, without being obliged to include a lot of overlaps, interruptions, interactive expressions… that may affect intelligibility.

Thornbury (2005) provides an example of authentic text (Earring 1) from which a version (Earring 2) is derived to be a dialogue in a course book. The first version reflects casual speech that may occur among friends. Whereas the second version is rather artificial, its turns are systematically distributed between speaker one and speaker two.

Speaker 1: I went in and bought some stupid things this morning in Boots, twenty-five p [laugh] for twenty-five p you could be as silly as you want to couldn't you? Silly aren't they? Oh what fun. Silly green non sense. Children's bead earrings.

Speaker 2: You got green?

Speaker 1: I've got a green jumper which I wear in the winter.

Speaker 2: Yeah that's fine.

Speaker 1: So I thought I would. I'm – am very fond of green jumper, silly pair of green earrings to go with it.

Speaker 2: Why not?

Speaker 1: It's a laugh. There was another lady there looking through all the stuff where I was and she said to me ' Isn't it fun' [laugh] and I said, 'Yes, only twenty-five p'[laugh] Absurd

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(Thornbury 2005: 43)

Speaker 1: What nice earrings!

Speaker 2: I bought them this morning.

Speaker 1: Where did you buy them?.

Speaker 2: I bought them in boots.

Speaker 1: How much did they cost?.

Speaker 2: Only twenty-five p.

Speaker 1: What a bargain!

Speaker 2: I'm going to wear them with my green jumper.

Speaker 1: what a good idea.

Earring 2 (course book version)

(Thornbury 2005: 44)

It can be noticed that the two versions are on the extreme points if viewed from the angles of authenticity and intelligibility. A third version is created to reach effectiveness in language teaching.

Speaker 1: What nice earrings!

Speaker 2: Do you like them? Silly, aren't they? Silly green non sense. I bought them this morning. Twenty-five p.

Speaker 1: What a bargain! Have you something green to go with them?

Speaker 2: I've got a green jumper which I wear in the winter. So I thought I'd get some silly green earrings to go with it.

Speaker 1: What fun!.

Speaker 2: I know. It's a laugh. only twenty-five p.

Earring 3

(Thornbury 2005: 44)

Another solution to the dilemma of authentic materials versus created ones is to use both; hence learners benefit from both types of materials' advantages (Richards 2001).

Be it authentic or artificial, auditory materials are mostly used "to raise the learner's awareness of features of spoken language" (Thornbury 2005: 43). This can occur only if learners pay attention to the target language use. Then, notice the presence of particular linguistic elements in a dialogue presented by native speakers as they may notice the absence of these same features in their performance. At the end, the learners understand that a pattern or rule is underlying the skill use. This understanding is reinforced if several examples incorporating the targeted pattern or rule are repeatedly presented.

3.2. Visual materials: these include picture-based, printed or real resources. They can be presented in the form of picture sequences, role cards, cue card, schedules…etc. Not only do pictorial resources contextualize the language use as it was pointed earlier, but they also help learners retrieve vocabulary items, guide them to the right meaning and facilitate task performance. But the most important use of visual materials in a speaking course is the provoking of thoughts. It was explained in a previous section that language production starts with an idea, an intention or a message to transmit. It is however difficult in the artificial classroom settings to create and provoke a wide range of ideas that may occur in the real world. It makes sense, then, to use any available means to suggest to the learners samples of communicative needs. A picture of a passenger talking to the customs officer is an efficient and practical way to prompt learners to imagine themselves performing such a communicative event.

By introducing new ideas in this manner, the teacher would have saved much time and energy. Long introductory utterances are time consuming and boring if they reoccur many times in a short period and may demotivate learners instead of raising their interest. By way

of   example, let us consider an introductory utterance that may precede a role play or a simulation:"Imagine yourself coming back from a trip to another country, you are in the airport, more precisely in the customs' office, the customs officer asks you some questions you answer them" (Dash and Dash 2007).

As a matter of fact, this example does not illustrate only how time and energy are employed but also it is a case in point on "excessive teacher talk" (Nunan 1991: 190) that can be easily avoided. Using visual aids including even realia is, then, one effective way of increasing learners' talk and reducing the amount of the teacher's talk. The more a teacher finds ways of contextualizing his language use the less his talk is, and this provides more opportunities for the learners to speak and to increase their percentage of class time talking.

This does not imply that teachers should keep silent during all the speaking courses for the "teacher's talk is important in providing learners with the only substantial live target language input they are likely to receive" (Nunan 1991: 190).

In some cases, the visual materials are not supposed to replace the teacher's talk instead they accompany it to make it more comprehensible, and avoid any translation from the mother tongue (Patchler 2001).

One example of such use is the description of processes, like how to prepare a cake. Nouns like flour, eggs, sugar, oil and verbs like pour, mix, sieve… can be understood through pictures without resorting to translation.

Visuals materials can also be a motivating factor, in that they give chances to vary the types of tasks administered in a speaking course, and raise the learners' curiosity especially if they are supposed to guess something which is actually happening. Harmer gives an example of these tasks.

"Students might look at a picture and try to guess what it shows (are the people in it brother and sister, husband or wife, and what are they arguing about or are they arguing? etc). They then listen to a tape or read a text to see if it matches what they expected on the basis of the picture". (Harmer 2003: 135).

Visual materials are also thought of to be motivating in that they represent an effective means to achieve novelty in terms of topics. Skipping from one topic to a completely different one is only easy and possible if appropriate aids are used. Without such novelty and variety, it is difficult to keep learners interested in what the teacher is presenting or in what they are supposed to perform.

Audiovisual teaching materials are resources where pictures and sounds are matched to "allow the teachers and the learners to explore the nonverbal and cultural aspects of language as well as the verbal" (Crawford 2002: 85).

Video and multimedia are more modern tools that enrich the teaching experience and stress the multifaceted nature of language use. Crawford (2002: 85) points out the benefit that may be gained from using audio-visual elements in showing that language is more than words assembled together:

"Intonation, gesture, mime, facial expression, body gesture and so on are all essential channels of communication which not only help learners understand the verbal language to which they are exposed but also are an integral part in the system of meaning which they are seeking to learn" (Crawford 2002: 85)

Much of what has been advanced concerning the authenticity and appropriateness of auditory materials apply to audio-visual resources. They also help to explore the physical context of language use and incorporate diversity into the language courses in general and speaking ones particularly. Still, their use is very limited in some parts of the world, probably because of their cost (Donovan 1998) and because of the technical problems that may disturb the development of the course (Harmer 2003).

4.Interaction:

Apart from what is planned by the teacher in his prepared lesson and from the teaching materials that accompany the teaching practices, classroom interaction plays an important role in shaping the language that learners will produce (Tsui 1995). Speaking is not the only skill affected by interaction but it is the most directly involved. Turn-taking, negotiation of meaning, teachers' questions are aspects which influence the experience of speaking taking place in the classroom settings.

It is estimated that about three quarters of the classroom talk is performed by the teacher (Nunan 1991). He is actually either asking a question, appointing the student who will answer it, or giving feedback when necessary. The teacher-learner interaction is, therefore, the dominant type of interaction.

Lynch (1996) , in an exploration of the speaking skill from an angle of interaction, states that teacher-learner interaction patterns differ in accordance with the current methodological tendencies, with the age and level of learners, and with the purpose for which the task was assigned.

In fact, what allows the teacher to be the dominant part in interaction is questioning. This latter has, in turn, its own patterns that may yield different kinds and degrees of meaningful communication. Long and Sato (1983 cited in Tsui 1995:27) make a distinction between display questions and referential questions. The former term refers to questions whose answers are already known for the teacher but he poses them just to check whether the learners know the answers or not and hence, to evaluate them in term of correctness. The latter refers to questions whose answers are not known for the teacher and which he asked them for the purpose of getting informed. The difference, however, between these two types of questions is more than having an answer known or unknown to the teacher.

Different kinds of communication do in fact result from each questioning pattern. In terms of quantity, referential (or real) questions yield longer answers from students. In terms of quality, they provide learners with an opportunity to make decisions and have more responsibility about the speaking experience instead of having the only role of responding passively on the teacher's questions and instructions. Moreover, students may refrain from taking risks and giving any answers if they feel that they are going to be evaluated on the basis of what will be said. It is clear that if the teacher predetermines what should the appropriate answer be, there will be no real communication. And since there is no real information gap in display questions, it is then obvious that there is no need to a negotiation of meaning.

According to a study conducted in the 1980's by Long and Sato (1983 cited in Lynch 1996) on ESL learners in the elementary level in Hawaii, California and Pennsylvania, only one question out of seven asked by teachers was a referential one.

Lynch (1996) explains that teachers often miss real opportunities of learner-teacher and learner-learner interaction because of their exaggerated obsession to exert control over their classes. He articulates this problem as follows: "Even when teachers do decide to encourage real communication between students it can be hard for us to move away from our traditional roles of controller and organizer" (Lynch 1996: 109).

This problem can be solved, however, if the teacher takes the right decisions concerning his class management and activities to be planned. Lynch (1996) goes on suggesting a solution to the problem, he points:

"If we want to extend learners' competence in speaking, we have to know when to relax our control over classroom interaction, so as to give them the chance to practice freer talk. This does not mean that the classroom has to undergo total revolution or that teachers should abandon all control. But we should be including at least

occasional activities which realign the communicative roles of teachers and learners, by enabling learners to take over responsibility for interaction" (Lynch 1996: 110)

The other type of interaction is learner-learner interaction. Here, it is peers who communicate together, negotiate meaning and provide feedback for each other. The problem that arises in this type of interaction is what can be done to maximize every student's chances to contribute in classroom talks? Long and Porter (1985 cited in Tsui 1995:91) estimated that in a fifty minute lesson, every one of thirty-students-class can have the opportunity to talk for only thirty seconds which makes one hour per year. To cope with this shortage of opportunities to speak, the class is divided into small groups. The advantages of this way of classroom work have already been discussed in a preceeding section, but it is convenient to add some arguments advanced by a number of authors who investigated this field.

As regards the learners' readiness to interact and the quality of their talk, Tsui (1995) states:

"It has widely been observed that students are much more ready to interact with each other than their teachers. The responses that they produce when interacting with peers also tend to be more complex than when they are interacting with teachers" (Tsui 1995: 90).

Tsui (1995) explains that the reasons behind this readiness are mainly due to the "removal of the figure of authority" (Tsui 1995: 91) represented by the teacher. By authority it is essentially meant the status of being the one who judges what is correct and what is not. In the absence of the worry to be evaluated learners are more willing

"To take risks in the sense that they will verbalize their ideas even when these are not fully developed and coherent and they will use the target language even when they are not sure whether it is grammatically right or wrong" (Tsui 1995: 91).

This statement converges with the arguments advanced by Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos (1976 cited in Lynch 1996) about the diversity of language functions treated among group works as compared to those treated with teachers.

In a response to the claims that group works encourage learners to pick up each others' errors, Porter (1986 cited in Lynch 1996:115) contends that these worries are not justified and it rarely happens that students reproduce any of their mates' errors even shortly after they are made.

5. Feedback:

This is actually another aspect of classroom interaction. In typical classroom exchanges, teachers initiate talk, learners respond, then a feedback is given by the teacher to comment on learners contributions. Its importance, then, lies in its being the direct way by which students know if their performance is correct and appropriate. Without this process there is no practical testing of one's hypotheses about the target language and hence, there is no actual learning.

Added to this cognitive role, feedback has also an affective one, in that it either increases the student's motivation if he is praised or it discourages him if the feedback is negative or if no feedback is provided at all. This implies that "unless carefully handled, the act of correcting may impose an emotional burden, on the learner" (Lynch 1996: 117).

Most researches led on feedback try to answer the questions of: when and how to provide feedback and whether it is really necessary to provide it. Since our concern here is to clarify how diverse factors can affect a speaking course, we will limit ourselves to the discussion of feedback during oral work.

It makes sense, in this context, to distinguish between the two facets of the students' performance on which the teacher will provide his evaluation; the non-communicative aspect of language use and the communicative one.

In non-communicative activities, where students are required to produce correct language in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar, the teacher's intervention is appreciated. This intervention has its own rules and preferred techniques. The teacher should first draw the learner's attention to the mistake occurring in his performance. This can be done by either: asking for repetition, with an intonation suggesting that there is something wrong. Or by echoing the learner's utterance, of course with an emphasis on the incorrect part. Alternatively, body language such as facial expressions or hand gestures can indicate effectively that a problem exists in the learner's performance. Once the learner is informed he makes attempts to correct his mistakes. In case the problem in language use is due to an embedded error of which the learner is not aware rather than a mistake, the teacher's repair is provided. The treatment of the error can take the form of a corrected version of the learner's utterance or just the correction of the wrong word. An explicit explanation of the grammatical rule can be added if the teacher judges it necessary (Harmer 2003).

The teacher's concern of having learners produce correct language should not, however, drive him to stop the learner repeatedly and ask him a correction of the mistake or the error. To stress the effects of such an attitude, Tsui (1995) states:

"The sequence of correcting every error in this particular case is that the student will have non sense of achievement despite the fact that he knows the answer to the teacher's question and that he is likely to be discouraged from answering questions in the future". (Tsui 1995: 47)

In communicative activities, where the purpose is to communicate ideas and contribute in debates, the intervention of the teacher to correct mistakes should be done in a very subtle way. To understand the purpose from doing so let us consider this theoretical issue. For some researchers (Swain 1995 in Ellis 2005) acquiring a language is a goal which can be achieved if learners are engaged in language production. One of the biggest challenges that a teacher is confronted with is to find ways to engage learners in classroom talks and increase their motivation in fluency tasks.

It is, therefore, unwise to interrupt a learner in the midst of an utterance just to correct a pronunciation or grammar mistake and to shift his attention from the content of what he says to the form of the utterance. Tsui (1995) states that only when the pronunciation errors might cause a misunderstanding and thus hinder communication, that an intervention is necessary. Furthermore, the treatment of the error can simply be delayed until the end of the student's turn or of the debate.

The decision of giving feedback is also determined by the kind of students to which it is addressed and the level of linguistic competence they have. "For students who are very shy and reticent it is more important to get them to express themselves rather than produce correct forms" (Tsui 1995: 48). It also makes no sense if a learner with low language proficiency is repeatedly corrected, for he cannot benefit from all the corrections provided as he lacks the knowledge that allow him to correct himself.

So, feedback can be efficient and beneficial only if the teacher takes into account the elements mentioned so far. In this respect, Nunan (1991) stresses the importance of developing "an awareness, not only of the ways in which we provide feedback to learners, but also that we monitor who gets the feedback (Nunan 1991: 197).

Teachers are not the only source of feedback in the classroom. Learners as well can correct and advise their peers. The merits of this type of feedback can be summarized in these points:

•Feedback offers additional opportunities to speak the target language.

•It permits the learners to think about and discuss the language forms.

•Treatment of errors and comments on language forms represent genuine communicative events where participants are really exchanging meanings and striving to reach communicative effectiveness.

Besides these appealing advantages, peer feedback has also its drawbacks. A learner does not always accept to be corrected by someone who is on the same level of language competence. A feedback provided by a peer may be more annoying than a one provided by the teacher. To cope with this problem without being obliged to sacrifice the advantages of peer correction, Lynch (1996) advises teachers to create a cooperative atmosphere in which feedback can be given without upsetting those who receive it" (Lynch 1996: 113).

Moreover, peer's feedback is not always relevant, and if it is so it does not achieve the positive results it is expected to have. In such situations, the teacher's interventions are necessary.

Feedback and the other factors discussed so far that is, tasks, teaching materials, class grouping, and interaction, determine to a great extent the effectiveness of any speaking course. They help the teacher form an ampler image on the teaching activity and understand the multitude of ways through which established pedagogical objectives can be fulfilled.

The attempts to characterize successful speaking courses have resulted in a number of features that should be present. The most agreed upon ones are summarized in these points:

•Speaking courses should elicit a big amount of learners' talk.

•The participation should not be limited to a minority of students, but all the class should be involved in the activities.

•Teachers should create communicative situations to get the learners exchange meanings and fulfill genuine communicative goals.

•To facilitate interaction, learners should be encouraged to use an easy and accessible language. (Ur 1996, Tsui 1995).

It is, however, worth to note here that much of the course criteria are determined by the learners needs. There is no ideal course that suits all categories of learners. Planning educational programs that focus on particular skills should precede any practice. The basis on which the programs, and similarly the courses, are designed is the objective of fulfilling the learners' needs.

The motives behind learning a foreign language are so diverse; they range from the need to make telephone calls, to the one of understanding and presenting academic lectures. In the case of adult learners, the planning of the courses is bound to the expectations and motivations of the students. However, when the foreign language is taught as a subject in elementary or secondary schools, the learners "may not have any immediate perception of their needs" (Richards 2001: 53), that is they have not clear ideas of the purposes for which the language will be learnt. In this case, their needs should be "Decided for them by those concerned with their long-term welfare, needs analysis thus include the study of perceived and present needs as well as potential and unrecognized needs". (Richards 2001: 53)

Therefore, it is understandable that school programs try to cover all the skills and sub-skills of a foreign language with no focus on particular skills, contrary to ESP instruction where emphasis is put only on specific skills. Employees of hotel industry and tour guides, for example, need to develop speaking skills and to master the rules of pronunciation so

that their talk will be intelligible. However, students interested in academic lectures need to know about the rules of written language.

To conclude, besides knowing the pedagogical options available for developing linguistic and communicative competence, teachers should be aware of the short-term objectives as well as the long-term ones for which instruction is provided.

Conclusion

The classroom practices are, then, closely tied to the techniques and options adopted by teachers in addition to the methodological tendencies held by curriculum designers. However, to reach effectiveness in teaching the speaking skill, teachers need more than methods, techniques, and tools; they should adopt a critical thinking that allow them to manipulate all these elements and decide which suit best their objectives and the learners' expectations.

Questionnaire analysis

Introduction:

In our attempt to gather consistent information about teaching speaking, we opted for the administration of a questionnaire to learners. By adopting this data collection instrument it will be possible for us to get acquainted with the learner's perceptions about the skill, their preferences as regards some learning and teaching techniques, as well as the expectations they have from mastering this skill. The obtained information will be converted into numerical data, which will eventually enable us to establish links between the results of the questionnaire and the hypothesized conditions that should be met in teaching speaking.

1. The administration of the questionnaire:

This questionnaire was administered to a population of eighty-eight middle school pupils, one of pupils was absent on the day of the administration. The sampling strategy opted for is convenience sampling; for geographical reasons, it is easy for us to reach the population.

The questionnaire was completed when the participants were assembled in their classes; hence, it is considered a group administration. In the introduction we have guaranteed the anonymity of the respondents. This step will itself guarantee a certain level of collaboration and honesty from the part of the respondents. A note is also included that answers represent personnel views that will not be evaluated by the student conducting this research. There is however a fear of not assuring an acceptable level of collaboration as the questionnaire is addressed to teenagers who may not take it seriously.

2. The description of the questionnaire:

In order to probe the learners' perceptions as regards the speaking skill as well as their abilities and preferences, we have designed this questionnaire including mostly close-ended questions to get precise answers which can yield to numerical data. At the same time we have strived to make these questions straightforward and easy to guarantee the respondents collaboration.

The twenty questions are organized into four sections; every section has a general aim shared by a number of questions.

Section one: (Question 1 - 3)

This section contains three questions which aim mainly at getting general information about the participants such as their age, the number of years they have been studying English and the extent of personality extroversion. This section, then, is meant to draw a general picture about the learners' background.

Sections two: (Question 4-12)

This section attempts to tackle different aspects related to the skill and investigates the language in general and the speaking skill in particular. Among points that are dealt with are the extra-curriculum sources of input, the difficulties found in speaking, and the use of communication strategies.

Section three: (Question 13-19)

The purpose from designing this section is to probe the respondents' preferences concerning a number of points, such as work-from, feedback, and topic selection.

Section four: (Question 20)

This last section is composed of one question, which aims to discover the immediate wants that guide the participants in their learning English as well as the long-term expectations as regards the use of the spoken English in the future.

3. Responses analysis:

Item 1: Age distribution

a-14

b-15

c-16

d-17
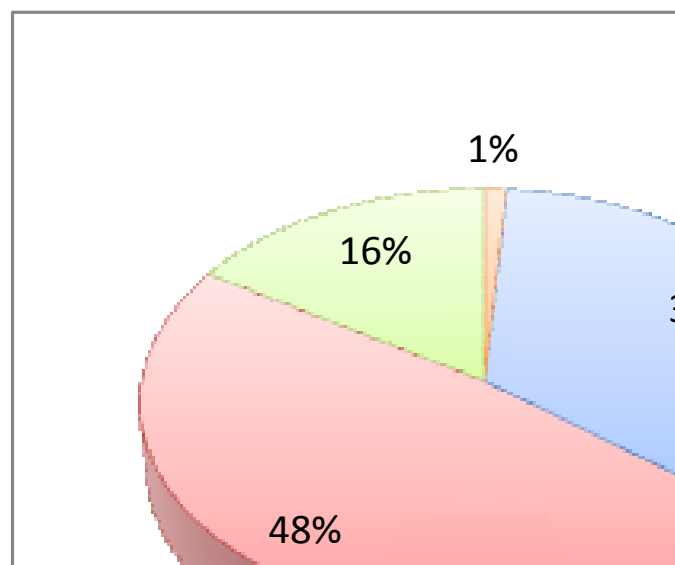
Fig 1 The learners´ age distribution

According to the responses gathered in the questionnaire, there are four categories in which the participants can be classified. Their age range varies from 14 to 17. The biggest part of our respondents 48% are aged 16, 35% are 15 and those who are 17 represent a

97

proportion of 16%. The smallest proportion is that of respondents aged 14 and it is estimated to be 1%.

Item 2: Length of language learning duration in the middle school

a-More than four years

b-Four years
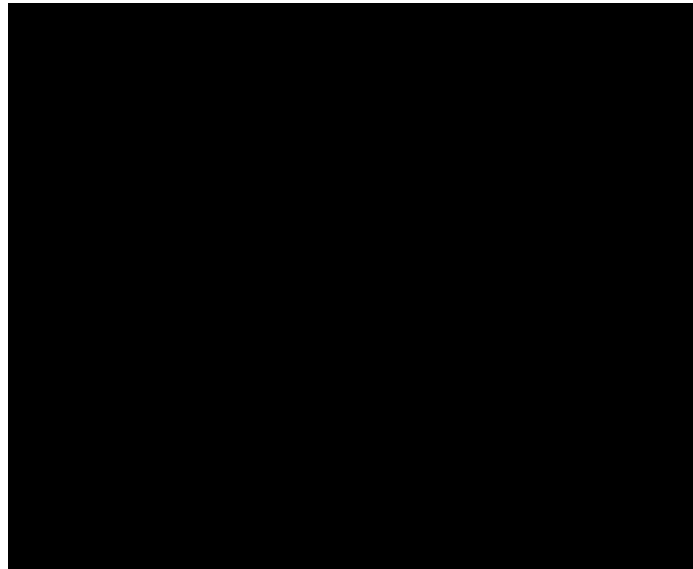
Fig 2 Length of language learning duration in the middle school

The purpose behind investigating this point is to find out the proportion of learners who, by the end of the year, will have studied English for more than four years. The results revealed that about a quarter (26%) of the whole sample population have actually studied English for five or more years because they repeated at least one year. While the other three quarters (74%) have studied English for four years.

Item 3: The participants' judgments about their personality

A-Extrovert personality

B-Introvert personality
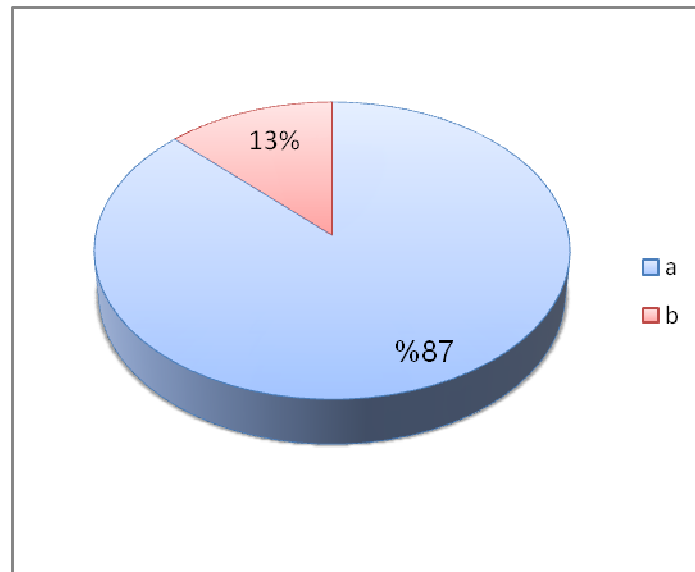
Fig 3. The participants' judgments about their personality

In dealing with this item, we wish to find out whether participants judge themselves to be extrovert people who enjoy having discussions with others or introvert ones preferring silence and reflection. The responses show that the majority (87%) of the participants consider themselves extrovert people, whereas a minority of 13% regard themselves introvert people. Knowing such an aspect of the learners' personality offers the teachers insights as regards the grouping of the pupils and urges them to adopt more motivating ways in teaching oral communication. At this age, (see item 1 above) learners who are adolescents generally show a dynamic, extrovert, attitude towards life in general and the classroom environment is not an exception.

Item 4: The ranking of skills according to their difficulty

a- Listening.

b- Speaking.

c- Reading.

d-Writing.
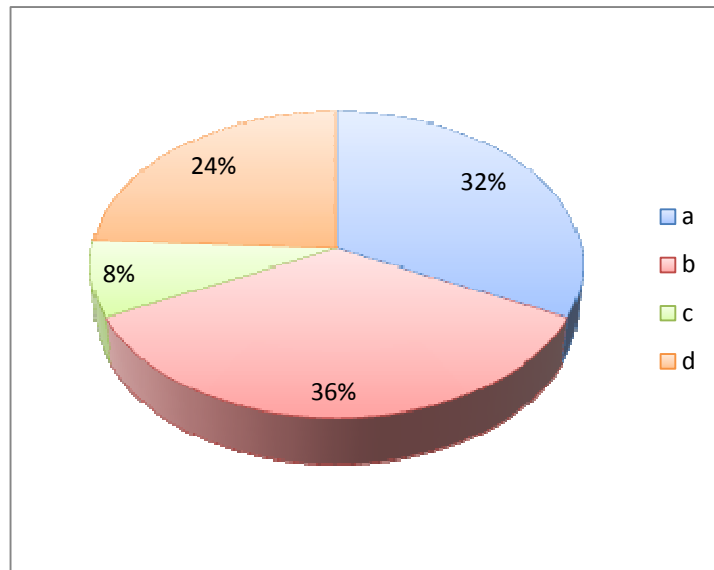
Fig 4 The ranking of skills according to their difficulty

Responses obtained for this item reveal that speaking is the skill which is thought of to be the most difficult by 36% of the population. Then, comes listening with a proportion of 32%; the respondents represented by this percentage face serious difficulties with this skill. The writing skill is chosen by 24% of the respondents. Whereas only 08% of the population see that reading is the least difficult skill.

Such facts revealed by these results deserve some thinking and consideration from the part of both teachers and curriculum designers and suggest the following question. Does speaking represent an inherently difficult skill having a particularly complex nature which prevents learners from acquiring it and having a good command of it? Or is it the teaching practices proposed by curriculum designers and applied by teachers that are inefficient and need to be replaced? However, we can also consider that the acts of listening and speaking are instant, immediate language processing while reading and writing provide much more reflection.

Item 5: The existence of other media of getting input outside the classroom

a-Yes

b-No
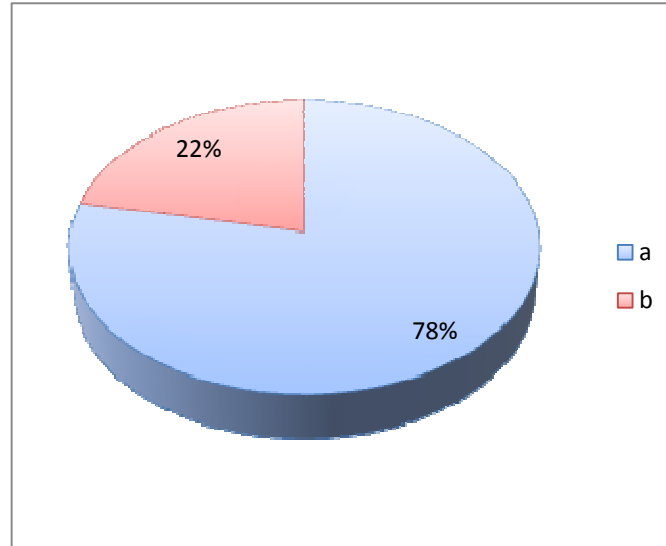
Fig 5 The existence of other media of getting input outside the classroom

The majority of respondents (78%) have responded positively and affirmed benefitting from other sources to listen to English. Although most of these sources are not instructional, they offer additional opportunities of exposure to this foreign language.

The main source of auditory input that attracts our respondents is films. Then, come songs. To a lesser degree respondents have mentioned TV programs including documentaries, cartoons and news. Some of the respondents affirm finding opportunities in the internet and with friends or relatives who are also foreign language learners. Compact discs are another medium that provides auditory input; here the respondents do not specify the content or the nature of these CDs. The least mentioned source is the reinforcement courses where learners study English for extra hours with a special focus on the items that are likely to be tested.

For the remaining proportion (22%) representing those who answered negatively to the question, the class then, represents the only place where they are exposed to auditory input.

Item 6: The model of language production

a-Teacher's talk.

b-Good learners´ talk

c-The course book

d-No answer
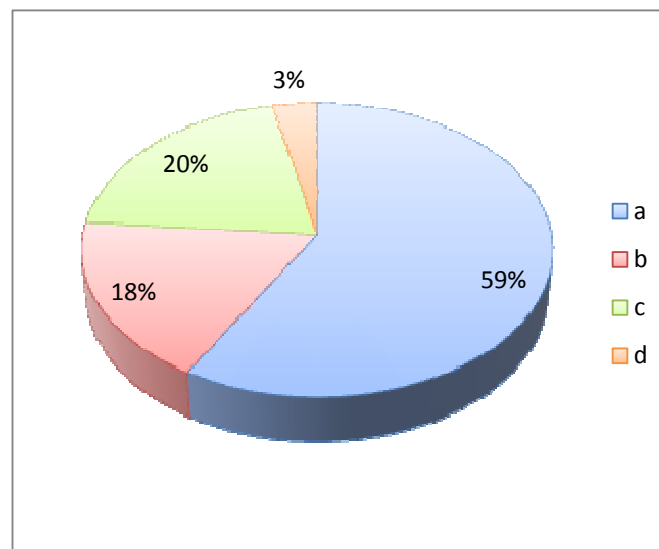
Fig 6 The model of language production

Having seen the extra curriculum media that allow learners to listen to English, we wish at present, to investigate the models that learners prefer to take in formal contexts. Three choices are proposed to the respondents. First, the teacher's talk which represents the biggest share of the whole classroom talk. The good learners´ talk which occupies a lesser duration of the class talk but which consists of a more accessible and comprehensible language for the peers having a close level. The third choice is the course

book language, which includes texts designed for reading or examples for compositions. It is worth to remind here that reading texts and writing models may not be ideal for imitation if the objective is to produce spoken language.

The generated answers for this question reveal that the teachers´ talk is the kind of language respondents wish to imitate at least for the majority (59%). The language introduced in the course book is targeted by 20% of the respondents and the remaining proportion (18%) takes the good learners' talk as a model. For unknown reasons 03% of the participants have no answer.

Item 7: The kind of participation respondents are able to perform in speaking tasks.

a-Repetition of one word.

b-Repetition of one sentence.

c-Reproduction of a dialogue.

d-Production of a sentence.
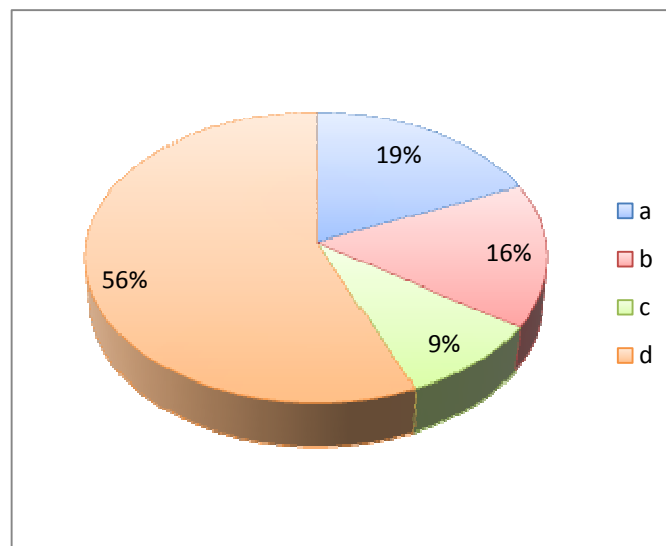
Fig 7 **The kind of participation respondents are able to perform in speaking**

tasks.

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Given the differences in the level of language proficiency that learners have, production of language chunks differs with every pupil accordingly. On the one hand, the weaker learners scarcely reproduce words suggested by the teacher; more proficient ones are able to memorize a sentence generated by the teacher and repeat it. Those having a higher level can reproduce a whole dialogue presented by the teacher. On the other hand, there are excellent learners who are able to generate longer chunks of language using their own linguistic resources.

When asked about the kind of language production our respondents are able to generate, 56% declare that they are able to produce a whole sentence without anybody's help. 19% answered they are only able to repeat isolated words, 16% can repeat a sentence and 09% say that they can act a whole dialogue presented by the teacher.

These results can be explained by the fact that our respondents belong to a transitory level between beginner's level and intermediate one. It is within their abilities to generate simple sentences composed of basic elements especially if similar examples are given beforehand by the teacher. Add to this, the mixed level nature of most Algerian classes of English as a foreign language.

Although the proportion of 56% is not an overwhelming majority, it encourages, however, to set communication tasks and discussions since these type of tasks are basically composed of short sentences and/or limited utterances. This proportion urges teachers also to lower the learners' fears of making mistakes by encouraging them to use strategies such as using circumlocution or choosing the topics that permit more manipulation of the mastered patterns and vocabulary.

Item 8: The language of utterance formulation

a-From Arabic to English.

b-Directly to English.
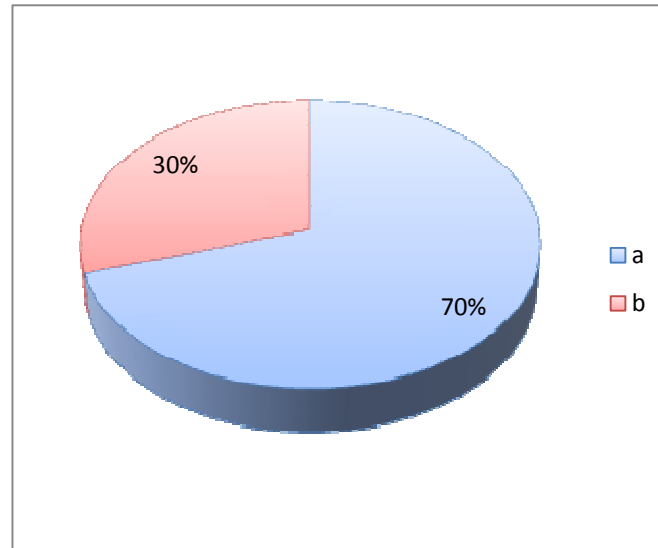
Fig 8 The language of utterance formulation

Although an important percentage of the population have declared being able to produce sentences without the help of a more expert person. Paradoxically, there is also a majority (70%) of respondents who admit that they have to formulate the sentence in Arabic first, then translate it into English. The remaining proportion estimated by 30% think they are able to formulate the utterances directly to English. Recourse to the mother tongue does not represent only a time consuming step, but affects as well the quality of language patterns produced by learners. Hence, foreign language learners should be trained right from the onset and encouraged to perform the cognitive processes that precede articulation using the target language.

Item 9: The language difficulties faced when speaking

a-Vocabulary

b-Grammar

c-Pronunciation

d-Ideas

e-No answer
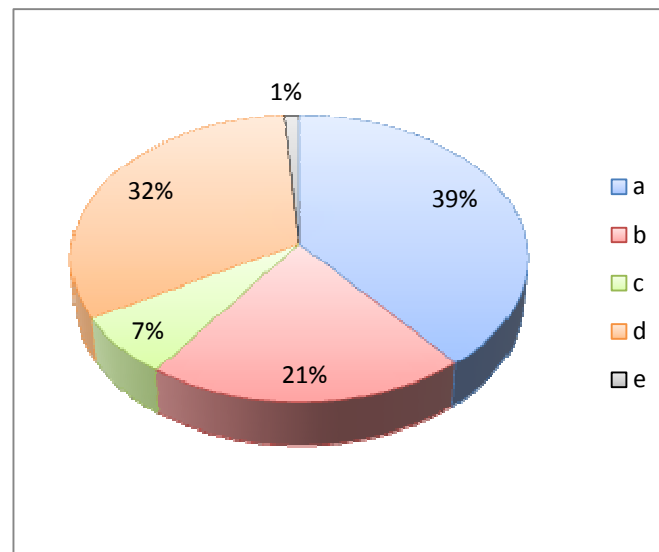
Fig 9. The main difficulties faced when speaking

The responses obtained for this question show clearly that there are a number of areas which constitute real obstacles for oral communication namely vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and the content of the message. For 39% of the respondents, the poor vocabulary resources inhibit them from participating in speaking tasks. Although this proportion clearly represents those respondents complaining from having little vocabulary knowledge, we can add those who actually have an acceptable vocabulary repertoire but who do not know how to employ it or who cannot get access to it when needed. 21% of the respondents think that they do possess the building blocks of language but do not know

how to combine them. Their poor knowledge in grammar is the barrier they face when trying to generate meaningful utterances.

Pronunciation, however, is the problem that only a percentage of 07% of the respondents complain of. This can be interpreted by the learners' insistence to be correct in terms of grammar but not necessarily in terms of pronunciation as long as the vocabulary items are correct and the ideas are understood.

Surprisingly, an important percentage of 32% of the respondents complain of having no ideas to express; a fact that shows that the poor linguistic resources may not be the only difficulty faced when speaking, but it can be as well the message itself that should be encoded. This problem can be due to the failure of teachers to contextualize the language use and stimulate the learners' imagination to evoke a range of situations in which language can be used. The lack of motivation from the part of learners can be an additional factor that deprives them from the desire to communicate.

Item 10: The communication strategies opted for by the respondents

a-Avoid speaking.

b-Ask teacher for translation.

c-Circumlocution.

d-Gestures.
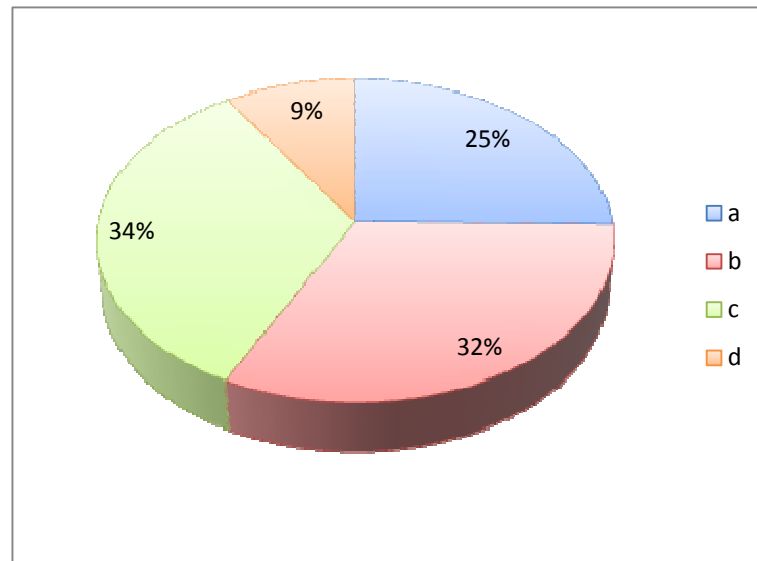
Fig 10 The communication strategies opted for by the respondents

According to the choices made by the respondents, a quarter of the them (25%) prefer to avoid communication and give up the participation in talk if they lack the necessary vocabulary to formulate their utterance. 32% is the percentage of respondents who opt for providing the word in Arabic and ask for the teacher's help. The latter will give the equivalent in English. Many teachers hate this strategy as it encourages learners to think in the mother tongue and takes much of the class time. It is however, a tolerable strategy in that it maintains the learners' involvement in tasks.

An almost equal percentage (34%) represents the respondents who use circumlocution; that is to explain the desired meaning of the unknown word with a whole sentence. This is a much preferable strategy because the learner is using the target language and still trying to communicate his idea with the available resources. The remaining proportions of learners (9%) say that they appeal to mimes and gestures to suggest the word they mean to the teacher and the peers.

Item 11: The category of link words the respondents are able to use

a-and, but, or

b-which, who, while

c-No, answer
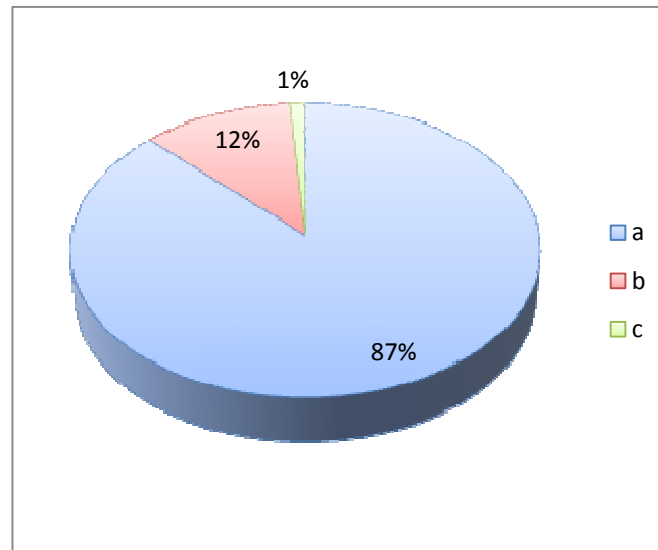
Fig 11 The category of link words the respondents are able to use

To answer this question, a majority of 87% of respondents replied that it is easier for them to link sentences with words like: "and, or, because, and, but". The remaining minority consisting of 12% say that "while, which, and who" are the kind of link words they are able to use.

This is a quite reasonable and expected result, for the first category of link words does not require from the speakers long or complex cognitive operations; they just have to coordinate the chunks of their talk with one of the conjunctions. However, for relative clauses for instance, the speaker is expected to formulate his long and complex sentence beforehand which means that he needs more time and thinking to express his utterance.

Item12: The learners' hesitation to produce long sentences

a-Yes

b-No
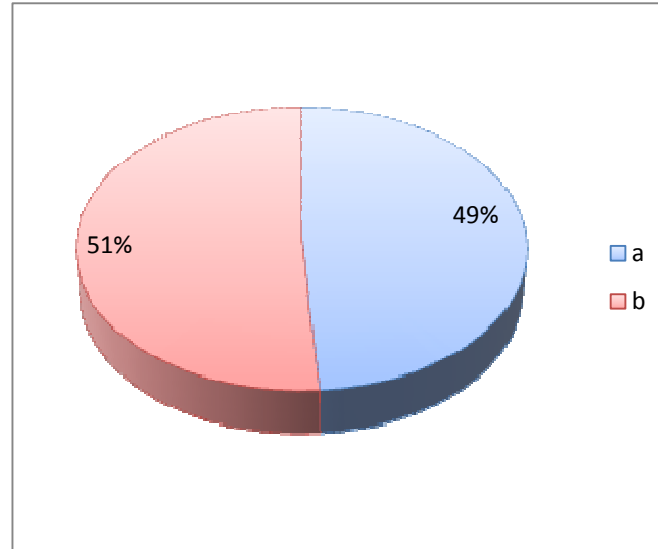
Fig 12 The learners' hesitation to produce long sentences

In the same vein, this question investigates whether the respondents feel reluctant to participate if they are expected to produce a long sentence; this reveals the respondents perceptions of their own abilities. The responses show that the participants are divided into two almost equal groups, the first having a percentage of 49%, admit that they really hesitate to participate when they are expected to generate long sentences; the other group representing 51% of the population say that they do not feel discouraged if they are required to produce long sentences. These results reveal the extent to which the learners' participation in speaking tasks is affected by the nature and length of the sentences they are expected to produce. We should, however, distinguish between long sentences and long speaking turns. When turns are composed of short sentences that are combined with simple conjunctions or just strung together, they do not constitute a challenge as long and complex sentences do.

The limited use of communication strategies can, partially, be a cause of the learners' reluctance to produce long sentences. They hold the belief that sentences should be error free and should be produced without the help of others. Nevertheless, learners' talk can be increased had they been sensitized about the usefulness of communication strategies.

Item 13: The respondents' preferences as regards the work form of the tasks.

a-Pair work

b-Group work

c-Whole class
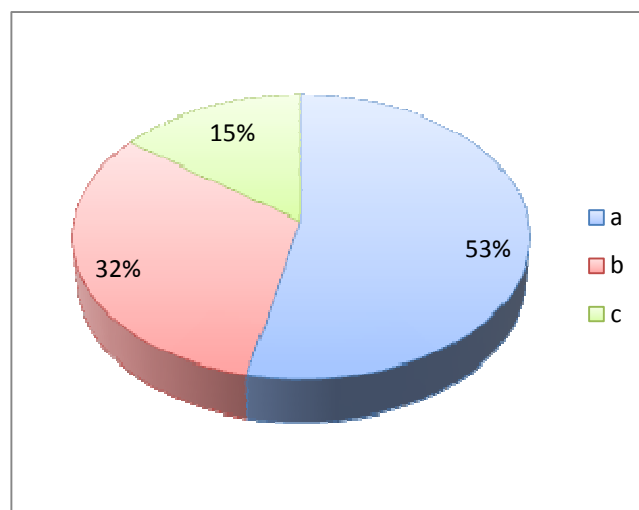
Fig 13 The respondents' preferences as regards the work form of the tasks.

More than half of the respondents (53%) prefer working in pairs, having just one partner when assigned a speaking task. 32% of the respondents like working in groups with a given number of classmates. The remaining proportion (15%) represents those who prefer working with the whole class. These results clearly show that the respondents prefer to speak within the work forms that are most similar to real-life conversations, that is either speaking to just one person or having a discussion with a group of five or six people but

rarely with a group of 44 partners. Again, learners' preferences are in conformity with the natural characteristics of the speaking skill.

Item 14: The feedback that embarrasses learners

a-Teacher's feedback

b-Peers' feedback

c-Both

d-None
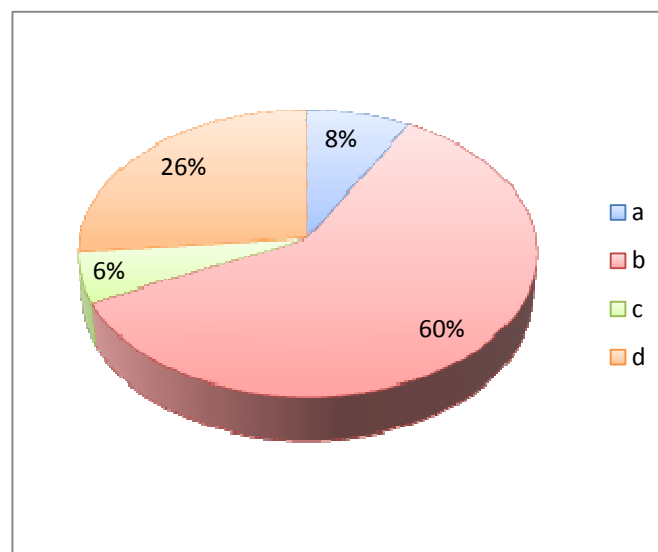
Fig 14 The feedback that embarrasses learners

A high proportion of the participants (60%) see that the peers' corrections are embarrassing. This may be due to their refusal to be corrected by someone who has a close level. It is, thus, more accepted to be corrected by someone who is more proficient. This assumption is reflected by the low percentage (08%) of those who do not appreciate the teachers' feedback. A minority constituted of 06% of the respondents prefer being corrected neither by the teacher, nor by the classmates. The remaining proportion estimated

by 26% declares that it does not annoy them to get a feedback be it from the teacher or from the peers.

When we go back to the third item in this questionnaire where the respondents are asked about the nature of their personalities and where most of the respondents think they are extrovert people, we notice a contradiction in the respondent's answers. Extrovert learners are supposed to welcome feedback regardless of its source. But, probably due to the absence of collaborative and cordial learning atmosphere, learners feel a kind of discontent as regards the others interventions.

Item 15: The type of tasks preferred by respondents:

a-role play and drama

b-debates

c-games

d-Story-telling
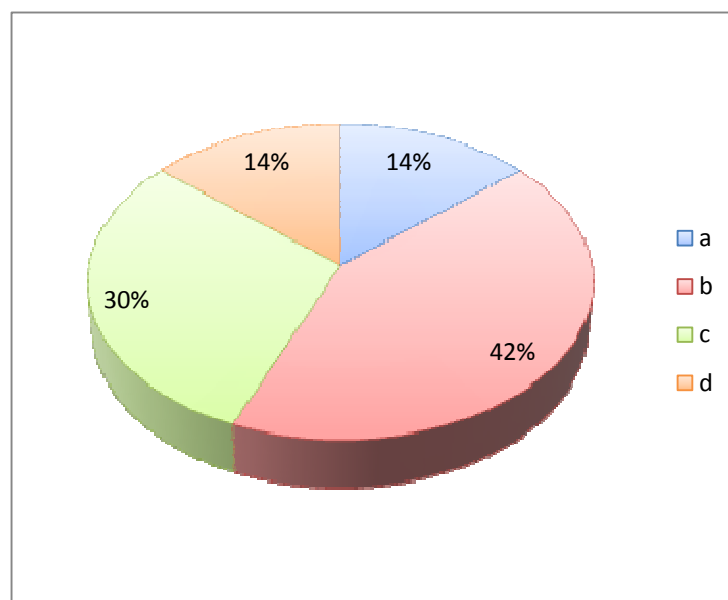
Fig15 The type of tasks preferred by respondents

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Concerning this question, the biggest proportion (42%) recorded is in favor of debates centered on given topics. Such a result highlights the importance of being involved into interesting topics and being willing to share one's opinions with others. For 30% of the population games are the type of tasks that attract them. The entertaining aspect these tasks have and the sense of achievement when a score is obtained or a goal is attained is the reason behind this choice. Drama and role play are the preferred type of tasks for 14% of the respondents. An equal proportion estimated also by 14% appreciates story-telling.

Pedagogically speaking, every type of the proposed tasks has its own merits and its instructive values. But since the course objective is to maximize participation in speaking tasks, bearing in mind that this can only be achieved if the learners are motivated in what they are doing, it is legitimate to assign the type of tasks preferred by the majority of learners.

Item 16: The usefulness of preparation for speaking tasks

a-Useful.

b-Not useful

c- No answer
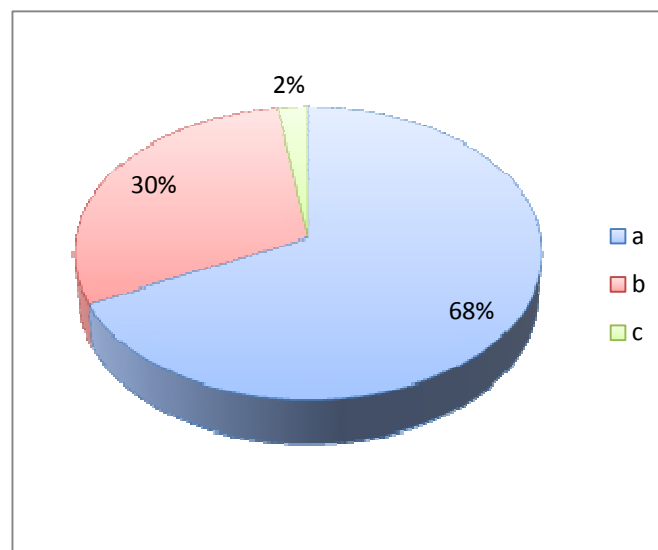
Fig 16 The usefulness of preparation for speaking tasks

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To this question, 68% of the respondents reply that they are in favor of prior preparation of tasks. This step allows them to know the vocabulary relevant to the topic that will be treated and benefit from the leisure they have at their disposal to think over the details of this topic. A proportion of 30% represents the respondents who rather prefer to deal with the task solely in the classroom. This makes talks more natural as they preserve their spontaneity. 2% of the respondents have not provided any answer to this question.

Item 17: The respondents' opinions about the selected topics

a-Interesting

b-Not interesting

c-No answer
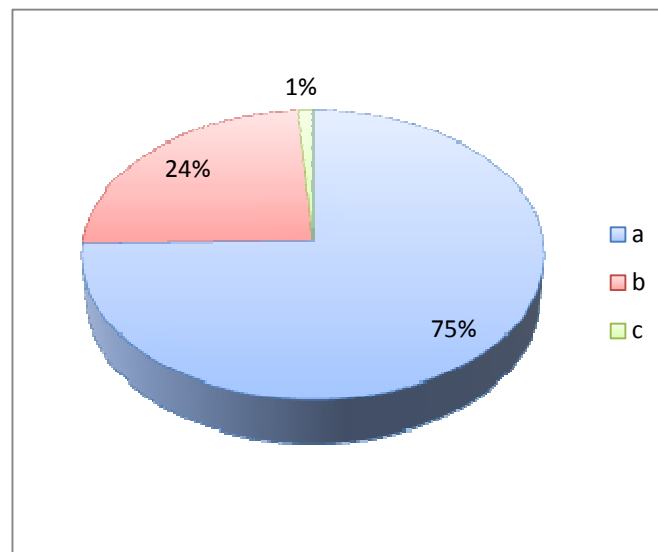
Fig 17 The respondents opinions about the selected topics

A look at the fourth grade textbook shows that the program is centered around six topics.

- Food and drinks.

- Citizenship sustainable development.

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- People and places.

- Customs and mores.

- Cultural exchanges.

- Arts and sciences.

When asked about their opinion concerning these topics 75 % of the respondents show their satisfaction and say that the topics tackled in English lessons are interesting. While 24% do not find the above-mentioned topics interesting. A tiny proportion of 1 % has not given any answer.

Item 18: The respondents' readiness to take part in the selection of topics

a-Yes

b-No

c-No answer
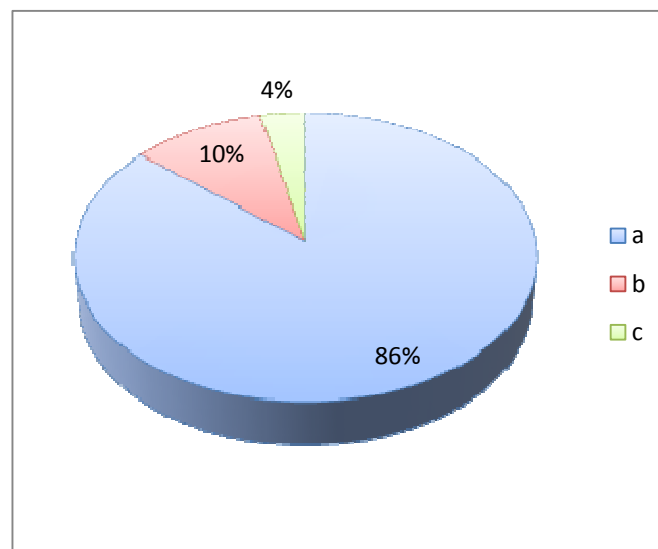
Fig 18 The respondents' readiness to take part in the selection of topics

Although the majority of the respondents show their satisfaction about their textbook topics, they welcome the idea of having a role in selecting the topics. To this appealing

idea, a percentage of 86 % have given a positive answer. Probably they appreciate the fact of being involved in classroom decisions even if they are satisfied with the teachers and curriculum developers' ideas. 10 % of the participants do not wish to intervene in topic selection and 4% decline to give any answer may be for the reason that they cannot decide upon a choice.

Item 19: The choice of the partner in pair works

a- A friend

b-A good learner
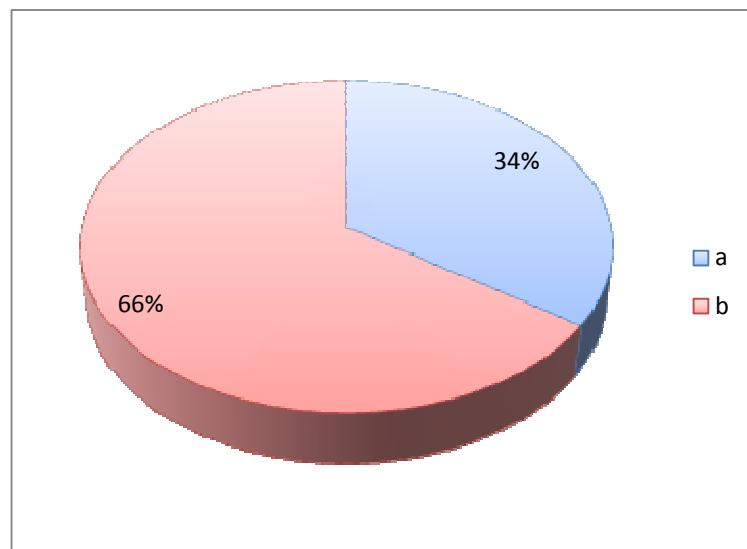
Fig 19 The choice of the partner in pair works

It generally happens that the teacher appoints both partners of the pair work but sometimes the learners express their wish to act a dialogue or perform a given work with a particular classmate. In our attempt to know whether the respondents prefer to work with a friend or a colleague having a good proficiency in English, we have asked this question and requested the participants to provide a justification for their choice. 34 % of the

respondents opted for working with a friend. They say that it is more enjoyable to have talks with friends, and it is easier to communicate with someone with whom we have a good personnel relationship. They also argue that friends are cooperative and ready to help when needed.

66% of the respondents think it is better to work with a classmate having good language proficiency. To justify this choice the respondents have advanced a number of reasons. The most mentioned one is the opportunity of benefitting from the knowledge he has. This attitude shows that a good proportion of the participants appreciate cooperative learning and do not feel embarrassed to acquire knowledge from good learners. Another reason cited by the respondents is to get help when needed; in other words, the good partner may provide a vocabulary item, a correct grammatical structures or an exact pronunciation detail if he judges his intervention useful. To a lesser extent the respondents mentioned as well the advantage of guaranteeing the easiness of speaking and the correctness of the generated sentence.

Item 20: The respondents' objectives from learning English

This open-ended question aims at discovering the objectives and expectations that guide these learners in their foreign language instruction. As regards short-term objectives, the primary objective mentioned by the respondents is to achieve good academic results. This foreign language represents for them a subject occupying an integral part in the curriculum and whose mark contributes actively in the success or failure of the learner.

With a smaller proportion, other objectives are talked about such as being able to watch T.V programs diffused in English, to use the web, and to communicate with other people having a good command of this language like teachers or foreigners. Some of the participants affirm that knowing a foreign language is a skill that enriches the cultural

knowledge and represents a mark of extended knowledge. There are, however, few answers which do not embed any clear objective such as aiming to master this foreign language or just because it is important.

Concerning the long-term objectives, the most cited one is the ability to communicate with foreigners; this reflects the participants´ awareness of the importance of English as a global language. An almost equal proportion of the participants think that English is a primary requirement in many jobs; hence, mastering it enables people to get prosperous careers. Other respondents express their wish to travel abroad without mentioning if it is for getting a job, for studies or for tourism but asserted that knowing a foreign language facilitates communication. Few respondents consider English a means to know other cultures, while very few ones have not given precise answers such as expecting the language to be useful in the future or regarding it as an important one.

4. Findings of the questionnaire:

In the light of the answers and clarifications provided by the learners to whom the questionnaire was administered, we can draw the following conclusions:

An important proportion of the respondents affirm being extrovert people who like having discussions and exchanging opinions. There is also a majority of participants who judge themselves able to produce at least short sentences and link them with conjunctions like: and, or, but…. They also can make use of communicative strategies when they judge it useful. With all these positive aspects, it is quite surprising to find that there is, as well, a high proportion of respondents who consider speaking a difficult skill. This belief is probably due to the lack of awareness about what is required from them when speaking. So, a large part of learners think falsely that they are supposed to produce long stretches of speech using complex sentences and delicately chosen vocabulary. In other words, the learner's abilities and preferences as regards the production of utterances, the coordination

of short phrases and the work form are in conformity with the features characterizing the speaking skill.

A further point that can be discussed is the possible ways that may maximize the learners' participation and facilitate their speaking tasks. It has been reported in a previous part of the analysis that a proportion of 39 % face a problem in words that constitute their talk and that 25 % of the total respondents relinquish to take part in talks just because they do not find the words. This problem may be due to the learners' unawareness about the legitimacy of appealing to communicative strategies. They probably regard the use of such solutions a sign of a gap in the learners' fluency. Whereas in reality it is a sign of fluency in that it helps achieve communicative effectiveness. Hence, teachers should invite the learners to say more about the meanings they are aiming to convey by using circumlocution, or by providing a literal translation from the mother tongue; and should give more freedom to talk in specific topics if learners show the ability to manipulate the vocabulary with relevance to this particular topic. Moreover, teachers should not be obsessed by the idea of prohibiting the use of the mother tongue; if transfer proves to be beneficial in maximizing the learners talk it can be used as a last recourse. The teacher is, practically, the ☐more expert person☐ present in the class from whom help can be asked, and transfer offers opportunities to provide feedback and detect the gaps in the learners proficiencies. In doing this repeatedly, the learners will realize the primacy of expressing one's idea even with modest linguistic repertoires; and the recourse to strategies will become a good habit rather than an embarrassing choice.

Another point revealed by the questionnaire is that some respondents estimated by 32% are reticent about oral communication because they do not find what to say. There is no idea, or message to be conveyed. This may be one of the reasons underlying the judgments attributed to the speaking skill. In another question, the majority (86 %) of the

participants express their wish to take part in the selection of the topics. This idea contributes certainly in increasing their involvement and brings plenty of ideas on which talk can centered. The teacher as well can have a role in solving this problem by finding and employing more efficient ways of contextualizing the language use. It is only if the situations are made clear to the learners that thought is stimulated and learners feel tempted to participate in talks.

The questionnaire has also showed that more than half the participants prefer pair works and 32 % of them like working in groups. Such preferences highlight the collaborative aspect between the speaking and listening skills and the necessity to integrate both skills. Learners taking part in pair or group works exchange roles of listeners and speakers just in the same way it happens in real-life communications.

Tasks that meet this condition, that is stressing the dynamic relationships between both oral skills, do not merely train learners how to keep the floor and how to yield it, but teaches them too how to conceive jointly messages, and collaborate in encoding utterances. Showing interest, hesitation, or the desire to end a conversation are other aspects that can only be performed if the task incorporates the characteristics of genuine conversations.

Conclusion:

This questionnaire has unveiled much of what we wished to know about the learners' abilities, preferences and attitudes as regards some aspects related to the speaking skill. We have come to a number of conclusions that bear on the assumptions held about the conditions that may guarantee the success of a communicative speaking course. Since the ultimate goal of this work is to gain a satisfactory understanding about the skill and to study all the elements that can contribute in fostering teaching oral communication, we have tried to imagine the practical decisions that follow from such conclusion and that can

be adopted. In terms of teaching materials, they can be tailored to fit both the nature of the skill itself; and the abilities, and preferences of the learners since the questionnaire results have shown a great conformity between both. The teachers' practices too should aim at maximizing the learners' participation by designing more motivating and productive tasks. The teaching / learning environment, as well, can be organized so that it serves best the pair and group works.

Analysis of the teachers' interview

Introduction:

Teachers are active participants in the process of language teaching in that they guide the practical side of the process and represent the physical factor whereby the theoretical standpoints of curriculum designers are put into practice. For this reason, it is essential to determine the teachers' conceptions as regards the speaking skill and whether they have any suggestions that help achieve better results. A semi-structured interview, including a considerable number of open-ended questions, is conducted with six middle school teachers to attain these goals. This interview will certainly clarify some aspects of the topic at hand and help draw some conclusions about the study.

1. The interviewees' selection:

Although interviewees have been selected randomly, by questioning teachers who show readiness to spend some time in answering the questions, and with whom contact is easy, it has been taken into consideration to work with teachers having led different kinds of formations and having varied teaching experience. By doing so, we wish to ensure as many characteristics as possible in our interviewees and thus guarantee an acceptable degree of representativety.

2. The setting of the interview:

Teachers were interviewed in their work place after the period of the final exams to take the advantage of their spare time and not be obliged to interrupt the interview to be completed in later sessions. Interviews lasted between one hour to three hours. This variation in duration is due to the readiness of the interviewees to give some details or to

illustrate their statements with examples. The teachers' readiness to be recorded differed also from one teacher to another. Four teachers accepted to be recorded using a cell phone MP4, while the two others refused.

3. The description of the interview:

The present interview is a semi-structured one. It contains, however, much more open-ended questions than close ones. The aim from it is mainly to conduct in-depth analysis rather than to generate numerical results. The teachers' views are so varied that it is difficult to classily them clearly within given categories. But variety here is an appreciated virtue that reflects the differences in the perspectives from which the teachers view the same issue. The interview includes 25 questions categorized into four sections; each of them has its particular objectives.(see appendix II)

Section 1: (question 1 to 2).

Before any questions concerning the content of the study are asked, it is necessary to get a broad idea about the teachers' qualifications, the nature of the formation they had received, and the length of their experience. Knowing the background of each teacher may help establishing any connections between the teacher's profile and his opinions.

Section 2: (question 3 to 7)

This section aims at finding out how teachers perceive the speaking skill in relation to the other skills and the degree of importance given to this skill both by syllabus designers and learners. It also reveals the teachers opinions concerning the degree of importance that should be given to the speaking skill.

Section 3: (question 8 to 21)

In this section of the interview the primary objective shared by the 14 questions is to know the teaching practices that teachers adopt in teaching the speaking skill and the

conceptual backgrounds that make teachers choose a technique rather than another or take a decision instead of another.

The main points that questions attempt to tackle are: the differences between the spoken language and the written one, the criteria of vocabulary and grammatical patterns selection and teachers' attitudes towards learners' silence pauses in oral activities. Another objective of equal importance that this section is expected to meet is to induce teachers to make any suggestions which many enhance the teaching of this skill.

Section 4: (question 22 to 25).

The main concern of this last section is to reveal the teachers' views concerning a number of external factors on which they can have no or little control such as time allotted to English lessons, course book and the class size .After each question, teachers are invited to give suggestions as regards the point in question.

4. Results presentation and analysis.

Section one:

Question 1: Teachers' qualifications:

According to the results of the interview there are three categories of English Teachers' formation which the interviewees had received: Bachelors of Arts having received a general EFL course at the university, for a duration of four years; graduates of the ENS who have led an educational and teacher–training program at the Teacher Training School for four years; and graduates of the ITE who have received some educational and teacher–training course at l'Institut Technologique de l'Education for two years. This last category of formation was followed many years ago and is no more applied. Three teachers out of the six are Bachelors of Arts, one is an ENS graduate and two are ITE graduates.

Question 2: Teaching experience.

The interviewed teachers have varied teaching experience; it ranges from two years to 24 years. It can be categorized as follows:

- Less than five years: one teacher.

- Between five and ten years: three teachers.

- Between 20 and twenty 25 years: two teachers.

Section two:

Question 3: The classification of the four skills according to the importance given to each skill in the curriculum.

The purpose behind asking this question and also the next one is to know the general impression of teachers as regards the importance of each skill in the curriculum and to check whether they are satisfied with such an order of importance. In order to clarify what we mean by the word "importance" we have added that it can be deduced from the amount of time spent in teaching each skill and the amount of tasks and sections devoted to each skill in the course book.

Three teachers agreed that speaking comes at the third rank after reading and writing and before listening. One teacher thinks it is in the second rank after writing. Another one thinks also that it is in the second rank but after listening. While the sixth teacher claims that all skills are given the same importance.

This variance in responses reveals the subjectivity with which the same curriculum can be handled by different teachers. Their views are partially and indirectly influenced by their own decisions in selecting what to focus on in teaching the foreign language.

Furthermore, teachers may perceive some tasks that aim to integrate two or more skills as ones that serve only a particular skill and this will tip the balance in favor of this skill.

Question 4: The teachers' views concerning the right order of importance of the four skills.

When asked this question, teachers have also given varied answers, relying on some theoretical backgrounds they refer to when justifying their statement. One teacher, for example, thinks that learners should be presented the four skills in the proportions that they normally occur in real-life. That is to say: listening should take the biggest share because we actually listen more that we speak, read or write. Speaking should come just after; then, reading comes in the third position. However, writing comes last because it rarely happens that ordinary people need to write something.

The classification of listening, speaking, reading then writing is shared by another teacher but for another reason than the proportions of skills occurrence in real-life. This teacher considers listening as the ability without which an individual cannot speak and the same thing with reading and writing. The order here is rather justified by the idea of which skill serves the other in terms of interdependence and complementarity.

Another view was presented and agreed upon by two teachers is based on the concept of needs analysis. For them learners are taught English not for the purpose of speaking it outside the classroom, since chances for doing this are so scarce in the Algerian context, but in order to pass written exams and fulfill academic achievements. Hence, the focus should primarily be on reading and writing. To support this view, the following argument is advanced: in the final formal paper and pencil test, seven points out of 20 are for the reading section and six points out of 20 are for the writing section, which is an important share that learners should be sufficiently prepared to get at the end of term examinations.

The two remaining teachers think that no skill must be given more importance than another. All of them are equally useful to learn a language and can naturally be integrated. Teaching one skill does indeed help to enhance other skills and can have other indirect purposes rather than serving just one purpose.

Question 5: The learners' interest in tested skills at the expense of those which are not tested.

All the teachers except one replied positively to this question and certified that learners are interested more in getting marks than in other objectives. This is why they tend to focus on reading and writing tasks and neglect what will not be tested especially the listening skill. This tendency from the part of the learners can be explained by the absence of an immediate need for learning the language. Their motive behind learning English is to get good marks rather than to be able to use the language in specific real situations. But this assumption cannot be generalized to all learners as there is a category of good learners who show a deep interest in all aspects of the target language even the least likely to be evaluated such as stress, intonation and so on. However, one teacher has a completely different idea. She thinks that learners are more involved in oral skills because they appreciate that kind of tasks. According to this teacher, learners find that engaging into discussions is easier and more enjoyable than writing which requires more efforts and more knowledge about the language.

Question 6: The skill that is most helpful to the speaking one.

This question aims at investigating whether the teachers are aware of the significant role that the listening skill plays in enhancing the speaking skill and the importance of integrating these two skills together.

Responses obtained from this question have revealed that listening is the skill which is supposed to facilitate and enhance the learning of speaking. Five teachers have agreed on this idea but they have provided different arguments. Listening is either an introductory phase to speaking practices, a step through which vocabulary and language patterns are contextualized; it is also a model of native speaker pronunciation, and if matched with visual elements it can convey cultural hints. The remaining interviewee thinks that reading is the skill that helps learners to practise language whether orally or in a written form. According to this teacher, reading is the skill through which learners can acquire a repertoire of grammar and vocabulary and wherever learners want to speak or write they draw upon this repertoire. It is worth to note that even if this last view is seemingly different form that of the former five interviewees´, there is a general agreement that in order to have some productive skills we need receptive ones as a basic requirement.

Broadly speaking, the responses obtained from this question reflect the teachers' awareness of listening as a skill that helps language acquisition but no one of them mentioned the close relationship between the two skills, and that when a group of people are engaged in discussions, they continuously take speaking turns and exchange roles as speakers and listeners.

Question 7: The role of the oral practices that precede listening, reading and writing tasks.

All the six interviewees agreed that the speaking skill actually benefits from oral practices that serve as a pre-listening, a pre-reading or pre-writing phase. So the time devoted to these practices can be added to that of the speaking skill. This amount of time is estimated by one of the teachers as being approximately 15 minutes before listening, 10 minutes before reading and about 30 minutes as a pre-writing phase which makes a total of about 55 minutes. Although these phases are not originally meant to develop the speaking

skill, they give opportunities to set discussions about specific topics and permit interaction. They also enrich the linguistic repertoire and reinforce the vocabulary and grammatical patterns learnt before.

Section three:

Question 8: Differences between the spoken language and the written one.

This question helps to discover the extent to which teachers are aware of the differences between the two forms of language in terms of grammar and vocabulary. The obtained responses will help us decide whether the pre-listening, pre-reading, and pre-writing phases do actually serve the speaking skill in terms language patterns reinforcement.

Again, all the interviewees share the same opinion stating that both forms of language are slightly different. However, they give different examples of these variations. For one of them, the use of paralinguistic features and gestures are additional means of communication used when speaking and which are not found in writing where only words and punctuation are used. For another teacher, sentence formation and linking differ much between the two forms. For instance, when trying to express a cause and effect relationship, the writer may employ "consequently", "so" or any other link word. However, in the oral form, the speaker can do without the link words and just utter the two sentences (cause and effect) next to each other. Another teacher, lists a number of vocabulary items and expressions which differ in both forms such as "mum" for mother, "cop" for policeman, "gonna" for going to….and so on. Another teacher sees that the differences do, actually, result from the variations in the levels of formality; that is when speaking, language users tend to employ a colloquial language. But, when writing, they feel

compelled to use a formal language. The remaining two teachers have just stated that the spoken form differs from the written one without giving any details or examples.

Question 9: The necessity to raise the learners' awareness about the differences between the spoken form and the written form of language.

In spite of the teachers' assertion on the existing differences between both forms, they show a remarkable reservation as regards raising the learners' awareness about these differences. Half of the interviewees claim that learners are expected to pass a written exam; hence, there is no need to put much stress on aspects of the oral language. A further reason for not introducing such a point to middle school learners is their present level which does not allow too many details about the contexts of use of the same vocabulary item.

The other three interviewees who approved   awareness raising have also made restrictions to this idea. There should not be a lesson as such for presenting this language aspect. Instead, when opportunities are presented and a vocabulary item or a grammar pattern used mainly in oral discourse is encountered, the teacher opens the brackets and explains the contexts of use. He should also avoid getting into ambiguous and misleading details.

Question 10: The criteria of vocabulary items selection from the wide range suggested in the course book.

One of the problems teachers are faced with is the selection of vocabulary items that will be taught to learners. This question aims at discovering the criteria against which teachers select the vocabulary.

To this question, interviewees have responded by giving rather general words such as the most useful″ ,the commonest″, and the easiest″ when asked to explain more what they mean they have given the following explanations: by "the most useful" some

interviewees mean the vocabulary that enable learners to solve the tasks or to engage into dialogues or discussions, the words and expressions that serve the topic and facilitate its understanding. The same notion "The most useful" is used by another teacher to mean words which will be recycled in other files and which are needed in real-life situations.

By "the commonest words" it is also meant words that are found in other parts of the course book, and words that are used in media and in other sources than the classroom."The easiest" is explained by one teacher as words having clear meanings and which do not entail any ambiguity, words which may have an equivalent in French that can be inferred easily and words which suit the level of the learners and their linguistic repertoire. Easiness covers also, for this teacher, pronunciation and spelling; hence, long words and difficult words for pronunciation are to be avoided. An easy word means as well a word that can be explained through the use of a synonym or an opposite and not a very long and ambiguous definition.

From these explanations, we can notice that teachers rely on some subjective criteria to decide upon the vocabulary they have to use and although they have used the same words they have meant different things.

Question 11: The criteria of grammatical patterns selection.

In this question, too, we attempt to find out the principles that guide the teachers through their teaching of grammatical patterns. Three interviewees state that they firmly follow the curriculum without bringing any modifications or additions. Two other interviewees say that in addition to the grammatical structures proposed in the curriculum, they sometimes feel obliged to recycle some structures that have been studied previously and that may be necessary for the understanding of the present structure. By so doing, they assure moving from the simpler to the more complex patterns.

The remaining interviewee says that she moves from the general to the detailed, and that she selects easy structures which help discussing given topics. This teacher points out that when the purpose of the lesson is to set communicative tasks, structures are rarely dealt with, this encourages learners to speak and lowers their fear of making mistakes.

Question 12: Fluency and accuracy dilemma.

To probe the teachers' attitudes towards the dilemma of fluency versus accuracy, we addressed this direct question in the form of two predetermined choices. Without showing any hesitation, four teachers have assured that getting the message transmitted is much more important than just producing correct sentences. They argued that in real life situations, such as trade bargains, what matters most is to get things done even if the pronunciation is not native like or the grammar is not correct. In addition to this, the context of discussion can facilitate communication by just using isolated words instead of full sentences.

A further argument in favor of fluency focuses on the affective aspects of language production. Insistence on correctness may inhibit learners and decrease their motivation especially when we are dealing with beginner and pre-intermediate levels. The linguistic knowledge of these learners does not permit the production of error-free sentences. It is however important to correct pronunciation and grammar if the mistake may affect meaning.

One of the remaining teachers has specified that correctness is a required condition in writing tasks, but in speaking tasks the teacher can tolerate mistakes if the message is clear. The sixth teacher has strongly insisted on correctness, she argues that since learners have been taught the vocabulary and grammar necessary to communicate they are required to use them properly and produce full and meaningful sentences.

Question 13: The role of visual aids in contextualizing language use.

Although this question clearly attempts to emphasize the role of visual aids in creating contexts of language use, three teachers have replied by explaining how aids help to present vocabulary of both concrete and abstract items. They were also enthusiastic in explaining how pictures can motivate learners, save much of the precious class time and avoid translation. But they paid little attention to the role of language contextualization.

The other teachers stressed the role that a picture can play in orienting the learners' attention to the targeted topic and in avoiding long introductory sentences. To illustrate this statement, the following example is given by one of the interviewees: "the picture of two people in the restaurant with a menu in their hands is able to suggest and guide the learners to the target situation or topic". Another teacher points: "a picture can give hints to pupils to find some interesting ideas that will be discussed and gives the teacher the opportunity to ask questions to pupils".

Question 14: The teachers' attitudes toward silence pauses occurring in learners' talks.

False starts, hesitation and silence pauses are characteristic features in the spoken language; their rate of occurrence is higher in lower proficiency learners. In the classroom, silence pauses take much of the class time and need some reactions from the part of the teachers. This question is asked to see what these pauses reflect to the teacher about the learners' oral skills and to know the manners in which teachers treat such a situation.

Most of the interviewees hold a positive attitude towards this phenomenon. For them, it shows that the learner is thinking about what to say next, and that he is striving to generate correct and meaningful sentences. These interviewees go further in claiming that it is generally good learners who stop while speaking and that pauses guarantee to a great

extent the correctness of what follows. One of these five interviewees adds that:"speech without pauses sounds like rote learning rather than natural talk".

Only one of the six interviewees holds an extremely different view as regards silence pauses; for her they are, too, a sign of thinking process but this time they reveal that the learner has not grasped what he has been taught and that his level does not actually allow him to speak correctly.

Question 15: The teachers' reactions in cases of interrupted speech.

Once we have known how teachers view the pauses it is important to see how they practically react with interrupted speech. This time all the teachers express the same idea that the teacher should be patient and try to infer what the learner wants to say. Then, he helps him accordingly, either by providing the needed word, correcting the grammatical mistakes or by using gestures to suggest ideas. Using body language is very important to show interest to the learner engaged in a speaking task in that it keeps him involved in the talk and encourages him to say more. However, if the pause stretches longer, the teacher should smoothly move to another classmate, but without interrupting the present speaking turn. This can be done by welcoming help from peers and by avoiding any embarrassment to the learners participating in talks.

Two teachers have added that the reaction of the teacher can differ according to the level of the learner; if the participant in talk is a good learner who is pausing to formulate a correct sentence or look for the word that fits best the meaning, it makes sense then, to help him and wait a little moment. But if it is a weak learner who will not be able to carry on speaking even if help is provided, the teacher should move to another one but without embarrassing the currently speaking learner.

Question 16: The techniques and ways that make learners produce longer turns.

Without precising to the interviewees the nature of the techniques or giving any hints. This general question aims at prompting teachers to say whatever idea that serves the purpose. The interviewees have suggested a considerable number of ideas. Some of them are suggested by more than one interviewee, which reveals that there are some shared perceptions between teachers. However, to begin with, let us deal with the ideas on which there is a certain agreement. Four teachers have insisted on the role of the teacher in creating a relaxing atmosphere that encourages communication and that decreases the fears of learners. The relaxing atmosphere means also the way learners sit in the class; discussions should be conducted by students facing each other in the same way things happen in real-life situations.

The type of questioning, according to some interviewees, is the key criterion that should be attached considerable importance. When questions prompt learners to give more details, to supply explanations or to justify some choices, they entail longer turns and higher rates of learners' participation. Sometimes the teacher can suggest to the learner his dissatisfaction with the short answer he has provided. Accordingly, the learner does his best to give a more satisfactory answer.

Topic presentation is another idea mentioned by two interviewees. For them, learners can be involved in longer speaking turns if the topic is funny, witty or if it is directly connected to real-life concerns. The way teachers introduce these topics is also of paramount importance, he may provide hints with relevance to the topic to be developed by learners.

The other techniques that are each mentioned by only one interviewee can be summarized in the following:

- To encourage memorization of dialogues or expressions so that they can easily be retrieved when needed.

- To encourage learners to use gestures or body language to avoid breakdowns in communication and make it possible for the teacher to intervene with any help.

- To advise learners to develop their linguistic repertoires through the skill of reading.

- To get the learners use simple language comprising simple structures. The teacher's talk can represent a model to be followed by the learners.

What has been noticed from this set of suggested ideas is the general agreement of teachers on the role of the encouraging atmosphere, the type of questioning and the topic selection. However, they show little concern to the language itself and to the kind of patterns and vocabulary that can be used. This point has a key role in facilitating discussions and making speaking turns longer.

Question 17: The appropriate level in which language production should be started.

Through this question, we want to check whether the interviewed teachers prefer to start teaching language production at early levels with whatever available linguistic resources or wait until an adequate linguistic repertoire is acquired.

All the interviewees share the same belief of starting language production right from the earlier levels. This choice is justified with different arguments. For two teachers, the whole process of language production is regulated by the principle of habit formation. So, the sooner it is started the more beneficial it is.

For one teacher, when learners are encouraged to speak or write at an early stage, this gives them chances to be familiarized with language elements and to correct the mistakes . The same teacher adds that since English is a foreign language used solely in the classroom

settings, the familiarization with this language should take place in the classroom and as early as possible. In doing so, instruction will help not only to develop the speaking skill, but the rest of skills as well. Another teacher claims that learning a language requires both understanding and production, and both facets should be given equal importance. Hence, if beginners are taught how to decode language they should also be encouraged to encode it.

Concerning the manner whereby language production is taught, there is also a general agreement that it should be gradual. At first learners are expected to produce short answers composed of only one word, then phrases and sentences. The teacher must seize the opportunities where learners produce just one word to mean a whole sentence such as in "pen" standing for: "Miss, can I ask my friend for a pen" to utter the whole sentence and write it on the board. This type of guidance enables the learners to be gradually familiar with language.

Question 18: The techniques that help encourage lower proficiency learners to use their acquired linguistic resources.

The reason behind asking this question is to get teachers provide some insights into processes of teaching language production with learners having modest linguistic resources. This question would not represent a challenge if the learners have an advanced level. Hence, more efforts are needed to decide upon more efficient techniques.

Each of the six interviewees has given different ideas, however, there is a point on which five teachers agree upon. Guidance through the presentation of a model is so important for beginners. It offers them opportunities to rehearse and memorize a given structure before they become able to contribute with their own ideas and words. Imitation is then, a necessary step when the linguistic repertoire is not rich yet, in that it paves the way to subsequent attempts of autonomous speaking.

One interviewee suggests creating simple communicative situations that fit the level of beginners and pre-intermediate learners, such as talking about daily routines, then move to complex situations that require higher level of language proficiency.

Another idea is proposed by the same teacher; she says that the reinforcement of the learners' self-confidence boosts the learners' abilities and generates more talk. To obtain this effect the teacher has to praise the learners' contributions, show interest to their talk, and should not interrupt them abruptly. The mutual respect between learners is another factor of equal importance, which can encourage them to speak more even with modest linguistic resources.

Another teacher sees that learners must be advised to use easy styles and produce simple sentences composed mainly of subject, verb and object and avoid complex sentences. The learners have to employ the vocabulary and grammar that is easily accessible for them and should not feel compelled to look for other words. One way of solving vocabulary problems, according to the same teacher, is to use generic words which go with a larger range of situations. The learner may, as well, check a dictionary, a notebook for synonyms and opposites, or ask for the teacher's help. Other suggestions provided by the teachers are: cooperative learning, group work, and proposing help when necessary.

Question 19: The teacher's preference as regards input and output order in language production.

This question aims at defining the methodological orientations of the teachers concerning language production. A choice has to be made whether input should precede output or the opposite. In other words, should learners be presented a model that will be followed later on, or a situation is created beforehand to suggest a particular communicative need and prompt the learners to use language accordingly.

The responses vary with each interviewee. Three teachers stressed the importance of starting with input. For them, a dialogue, a paragraph, or a set of sentences should be presented at the beginning of lessons to serve as models of language production that learners will imitate later in the productive phrase.

Two other teachers think that it is better to create a situation where learners feel the need to communicate and try to say something in that respect. After that, the model including the targeted language element will be presented in subsequent steps to guide the learners to the correct language use.

The remaining teacher considers both methods useful and think that they should be employed depending on a number of elements namely: the learners level, the amount of real communication opportunities available in the classroom, and the targeted grammatical structures. This teacher specifies that with weaker learners it is preferable to present the model first, as it is difficult for them to infer the targeted communicative purpose or to use language to encode ideas.

Question 20: Interviewees suggestions concerning teaching speaking.

After having tackled many aspects of teaching speaking in particular and language production in general, we judge it necessary to give teachers a chance to add any suggestions that are relevant to the topic, without precising the aspect for which the suggestion will be given. By and large, teachers' responses are centered on a number of points most of them are mentioned in other questions, such as the type of tasks and topics, interaction and questioning, evaluation, psychological factors…and so on.

According to the interviewed teachers, the tasks administered in the speaking course should be motivating. They can be dialogues that look like real life discussions, story-

telling, games, discussion of a poem…and so on. To make things easier, learners can be asked beforehand to prepare a topic at home and discuss it later in the classroom.

Topics of discussions should have direct links with real-life experiences so that they can raise the learners' interest. To make the discussions richer and develop as much facets as possible in a given topic, teachers can use different visual aids. The teachers from their part can diminish their talk's amount and manage wisely their feedback. Learners must have more freedom in their speaking tasks, they must both ask and answer the questions and not be confined to the role of respondents. To achieve all this, certainly there should be an affective comfort and a readiness for cooperative learning.

Another suggestion made by some interviewees is to reward the learners for their contributions in speaking tasks by giving extra marks. This idea does not aim at evaluating or testing the learners but at encouraging them to make more efforts. In the same sense, learners can be encouraged if they are praised or if their contribution is selected as the best one. By way of encouragement, the teacher can even help his student to better formulate and express the idea, then draws the other learners' attention to his contribution as if it was fully generated by him.

One of the interviewees has added another idea that can make language use more genuine in the classroom settings. She says that when teachers come across situations where he can stimulate learners to talk and guide them to fulfill the communicative need without appealing to the mother tongue, he should benefit from these situations. Those communicative needs may not necessarily be relevant to the course such as when students want to go out, or to ask for a spare book. However, the teacher can turn the situations into an opportunity to produce language

Question 21: The principles of grouping learners in pair and collective works.

All the interviewees see that the best criterion against which learners should be grouped together is heterogeneity in terms of level of language proficiency. They argue that in mixed level groups, learners guide and help each other. They also feel less embarrassed than facing the whole class individually.

Mixed level groups offer also the possibility to ask each other about vocabulary items and to correct each other in case of language misuse. The interviewees added that they would have liked to chose pairs partners according to the same criterion, that is one partner should be a good learner while the other a weaker one, however, this is practically difficult to realize as it causes noise and takes time.

Question 22: The teachers' views as regards the number of pupils in a classroom and how it affects the speaking course.

The reaction toward this question can easily be expected, yet the aim is not to find out whether the teachers approve or disapprove working with large groups, but to get some suggestions on how things should be.

Hence, it is not surprising to know that all interviewees think that crowded classes including more than 40 pupils are not ideal environments for oral activities. Teachers argue that such classes tend to be noisy and permit little control over its members. Moreover, it is almost impossible to give every pupil in the class a chance to speak, especially with slow pupils since they cannot keep pace with good learners, so they prefer to give up and keep silent. To stress this problem one of the interviewees adds: "In large classes, the learners do not feel involved because they think that they will not be asked and their turn will not come rapidly or will not come at all". The large number of learners affects as well the teachers and peers feedback whether in term of quality or quality. Teachers relinquish to comment on the learners contributions just because it is not feasible with large classes.

The six interviewees propose a set of solutions to this problem. Either to diminish the number of the classes to 30 or less or to divide the class into two groups when the objective of the course is to set speaking activities. Each of these two groups should consist of less than 20 pupils, working in such workshops allows for more participation and interaction. Alternatively, the class can be divided into small groups consisting of five or six pupils, all of them work simultaneously under the teacher's guidance.

Question 23: The teachers' views concerning the amount of time allotted to the English subject in general and to the speaking phase in particular.

Here again, all the interviewees show a strong dissatisfaction with the amount of time devoted to teaching English. For them it is difficult to teach all the skills effectively and evenly in three hours per week. Two interviewees claim that teachers feel obliged to devote most of the program time to skills that will be tested at the expense of the skills which will not.

In the final exam taking place at the end of the fourth grade, reading comprehension and written expression constitute important parts of the exam for which the biggest share of marks is given. Teachers think that teaching English should be allotted five hours a week to be able to cover a big part of the curriculum. They argue that it is important to listen to the learners contributions and provide the suitable feedback which is time demanding.

One further reason for which more time should be allotted to English teaching is the fact that in the Algerian context, this foreign language is not spoken and used outside the limits of the classroom. Hence, learners should be given more chances to listen to this language and use it in the classroom.

Question 24:   Teacher's attitudes towards the written task that should follow the speaking activities.

Responses to this question show that interviewees are divided into two groups, those in favor of devoting the entire lesson to speaking, and those preferring to have a written task at the end. The first group thinks that speaking courses should be given enough time to ensure efficiency and productivity. For this reason it is preferable to drop any written task.

The second group sees that learners should have something to revise when going back home, especially weaker ones who are not involved adequately in the courses. A further argument states that skills should be integrated so that they serve each other. Hence, it is more beneficial to have two skills integrated together than teach one skill separately.

One of the interviewees proposes some solutions to gain more time for the speaking tasks without giving up the written phases. She thinks it will be beneficial to assign short tasks that can be corrected briefly or to have some photocopied tasks on sheets of papers or on a booklet that will be corrected also briefly at the very end of the speaking course.

Question 25: Teacher's degree of satisfaction with course book tasks and how they cope with the absence of satisfactory materials.

Interviewees declare that the fourth grade course book offers them great help when teaching speaking. Still, they feel compelled to replace some tasks with others that they find in other sources or that they design themselves. When asked about the motives that make them decide to omit a task or modify it, they advance the following reasons.

In case there are many tasks having the same objective the teacher chooses just one and drops the others. Another reason for which a task can be avoided is the high number of new vocabulary it includes. This distracts the learner from the original objective of the tasks and directs the learners' attention only to the explanation of this new vocabulary.

Long tasks including some ambiguities should also be avoided because they are not motivating and they yield little productivity.

It is also necessary to modify some elements in a task especially when talking about some personalities who were well-known in a certain period of time but who are no more famous at the present time such as: Hassiba Boulmerka. This insistence on relevance to real-life interest is stressed by a teacher who says that mentioning Shakespeare in a dialogue revolving around expressing preferences is not an appealing choice to the learners; hence, she replaces it by more recent authors.

In addition to this, teachers insisted on the fact that speaking tasks should have a double function: to induce learners to produce language and to reinforce grammatical structures and vocabulary dealt with in the previous sections. So they select the tasks according to this criterion.

5.Findings of the interview:

Through the interview conducted with the six teachers we have arrived at a number of conclusions, some of them are expected while others are not. But they all contribute in drawing a clear picture of the whole process of teaching speaking.

This skill, as revealed by the teachers' statements, is not taking the biggest share of importance in the curriculum and this is because of the final exam which is based almost entirely on reading and writing skills. Speaking actually benefits from the oral practices that precede or go along the sections devoted for the other skills. However, speaking has its own particularities as it was pointed previously in many contexts. In this respect, the interviewees have shown awareness about the variations between the spoken discourse and the written one, mainly at the level of vocabulary, and the different levels of formality that words can have.

However, only few of the teachers mentioned the level of simplicity of sentences in both modes or the possibility of using general words. It is probably owing to this reason that they show little enthusiasm towards raising the learners' awareness about the existing variations. Their assumption that raising the awareness means primarily, displaying lists of vocabulary and expressions where the formal version is compared to the colloquial one, is the underlying cause behind their reservation. Yet, in many contexts the interviewees point that language productions including speaking does not require having an advanced level of language proficiency, and that it can be started at very early levels. They asserted too that the use of simple language makes communication easier.

A further conclusion pertaining to the nature of the skill is the interviewees' attitude towards the silence pauses occurring within a same speaking turn. Here, the interviewees show both tolerance and understanding towards these pauses in that they represent evidence about the cognitive operations occurring before speaking and a further development for correctness and meaningfulness. It ensues from this that teachers are aware about the importance of time as a specific requirement for oral production activities, and have some suggestions in this respect which will be discussed subsequently.

Concerning the speaking tasks, the teachers insist on the fact that tasks should serve purposes related to grammar and prioritize this requirement on that of productivity. This reveals, to a certain extent, that the speaking skill is not sufficiently independent from teaching grammar. This is not to imply that speaking tasks should solely be based on communicative aims but what we mean is that grammar should not constitute always the primary focus of speaking tasks.

Another important point revealed by the interviews is that teachers wish to administer tasks that are similar to real-life discussions and concerns   in real-life

conditions. Yet, they feel compelled to work within the conditions afforded for them in the classroom and with the available type of tasks proposed in the course book.

The interview has also revealed the dissatisfaction of the teachers with the amount of time allotted to teaching English in general including all the skills and with the size of the class. The suggestions given concerning these points are so varied but in sum they call for more time or reduced program and smaller classes.

Given the importance of learners motivation, and since the speaking skill is not tested, interviewees consider it necessary to reward learners whose participation in oral tasks is productive and this through adding extra points to the mark of the written test.

Conclusion:

The findings achieved through this interview clarify much of the teachers' perceptions of the skill in question and the attitudes inside the classroom. By and large, the results reflect the teachers' willingness to teach the skill in a more motivating way, and this by taking into consideration some of the elements that make talks natural such as time, small groups, tolerance towards errors and silence pauses. But from the other hand, the pressure of preparing learners for the final written exam obliges them to ignore some of the speaking skill characteristics and to focus on materials and practices that consolidate grammar patterns and on tasks whose language is in accordance with written language rules. In sum the information we have gathered from this interview allowed us both to recognize the backgrounds that shape the teachers decisions and the positions that reflect their expectations and visions about successful speaking courses.

Textbook analysis

Introduction:

Before approaching the analysis of "*On The Move*", the fourth grade, middle school textbook, there are a number of ideas that should be considered. The importance of any textbook stems from its being the concrete aspect of a given curriculum. A guide for teachers, especially those with little experience and a reference for learners to revise what has already been learnt and know what will be dealt with next. However, it is generally agreed upon that there is no ideal textbook fitting all instructional situations; the teaching materials that may be perfectly suitable to one situation may not be so in another one. Judgments about the textbooks can only be done by reference to the purpose of instruction. What should be checked, then, is "whether or not the methodology and the content of the materials are appropriate for a particular teaching context" (Littlejohn 1998). Hence, this chapter aims at evaluating the speaking section and gauging the extent to which tasks are designed to be productive.

1.Criteria of Textbook Evaluation:

To evaluate a textbook, a number of criteria should be referred to. Many frameworks have been suggested; they either took the form of questions, or checklists. Cunnigsworth (1995 cited in Richards 2001:258) proposes a set of criteria which covers many aspects such as organization of the textbook, the language content, skills, topics and so on. Littlejohn (1998) proposes to examine points such as: division and subdivision of the materials, types of learning/teaching activities, participation and so on. Harmer (2003) provides a list of features, including among others: availability, layout and design, instructions, cultural acceptability…

By and large, the proposed features can be classified within two main categories, those related to external aspects like: the organization of the course book; the subdivision of materials into sections and subsection; and the internal features that reflect the underlying methodologies and orientations of the writers such as: the presentation of the skills, the sequencing and gradation of the materials, types of tasks….

Since our concern here is to assess precisely how the speaking skill is taught and to examine all the aspects that contribute in the success or failure of a speaking course, we will deal with a number of features having either a direct or indirect relevance with the speaking skill, but we will put particular focus on those affecting directly this skill.

1.1 Physical Features:

This level of analysis is concerned mainly about concrete criteria that can be observed without the need to deep analysis.

1.1.1. Publication and Type of Materials:

"*On the Move*" (year four) is the teaching course book succeeding "*Spotlight on English3*" and before it, "*Spotlight on English 1* "and "*Spotlight on English 2* ". It was revised in 2008-2009; very slight changes were brought in the revised edition, such as on page 136 in both books where the picture of the ancient general secretary of the United Nations was replaced by the new ones, or on page 69 on both books where the cues of the same text were modified. Yet, the revised edition does not affect the organization of the books pages; that is when learners refer to the same page on both books they will find the same tasks. Both editions are published by the ONPS, "L'Office National des Publications Scholaires.

1.1.2.The Intended Audience:

"*On The Move*" is designed to be used with fourth grade, middle school learners. At this level the learners have studied English as a third language for three years. Hence, they can be considered having a pre-intermediate level. The average age at this school level is 16, much of the materials content is selected to fit the interests of this age bracket. At this age and level of proficiency, learners have no immediate purpose from learning English except from fulfilling academic achievement. For this reason, this book is used in a general teaching context that does not target any specific purpose such as enhancing a particular skill.

1.1.3.Accompanying Document:

This textbook is meant to be the durable main course book, including texts, activities, instructions, project, and so on. No supplementary materials such as printed workbooks are provided. So learners are supposed to solve the activities and copy the corrections on a consumable exercise book. This explains why the written task assigned at the end of the speaking course takes time and learners have to copy it down on their exercise book instead of writing just the needed and missing answer. There are no audio CD or tapes which provide learners with native speakers' language as an input for listening and a model for imitating oral production.

1.1.4.The Organization of Materials:

The course book is divided into six files; each of them is centered on a specific topic and follows a fixed structure.

-Food for thought: an introduction to the topic through picture description and analysis.

- Listen and consider: listening tasks following the teacher's reading of a script.

- Practice: grammar tasks.

- Read and consider: reading comprehension tasks.

- Practice: grammar tasks.

- Words and sounds: morphology and pronunciation tasks.

- Research and report: tasks aiming as researching the topic of the life.

- Listening and speaking: listening tasks followed by speaking ones.

- Reading and writing: tasks based on reading comprehension, and writing.

- Project round up: instructions and guidance for the accomplishment of the project.

- Where do we stand now: an assessment phase where the progress of learners is checked through a number of tasks covering all the skills.

- Learning log: a questionnaire aiming at the learners' self-evaluation.

- Time for…: a selected poem, text, song or cartoon to be read or discussed.

We can notice that, there is a section grouping together the oral skills, occurring almost in the midst of the file which implies that the learners are induced to speak after they have been trained to use some grammar and pronunciation patterns and after they get acquainted to the   new topic.

This section of listening and speaking is in turn divided into two subsections

- Listen and check: devoted to listening tasks.

- Your turn to speak: devoted to speaking tasks.

So, in spite of their occurrence under the same heading, the speaking skill is not integrated with the listening one, it just follows it.

1.1.5.**The Amount of Lesson Time:**

The fourth grade program is supposed to be fulfilled within a period of approximately 34 weeks. English is taught three hours per week which makes 75 hours a school year. Hence, each of the six units should normally take about 12 hours.

Seeing that "*On the Move*" files are relatively long including an average number of 42 tasks, not including the progress check, it is then essential to give priority to some tasks and skip others. Other tasks should be assigned as homework to gain the time that would be spent in copying it down and solving it in the classroom. It is then required from the teachers to take the right decision concerning which tasks should be given more importance than others and which should be neglected. This can be done by reference to the objectives set before any course is started.

1.1.6.The Authors' Word:

In the opening pages, the authors address both the students and the teachers, in the pages entitled "To the student" the authors welcome the learners, introduce some characters that will repeatedly appear in the program and explain the objective set behind the way the four skills are presented, this objective is formulated as follows:

"when you see listening and speaking, reading and writing you will acquire a good command of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and strategies. The coping window will give you tips and hints for the purpose, these tips and hints will also help you develop social skills (e.g.: write a letter of opinion)". (*On The Move* authors 2008 :6)

In the word addressed to the teachers, the authors state that "*On The Move*" takes the same track as the third year course book, with some innovations introduced such as: "The clear cut distinction between the receptive phase and the productive phase of the

learning/teaching process as appears from the division between language learning and skills building". (*On The Move* authors 2008:8)

Concerning the methodologies and approach adopted in this course book, it is stated that, like with the third year course book, the approach is competency based approach and the method is learner based. This explains to a great extent the tendencies to develop the learners' autonomy in language learning by providing them with the necessary strategies. It is worth to note that the authors do not declare giving priority to any particular skill over the others which implies that all the skills should be given equal importance.

1.1.7. Visual Materials:

One of the most important features that should be considered when analyzing the textbook is whether pictures and graphics are included to facilitate learning. When flicking through the pages of the textbook, it is quite clear that a great deal of tasks is accompanied either with pictures, color photos, maps, boxes, tables or cartoons. Each of them plays a different function. Some pictures, for example, serve as an instrument for brainstorming; they provoke the learners' thoughts during the discussion of any topic.

Illustrations and tables including cues can be an integral part without which it would be impossible to solve the task such as in a task requiring to indentify the Indian tribe that was living in a given region on the USA map. Or the task where textbook users are given pictorial cues to be used in a substitution task. Alternatively, illustrations can be used as a means to check meaning like in the task mentioning the famous cartoon character "Shrek" with a picture representing it. Actually, pictures do not serve only cognitive ends but also affective ones; learners are attracted by cartoon bubbles, and pictures…and this raises their involvement in the learning process.

1.1.8.Cultural Aspects:

Much of the cultural underlying thinking can be deduced through the examination of the external features. The characters that are chosen to be the centre of many events, the topics that are chosen and the texts that are selected reflect to a great extent the cultural values and principles adopted by the authors. In our attempt to analyze "*On the move*", we find that there is a clear tendency to present the textbook's content in both an Algeria and international context. An instance of such a multicultural background is the choice of the characters names, places, customs…

1.2.Internal features:

This level of evaluation goes deeper to characterize the underlying principles that have guided the course book designers in their creation of the materials. Littlejohn (1998) points out that this is the most important level of analysis and in most of the times it entails subjectivity from the part of the analyst. Two analyses of the same book may result in completely different views. Moreover, analysts of teaching materials suggest a great deal of these criteria to evaluate the internal aspects of the course book. Checklists of these criteria may differ from one author to another, contrary to the external evaluation where there is much agreement on the proposed criteria. As it was mentioned before, this analysis does not adopt any particular framework. The features that will be considered in "On the Move" are selected to serve precisely the objective of analyzing the speaking tasks.

1.2.1. Linguistic Competence:

The first aspect to be dealt with is the way the course book develops the linguistic competence. This involves the set of targeted linguistic elements which have been selected by curriculum developers, Richards (2001) says in this respect:

"All teaching, of course, demands a choice of what will be taught from the total field of the subject, and the teaching of language at any level and under any circumstances requires the selection of certain features of the language and the intentional or unintentional exclusion of others".   Richards(2001:04)

•Vocabulary

Vocabulary constitutes a basic component of the linguistic repertoire that any learner should acquire to speak. Therefore, it is essential to consider the vocabulary content intended to be taught. McCarthy (1990) cites three principles when exploring the selection of vocabulary items: frequency and range; learnability and learners' needs.

In terms of frequency, vocabulary items can be analyzed by reference to frequency lists, these are provided in corpora relying on computer aided analyses. Examples of these corpora are: LOB(The Lancaster/Oslo/ Bergen Corpus) and the Birmingham Corpus. However, different corpora do not always agree on the same classification of common words. For this reason, we preferred not to refer to any corpus. Add to this, the pedagogical objectives in the Algerian context do not specify the adherence to any corpus, accent, or range of language use (technical, legal…). There are even some writers like Richards (2001) who assert that "frequency is not necessarily the same thing as usefulness "Richards (2001:07). In other words, what may top the lists of corpora is not always useful for pedagogical ends in classroom settings. Function words for example come at the head of frequency lists and what learners actually need are content words.

Sinclair and Renouf (1988 cited in McCarthy 1990:82) claim that learners need some particular kinds of vocabulary items that help them communicate in the classroom settings like days of the week, words expressing evaluation, words relevant to the physical settings of the classroom and so on. Accordingly, the selection of vocabulary content should rely in addition to frequency lists to the intuitions of material designers. This reliance on intuition can be perceived in the selection of words like ☐KousKous, mint tea, waiter, dish and

vegetables□ in presenting the topic of food, such words are not likely to top lists of frequency but they are useful to the teaching of some language elements.

Concerning learnability, this term is in fact employed to denote a number of characteristics, namely: spelling, phonology, syntactic properties, closeness in meaning, false friends, association to one's world experience or culture (McCarthy 1990).

As regards spelling, few words in "*On The move*" represent difficulties such as doubling the consonant in "carrot", the order of vowels in "neither" and silent letters in "bought". These difficulties are however unavoidable, because of the particularity of the English spelling including numerous irregularities (McCarthy 1990, Gramley and Pätzold 1992).

When considering phonological difficulties, we find that learners may be confused with the pronunciation of "mint" and "soup" as they rhyme with "mind" and "sour" respectively. But since these words occur in oral tasks, there are strong chances that learners be guided by the teacher's pronunciation.

The syntactic proprieties of some words might, also cause confusion like in the expression: "would like to" and "like doing something…" learners may need some clarifications that help them decide which of the verb forms have to be used: the progressive or the infinitive.

In expressing agreement and disagreement with "neither do I" or "neither can I", learners are faced with affirmative sentences formed with inverted subject and modal. This needs extensive practice to clarify the use of this pattern and clear the ambiguities that may arise.

Generally speaking, "*On the Move*" oral tasks do not include false friends except for "camera" and "glass" which may suggest other meanings if learners refer to the French language. However, there is a considerable number of words whose meaning can be

deduced from the similarity with French such as: idea, music, spectator, hotel, bicycle, potatoes….

As regards the association of vocabulary to cultural environment, most of the words´ meanings can be related to the learners' world and culture. The topics of food, achievements, customs, facts and fiction, constitute areas of daily interest in the Algerian context, so they do not entail any strange concepts to the Algerian learners.

It can be deduced, then, that the vocabulary suggested in this textbook is learnable to the average learners. The remaining question that needs to be answered is whether this vocabulary serves the learners needs, here it is necessary to refer to the objectives set for each file by the curriculum developers.

Speaking tasks in "*On the Move*" are devised to fit the objectives appearing on the book map, by way of example, we consider the case of file two whose speaking phase objective is to enable learners to talk about one's abilities, possibilities, obligations and rights. For this purpose the modals "can, will, shall, have and do" are introduced for use. This example reveals the extent to which vocabulary items are selected to serve the course objectives and thus the learners' needs.

•Grammar

Choices pertaining to grammatical patterns are also governed by a number of principles. This time the principles are based on intuitive criteria rather than on empirical studies. One of the reasons that prevent from appealing to empirical criteria is the non-feasibility of conducting computer based studies to identify the most frequent patterns and hence, the ones that should be selected.

The criteria that are adapted in the analysis of grammar patterns selection are those suggested by Richards (2001) namely: simplicity and learnability. By simplicity it is meant the use of structures having for instance one of the following forms:

-Subject, verb

-Subject, verb, complement

-Subject, verb, Adverb

-Subject, verb, object, adverb…..

Simplicity implies too the avoidance of complex and long patterns as well as the choice of structures which are more central to the basic language structures and avoid peripheral ones.

 The analysis of the speaking tasks suggested in "On The move" reveals that learners are generally required to produce simple structures composed of few words, not exceeding five or six such as in "I like reading Shakespeare", "So, can I", "Are you keen on photography?" and so on. Most of the structures are simple; that is, they are central to simple basic structures like (subject–verb-object). One of the rare instances where the learners are supposed to form a rather long and complex sentence is the following:

"You: which Indian tribe used to live in the south east of America?"

A model however is provided in the task, to guide the learners in producing such a structure. So the task is not really demanding in terms of sentence construction.

Learnability is another important criterion against which the selection of structures is determined. As it is explained for the selection of vocabulary, central to this principle is the idea of teaching the language element when the learners are ready to acquire it (Peinneman 1989 in Richards 2001:12).

Once the language structures are selected, decisions should be made concerning how these language structures will be ordered and sequenced. Richards (2001) suggests to take into account the similarities with the mother tongue of the FL learners; that is to start with structures that look like the mother tongue patterns. The degree of simplicity and complexity is also a determining element in the sequencing of structures; simpler patterns

are presented before complex ones to enable the learners to understand and acquire the language element in a logical manner. Yet, when the communicative purpose requires the understanding of some complex patterns, even in early stages of language instruction, the necessary complex structures can be introduced along with simple ones.

Having explained the principles of learnability and sequencing, it becomes possible to see how they are dealt with in "*On The Move*" speaking tasks. Most of the structures in oral activities are learnable because learners have already acquired the basic linguistic elements that enable them to produce the new structure. For instance the production of tag questions, although unknown before to the learners, is possible through the use of already known elements, namely the personal pronouns, auxiliaries and "not". The same thing applies on expressing agreement and disagreement with "so, do I" or "Neither do I".

Concerning the sequencing of the grammatical structures that speaking tasks incorporate, all the structures are of equal complexity degree. In files one and two, speaking tasks aim at training learners to use tag questions, agreement and disagreement expression, respectively. Both structures require more or less the same elements. In the remaining files, no particular grammar patterns are targeted as the aim of the tasks is to teach learners some conversational skills such as how to change the topic, how to fill silence pauses, and how to show interest. It is, therefore, difficult to say that the patterns seen in file one or two are easier than those of file five or six.

Thornbury (2005) draws our attention to an important aspect that should be considered when dealing with grammar used in spoken discourse. He says: "Since spontaneous speech is produced in clause length units rather than sentence length ones, a sentence grammar will be of limited usefulness for speaking" Thornbury (2005:33).This implies that speaking tasks should be devised to include short clauses that can be produced rapidly in real time.

In an attempt to examine this point in the textbook we are studying, it is noticed that most tasks are composed of short sentences rarely including relative or subordinate clauses. Some of them are just strung together without employing any link words. In tasks that aim at developing conversational skills, it is frequent to find ready-made expressions and phrases like those used to avoid silence such as:

"let me think", 'just a moment', 'what I mean is'…

The tenses used in oral tasks in *'On The Move'* are mainly the simple present, the simple past, the future and the present perfect. Tasks´ sentences include also modals and semi-modals like "can, would, have to, used to…"

On the whole, the structures included in the tasks are in conformity with the core grammar of informal and casual speaking, and are close to the spoken discourse characteristics.

•Conversational skills

Having discussed how vocabulary and grammar are selected in "*On The Move*", it is important at present to tackle higher levels of language competence and explain how they are developed in speaking tasks. It is noticed from the content of the devised tasks that much stress is placed on interactional knowledge. Learners are trained to develop the abilities of managing speaking turns, by holding the floor and filling the silence pauses with expressions that show the intention of the speaker to carry on talking. Or, by showing interest and asking for more clarifications, learners are also taught what to say when they intend to change the topic or to correct oneself.

All the speaking tasks in "On the Move" are preceded by a box entitled "Coping", which includes the useful expressions to be used by the learners. Explanations are provided in the form of notes, in thin and bold characters to guide the learners on how to use the expressions. The following is an illustrative example quoted from Coping box of file five.

…when you take part in a conversation, don't remain silent!

Show your interlocutor that you are thinking and looking for words, you avoid silence by saying:

- Let me think.

- Just a moment.

• Pragmatic knowledge

The examination of the pragmatic facets of the speaking tasks shows that there is an attempt to raise the learners´ awareness about the varied degrees of politeness that speakers may decide upon. In file one for instance, learners are assigned a task where they are provided with a dialogue between a customer and a restaurant waiter and required to produce a more polite version of the same dialogue by making the necessary changes. Different speech acts, as well, are suggested to learners for production, among others; expressing satisfaction, dissatisfaction, likes, disappointment fear and worry …For each of these functions a number of expressions are given to help the learners encode the desired meaning.

The importance given to pragmatic knowledge is also revealed by the design of dialogues where the choice of language is made in accordance with the situation in question. The language that is employed in the dialogue between a teacher and a pupil in a speaking task in file four is not the same as that employed between two friends in a task in file six.

1.2.2.Strategic Competence:

In addition to studying the linguistic competence, it is of paramount importance to consider the strategic competence without which the learners would not be able to cope with difficulties in communication. Right from the first file, the communication strategies are introduced in a "Coping" box to guide the learners when facing vocabulary problems. Three strategies are proposed: the first one is the use of a synonym, the second one is circumlocution, and the third one is the appeal to another person's help.

To train the learners to use these strategies, a pair work is assigned; It consists of a role-play where the waiter is listing the ingredients of a dish and when having trouble with naming a vegetable, he shows his inability to name it, then describes it by setting comparisons to other vegetables. This role-play, in spite of its little productivity, sensitizes the learners about the possibility to carry out successful conversations and communicate meanings with a reduced interlanguage. By developing such an awareness learners will rid their minds from the misconception about the criteria of a successful communication.

1.2.3. Integration of the Listening and Speaking Skills:

As it is pointed in many occasions, real-life conversations rarely consist of a single skill occurrence. It generally happens that people exchange roles of listeners and speakers repeatedly. Hence, it is significantly important to integrate the skills of speaking and listening together. The integration of both skills can be realized through a number of ways and techniques. Each of which offers the learners opportunities to get the input and produce an output in a same activity and within a same context of language use.

To gauge the extent to which speaking and listening skills are integrated in "*On The Move*", we need to examine, in addition to the speaking section, the listening section as well. In file one, for example, only one task out of five requires from the learners to listen

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to a passage then produce something. In file two, likewise, only one task out of four integrates both skills. However, in this instance what they are required to talk about relates to their perception of the pronunciation details and not to the content of the passage. In file three the listening phase includes four tasks, one of them asks the learners to listen to a passage and answer some questions without precising whether the answers should be given orally or should be written on their exercise books. In the remaining two files the listening tasks consist generally of checking an answer or choosing it after listening to the teacher reading a passage, and here, there is no production of any chunks of spoken language, be it short or long. Thus, we can conclude that this text book, contains very few tasks where both skills are worked on.

1.2.4.Authenticity of materials:

The importance of authenticity lies in providing the learners with a particular type of input having the characteristics that are expected to be found in the output of the learners, the question under consideration at present is: To what extent do the teaching resources used in oral skills represent samples of real-world language use? Yet, it should be admitted that authenticity represents just one face of the coin, this is why another question imposes itself which is: To what extent is the authentic language (if it is opted for by curriculum developers) employed in speaking tasks accessible and comprehensible to the learners?

Given that there are no notes preceding or succeeding the texts in "*On The Move*" to inform about their source and that acknowledgements for the text credits added at end of the textbook do not include any of the texts or dialogues that form the speaking sections, we assume that all the materials serving as speaking tasks are created. Yet, it is quite obvious that the designers have been very careful and very meticulous in their choice of

language appropriate to each situation. In a dialogue between a passenger and taxi driver, given as an example for reproduction, we find contracted auxiliaries, as well as brief silence pauses filled with sounds like: "Ed, Um, Eh…". To highlight the informal level of language the polite request is expressed with the modal "can" instead of more formal construction that can be achieved with: "would", "would you mind"…"could you…". In another dialogue simulating a history class presentation, where the participants are the teacher and the learner, we notice the use of a more formal language and complex structures.

In addition to the importance attached to the authentic language of the tasks, it is noticed that designers have handled with care the cultural dimension   in the tasks to serve the same purpose of getting authentic-like materials. This can be perceived for example in a dialogue between two friends having a talk about a cartoon CD. The dialogue includes the items: Shrek, music shop and (₤) pound as a currency which all imply a British culture. In other tasks we find "Shakespeare, England, Indian tribes, Madison Square Garden…"and so on which are all flashes of the English or American cultures .To reinforce this cultural content some tasks are accompanied with pictures like: the map of the ancient Indian Nation, the photo of Shrek, the yellow taxi found in England…

1.2.5.Topics:

The importance of topics in motivating the learners and increasing their involvement in language production is unquestionable. Hence, this point is worth to be examined.

The content of the textbook we are studying is revolving around six topics which are:

- Food and drinks.

- Citizenship- sustainable development.

- People and places.

- Customs and mores.

- Cultural exchanges.

- Arts and science.

All of these can represent interesting themes to talk about if they are well introduced and addressed by teachers. The third; fourth and fifth topics seem, however, to pertain to the same field namely of general culture; whereas, it could be possible to have more varied topics that relate directly to the daily concerns of the learners.

Concerning the cultural content that prevails in this course book and that serves as a background to the presentation of topics, the designers opted for a blend of the Algerian and the English speaking countries cultures. This can be perceived from the cultural elements included in all the parts and sections of the textbook.

1.2.6. Variety in Tasks Types:

Variety in task presentation has many merits: It keeps learners motivated and helps fulfill as much as possible different pedagogical objectives. Most of the assigned tasks are either role-plays, simulations or dialogues to be completed. But in spite of the supremacy of dialogues and the communicative aspect of these tasks, some of them serve mainly grammar and pronunciation objectives. By way of example, here are the instructions preceding two speaking tasks:

File2. Page 56.

- Group work: Complete the dialogues below using `so´ or `neither´ + the appropriate auxiliary: do , will/shall, or have.

File1. Page 31.

Pair work. Act out the polite version of the dialogue above paying attention to the intonation at the end of the question.

The presentation of the dialogues differs however from one task to another; while some require finding just one word or one expression, other tasks require building a dialogue starting from the description of a situation, or by appealing to a table, a map, a picture or a short text including the necessary information. In some tasks, an example is provided to be followed by the learners whereas in others it is only the missing items needed to fill the blanks that are given.

As it is pointed before, tasks that involve drama elements are given the biggest share in "*On The Move*". The absence of discussions, story-telling and jokes is probably due to an assumption held by designers that the level of learners does not allow yet for the production of long turns and for mastering the conversational abilities. Information gap activities too are not included within speaking sections may be due to the difficulty of affording the materials necessary to performing such tasks, like pictures, information cards…and so on, and which normally should be available to only some participants of the tasks and not to all of them.

1.2.7.Type of Participation:

Closely related to the question of tasks´ variety is the type of participation and productivity that a task involves (Littlejohn 1998). In "*On The Move*", most of the speaking tasks are either pair works or group works which suggest that the prevailing mode of work promotes communicative abilities and requires even participation from all the participants in the task. This is true only to a certain extent. In most of the dialogues, it is only one partner's contribution that is missing and the others´ is given. This implies that only one participant in the pair or group work is expected to produce a piece of talk while the others are not.

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In terms of productivity, some tasks can also be considered poor in that all they require from the learners to produce is just a word or an expression which is already provided beforehand with the instruction of the task. This kind of tasks is rather substitution drills or gap filling and not communicative tasks. The following are examples of tasks instructions yielding little productivity

-File five. Page 132.

Pair work: Imagine that an English friend of yours visiting Algeria has met with the problems in Column A, Give him/her advise starting with expression in Column B.

-In File two, page 56.

Respond to the statements below using `too´

Conclusion:

The importance of including a textbook analysis in this research stems from its being a basic element in the matrix of language teaching and constitutes the medium whereby ideologies about skill development are put into practice. It is worth to note again that there is a wealth of criteria for textbook analysis. But those which are selected in this study are only the ones which serve best the purpose of our investigation.

Having explored how the linguistic and strategic competences are developed in this textbook, the degree of integration of the receptive a productive and skills, authenticity of materials, variety in topics and tasks and the level of participation we have come to the following concluding comments. On the whole, this textbook reflects the designers' zeal to develop the linguistic and strategic competencies. Much attention is paid to the design of effective tasks by meeting many of the required conditions and criteria. The importance of developing the linguistic and strategic knowledge through varied tasks is unquestionable, but it is equally important to set tasks that offer the learners opportunities to make use of

this knowledge. It is only through the setting of tasks which involve both or all the participants that productivity is achieved and that chances for providing feedback are available. The dynamic relationship between the listener and the speaker is a feature that characterizes too the teaching materials designed to teach speaking.

It is, thus, necessary to remind that in spite of the significant role that a textbook plays, it is not advisable to depend totally on its guidance. The teacher should resort to his critical thinking and to his creativity to select what serves best the objectives of his course and suits his learners by modifying or adapting the most inspiring tasks.

A proposed Model for Teaching Speaking

The impetus behind writing this work is to address the topic of teaching the speaking skill from a different angle than it has already been discussed in other researches. A great deal of contributions has been made about teaching the skill according to a particular methodology, a particular syllabus or with a given type of materials. The point of departure this study starts from is the investigation of the skill itself, by considering its distinctive features and the proprieties that characterize it. Accordingly, the end towards which the study is oriented is to suggest teaching the speaking skill by taking into account the insights provided by applied linguists, cognitivists and researches in other fields about the nature of the speaking skill in order to provide efficient communication activities.

1.The Need for a Communicative Purpose:

Basically, speech events occur between two or more individuals with the aim of communicating a message. The content of talk can either be an amicable chat that strengthens social relationships or an exchanged information about a given topic. In both cases the dynamic aspect of speaking is dominant and obvious. The cases where only one individual speaks and no intervention or reaction is expected from the listener(s) are very rare; they can be summarized in these situations: a teacher presenting a lecture to his students, a politician delivering a speech to an audience, non-interactive TV programs presenters…and so on. But, this kind of speech events constitute only a tiny proportion if compared to those instances where the participants are all involved in the interaction.

The basic ingredient that makes this involvement bilateral or multilateral is the communicative purpose which both or all the participants are trying to fulfill. After exchanging turns, speakers achieve what is called in applied linguistics: communicative

effectiveness˝, this can be manifested when both speakers come to an agreement, exchange the needed information or get the intended reaction. When a warning for example is well performed, the interlocutor will react accordingly, and will be cautious towards the potential danger. Likewise, if an employer orders an employee to start immediately preparing a file concerning a particular item, the reaction of the employee should fit the order.

The notion of communicative effectiveness has its implications on the pedagogical scene. Tasks should be centered on a communicative purpose, whether it is a genuine one stemming from a real-situation present in the classroom or imbedded in a created situation. In doing so, there will be an aim for the speaking task instead of just striving to from grammatically acceptable sentences. This implies that a situation is presented to the participants where both or all of them have to say something that may be unpredictable to the others, just in the same way real conversations are carried out. Tasks which require the contribution of only one participant in a dialogue present the dialogue in an untypical form and deprive it from its interactive aspect.

2. The Need to Integrate Speaking with Listening:

The dynamic aspect of speaking can be perceived in a number of other ways. While speaking, interlocutors are in fact taking turns and between each turn and another they take the role of listeners. What they have to say next depends to a far extent on what they have just heard, the discourse that they arrive to build at the end is jointly constructed, relying on some implicit principles of turn-taking, openings, closings, interruptions…and so on. These same rules are responsible of the omission of some parts of utterances when both interlocutors know what should follow next, or the repetition of some parts uttered by the partner in order to maintain the same thread of discussion.

Interruptions, clarifications and prompts are also other aspects that demonstrate the collaborative structuring of discourse and the bilateral effort to understand each other. Bygate (1987) calls this collaborative production and processing of speech "reciprocity"; he considers it one of the salient features that characterize speaking and which is not found in the other productive skill: writing.

It follows from what has been discussed so far that teaching speaking in isolation from its receptive counterpart would reflect a distorted image of the skill. Much of what occurs in real conversations such as interruptions, clarifications, and showing interest, would not be present if the speaking skill is not integrated with listening. The integration of both skills can have many forms; the learners may be assigned a task where both of the partners are involved and no one of them takes the role of the passive listener who just receives what the speaker says. This kind of tasks should be sufficiently stimulating to generate spontaneous and interactive talks.

Alternatively, the learners can be exposed to a situation requiring particular conversational skills; say how to signal a shift to another topic. After many attempts to perform something that fits the situation, an auditory material including these conversational patterns can be presented. To reinforce the learners understanding, the teacher may assign again a speaking task having the same purpose and should insist on orienting the learners towards the targeted feature by providing the convenient guidance. This type of tasks is ideal for raising the learners´ awareness about whatever linguistic elements starting from phonological features to grammatical or conversational patterns.

Another way by which both oral skills can be integrated and which incorporates the use of a learning strategy, namely self-assessment, consists of exposing the learners to a stimulating context of language use. At the end of their performance, the learners listen to the recorded talk. Their attention should be oriented to the details of their participation

especially those pertaining to the targeted language elements. Such a task allows the learners to listen to their own talk with a critical and evaluative ear, by detecting where they have reached their goals and where they have failed. This kind of self-evaluation proves very beneficial in enhancing the oral skills.

3. The Need for Visual Elements to Contextualize Language Use:

The particular relationship between speaking and listening and between speakers and the communicative purpose is not the only reason for attributing the quality of dynamism to speaking. This skill is performed within a given context inspiring the participants what to say and how to react. In addition to the listener, the place, the time and the topic of conversation are other external elements which determine what is to be said. This context dependence is the very feature that underpins the skill and that makes of teaching the skill in the artificial classroom settings a challenging task.

If the teacher aims at introducing the type of language appropriate to "airport customs or supermarket" contexts, how can he afford the entire elements that suggest the desired situation? When the central objective of a course is to elicit the maximum of talk from the learners, it seems inappropriate for the teacher to monopolize talk and to take the biggest share of it. For this reason, the option of providing long descriptive introductions and definitions is inadvisable.

One efficient way of contextualizing language use when teaching speaking is to use visual aids, it is much practical to show the learners a picture of a woman shopping in a supermarket comparing prices of items, than exposing the situation with a long introductory phase. On the picture, all the elements of the situation are present: the participants who are going to be simulated, the place, the topic and even the time can be

inferred from a clock. Abstract meanings too can be visually represented such as in the example of getting inpatient if we are passengers waiting for a train that makes a delay.

Visual elements do not only help the students to infer the present situation but they can also be used to guess what will happen next or what sequences have preceded the present one. Thus, not only do pictures represent motivating aids but they save as well much of the class time and the teacher's energy. But above all, they help highlight the dynamic relationship between all the elements of the situation from one side and the relationship between the situation and discourse from another side.

The teacher himself can be thought of as an essential visual element for the presentation of non-verbal signals that accompany verbal ones. Body language, gestures and facial expressions are key aids in the interpretation of the underlying meaning which might not be in conformity with the literal ones. Even tone, rhythm and stress which are audible elements can become more tangible if they are matched with the observable facial movements. This last point is an evidence that when speaking, participants in talks do not only produce audible words but also visual elements; that is body gestures that constitute an integral part in the whole situation and whose encoding and interpretation should be included in the process of teaching speaking.

4. The Use of Appropriate Language:

Another feature characterizing the speaking skill and having influential implications on teaching the skill is the conditions in which spoken language is produced and processed. Evidence from cognition reveal that the process of language production is far from being a simple task requiring little mental activities, In fact, it requires going through four steps to produce an utterance or just a word; the conceptualization of the message to be conveyed, the formulation or selection of the linguistic elements, namely words and sounds that will

constitute the utterance, the articulation of the mapped message, and finally the monitoring of the whole process of production and when necessary a repair may follow the uttered message. All these production steps are supposed to occur within a short space of time and with a conscious effort scarcely perceptible to any observer.

These time constraints are due to the presence of the message recipient who is supposed to get the message and comprehend it in real-time. The way speech is produced affects to a great extent the kind of language generated by speakers. Hence, the bulk of talk is composed of clauses which are shorter and simpler than the kind of sentences produced in writing. These clauses are either connected with conjunctions like `and, so, then, or, because´, or strung together without any connectors; they may be separated with short pauses of silence or with pause fillers that allow for the speaker to gain some time for the formulation of what will be said next.

Concerning vocabulary, it is more general and less rich; speakers do not have the leisure to select carefully the precise words nor are they able to edit their choice in case they judge it preferable. Due to the same reason, repetitions of some words are also frequent. With such a type of phrases and vocabulary, the information conveyed in speech are less condensed than it is the case in the written skill, where there is a tendency to opt for subordinations, complex structures and more precise vocabulary. This type of language suits the listener's cognitive abilities to process what has been said by his interlocutor. It is, therefore, important to consider the spoken grammar and vocabulary on their own right by identifying the main areas of variation between the speaking skill and its written counterpart and by including those features in teaching speaking.

This does not imply at all an invitation to teach colloquial English with all its varied structures and ever changing vocabulary reflecting the unlimited vagaries of lay-speakers. The objectives of FL instruction in middle schools are far from being the adoption of a

particular accent or variety, neither are they the attempt to integrate the learners into a particular society. What is meant, however, is the consideration of those facts displayed by cognitivists with respect to speech production and processing when designing speaking courses.

Learners can be encouraged to use short sentences, easy conjunctions and generic words. They must be aware of the possibility of using repetitions, having some silence pauses and uttering some sounds or expressions like: "Er", "Erm", "you Know" that help them gain time. They also should rid their minds from the misconception that simple language, repetitive vocabulary and hesitation markers are a mark of poor linguistic competence since they do occur too in native speakers´ talk.

We can claim that the reason for which teaching speaking is said to be difficult lies in requiring the learners to produce oral language with the norms of written language, whereas speaking is linguistically less demanding than writing. In real conversations, native speakers strive to make their communication effective. They cooperate with their interlocutors to convey the intended meanings and to get their talk understood using all the linguistic resources required for this objective. For non-native speakers, the linguistic repertoire does not always prove to be efficient. Hence, they should resort to a number of strategies to reach communication effectiveness and avoid possible breakdowns. Mimes and gestures for instance can be used to suggest to the interlocutors the targeted meaning. Facial expressions, may indicate some emotional attitudes such as being afraid, doubtful, confused… and so on. Movement of the body may help describe people or objects in motion as for a runner, a boxer, an arrow or a plane. Some verbs can simply be represented through actions like to walk, to eat, to sleep…

The use of circumlocution is another strategy that consists in employing an expression or a long descriptive sentence to explain a given notion such as to say: "the part

of the armchair where we can put our arm "instead of "armrest". Getting help can also be a strategy to which the learner can appeal. He may simply express his need for assistance when difficulty is faced in finding a word or formulating a message. This strategy may entail some metalinguistic accounts and discussions on the linguistic items that the learner does not master.

Given that the central purpose behind designing speaking courses is to elicit talk from learners, the use of these three strategies should be in our opinion, encouraged and prioritized. However, other strategies like the partial or total avoidance of the message, and the excessive use of the mother tongue should be avoided. They are more proper and suitable to second language learning in that the urgent communicative need which may arise in genuine conditions needs to be fulfilled by whatever means. In the artificial settings of foreign language instruction it is more preferable to train learners to use the productive strategies than to give up the massage or to use the mother tongue.

When approaching the question of communication strategies, it may sound useless to suggest teaching the strategies that every lay speaker tends to use unconsciously without being reminded to. So, it is not worth to draw the foreign language learners' attention to their use. The point, however, in teaching communication strategies does not lie in reminding the learners of their use but in showing that it is not unacceptable to resort to such solutions if the linguistic resources do not allow for the communication of one's massages. The explicit strategy instruction reveals to the learners the legitimacy of using exceptional solutions and the possibility of communicating even with modest linguistic proficiency. Furthermore, this type of instruction can detect the gaps existing in the learners' competence and thus help the teacher make the right decision in his teaching process, this would not be possible if the learner avoids communication totally or partially and adopts a reticent attitude towards language production.

5. The Teachability of Language Production to Lower Proficiency Learners:

Teaching the speaking skill to foreign language learners represents a real challenge to teachers of foreign languages, especially when the learners do not have an advanced level. The question that arises in this respect is whether it is preferable to limit teaching language production to learners from advanced levels and restrict language teaching to receptive skills with learners of lower levels, or is it more efficient and natural to start production right from the onset. A major reason that makes us opt for this second choice is that learners start language learning with very simple grammatical constructions such as the use of auxiliaries, simple tense, adjectives…and so on. Then, more complex structures such as the compound tenses, the conditional and the passive voice will be dealt with. The indirect speech and modals are taught to more advanced levels. Likewise, with respect to vocabulary, at earlier levels only a small number of items is introduced to beginners but this number increases as they progress in their language learning.

When learners are required to produce language, they generally feel compelled to employ the constructions and the vocabulary that are recently dealt with. This attitude is reasonable because speaking tasks are, in most of the cases, designed to practise or reinforce a given function or grammatical pattern. It is, therefore, much easier and logical to start language production when the acquired language elements are simpler and adopt a gradual process of development and challenge.

To avoid the confusion caused by delayed production, learners should start language production using the simplest constructions and the little amount of vocabulary at their disposal, and then progressively try to use more complex constructions with varied vocabulary as they move to higher levels. Seen from an affective perspective, early language production breeds self-confidence, and helps overcome the fear of being judged when the learners are constantly induced to speak from early stages of their instruction, it

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will not represent a big challenge to communicate meanings with the available linguistic repertoire.

Another reason for which early language production is favored lies in the fact that only through continuous practice that a skill becomes easy and controllable (Dekeyser 2001). Repetitive attempts to contribute in talks allow the learners to activate the schemata and to retrieve the necessary vocabulary. They also provide opportunities to test the hypotheses formulated about language rules, to recognize the gaps in his competence, and to get the feedback that either reinforces his knowledge or modifies it. All these benefits, if gained at early stages, make language production an easy task which can be accomplished with the least effort.

6. The Necessity to Teach Speaking for its Own Sake:

One of the major dilemmas that are posed in language instruction and which has entailed much divergence in methodologies is the attitude towards the primacy of accuracy over fluency or vice versa. Traces of this dilemma can also be noticed on speaking courses and on the classification of tasks. Interactive tasks are those aiming at developing the skills of how to initiate, maintain conversation, and how to close them. They also train the learners to signal or decode signals of turn taking, how to ask for clarifications and how to make oneself understood. Manipulative tasks, however, focus on language itself rather than interaction. A high premium is placed on correctness of talk in terms of grammar, vocabulary and phonology. Manipulative tasks and highlight its elements. Curriculum designers and teachers hold different attitudes towards this issue and make their choices of tasks accordingly; they design or select the tasks with the proportions that fit their attitudes.

Drawing upon our own experience in teaching and upon the research made about the skill, We can say that since the context of language instruction we are dealing with in this study falls under the umbrella of general teaching where no skill is given importance at the expense of others, the speaking skill should be taught for its own sake and not for the aim of reinforcing other aspects of language; this can be achieved by highlighting the characteristic elements of the skill and by focusing on those facets that make classroom speaking as similar as possible to real life talks. Manipulative tasks can be included in a speaking course if the underlying purpose for their use is to enable the learners to communicate better. But their inclusion should not overshadow the interactive dimension of the speaking task. In other words, the focus on form should serve the speaking course and not the speaking tasks that should be an extension to the grammar course.

Conclusion:

Given that speaking is a multifaceted skill involving a number of aspects, innumerable insightful suggestions have been provided by many language practitioners and writers in EFL field concerning effective speaking courses. These suggestions, if matched with the findings resulting from the teacher's, experience can help achieve better outcomes. It is, then, essential that teachers analyze carefully all the elements of the instructional matrix: the learners' aspirations and preferences, the course book, the available materials, the objectives set by curriculum developers and take the convenient classroom decisions accordingly. Hence, the discussion made so far in this part is an invitation to teachers to base their decisions on thorough studies and consideration of all the present elements. Practical contributions of this study suggest four model lessons of speaking by providing relevant activities which favor effective communication according to the claims made so far.

Healthy Lifestyle

Brainstorming

✻ Group work: Look at the pictures then say which of them represent healthy lifestyle. Justify your statements.
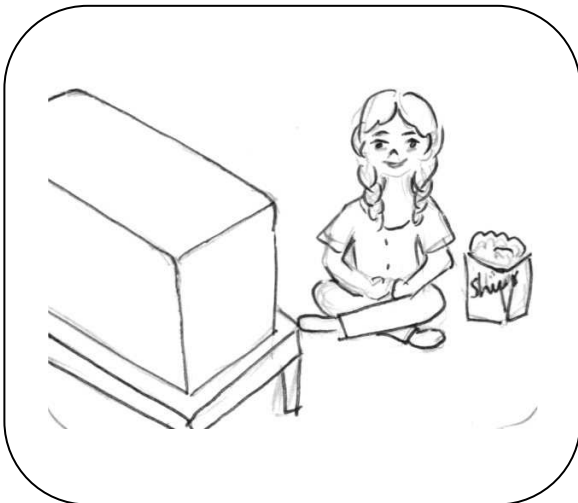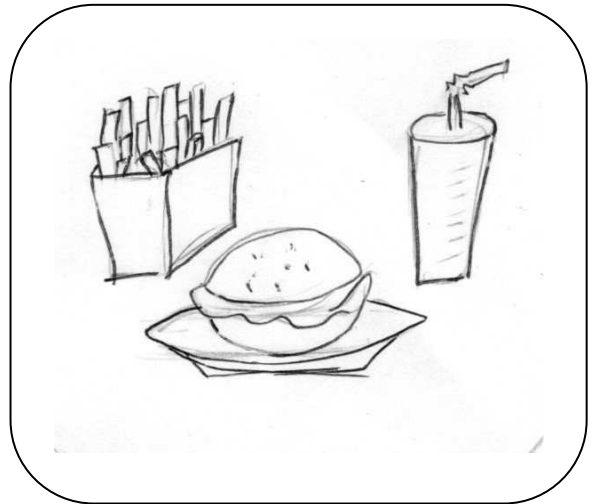
Listen then have a talk

✻ Group work: Listen to the text then:group A asks questions about Justin's decisions, and group B answers them.

Justin is a high school pupil. He used to be a lazy boy who spent much time playing video games, or watching TV. He liked too fast food and soda. But after having seen his father's photos when he had his age, 17, when he used to be a basketball champion, he decided to start a more active and healthier lifestyle.

Now, Justin takes regular physical exercises, spends more time in sport clubs and eats healthy food. He has stopped fast food and had replaced it with fresh food cooked at home by his mother. Justin is no more worried about his health; he took some photos and put them next to his father's. The difference is not so big!!

✱ With your partner, in talks of about four speaking turns, develop the following ideas:

* Sleeping early.

* Mineral water.

* Organic food.

* Avoiding stress.

* Chocolate.

* Riding a bicycle.

Use the following

I think people should........
May be it is better to.......
We should not have a lot.....

Say it with the right words

✱ -1-Group work: Talk about past habits or states. Here are two examples

-a -I used to eat very spicy food.

- And now, do not still eat it?

- No, I don't eat any more spicy food.

I rather prefer vegetables.

-b –I used to be a very lazy person.

-Really? Are you still lazy, now?

-No I'm not any more I practise sport regularly.

*

-2-Pair work. You have some health problems. Talk to your partner about them to get

some advice. Use should or should not.

Example:

A: I have in my ears. What should I do?

B:May be you should not listen to high music.

-3-Pair work: Imagine different situations and use the words in the table to make

uncountable nouns countable.

	bulb			garlic
	ear			corn
a	piece			fruit
	slice	of		bread
an	pinch			salt
	cube			sugar

Waiter: How much beef do you want?

Customer: Not too much. Just a slice.

Discussion: (to be prepared a day before)

Consider the following questions to be discussed with your classmates:

- Is healthy food less tasty than fast food?

- Is it possible for everybody to devote some time for sports and exercises?

- Does healthy lifestyle oblige people not to have a lot of fun?

LESSON TWO:

Having a Pet

Brainstorming

Look at the at the pictures than say what they suggest.
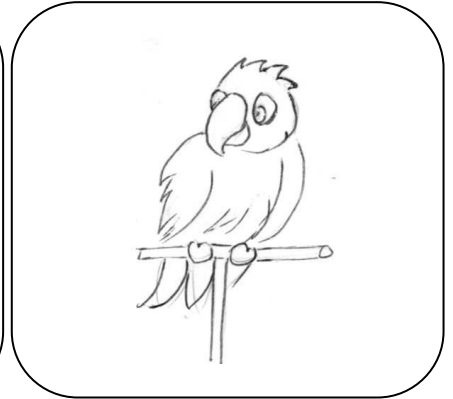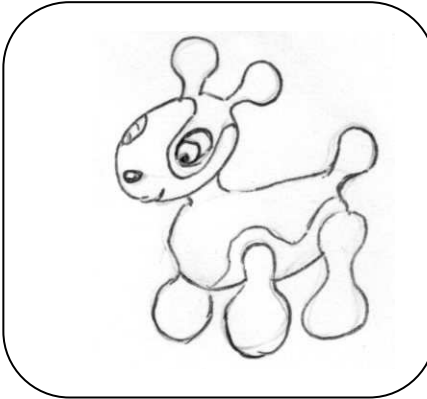
Listen then have a talk

✽ Group work: Listen to the conversation then say if Eric is with or against having a pet. List the arguments that justify your answer.

Alex: Sorry, I couldn't be at the sport club yesterday….I took my dog to the

vet.

Eric: Oh..It seems that your dog is not well …..again.

Alex: Yes, for the second time in this month.

Eric: I've always been too busy to take care of someone else but myself.

Alex: But having a pet is enjoyable, ….and er...it..after all, a pet is a friend , a good one .isn't it?

Eric:....and it needs to be fed , to be taken for walks, and it may let you abandon your human friends.

❋
    Pair work: With your partner, and in a talk of about four speaking turns, say whether you can have one of the following animals as a pet.

-A turtle.
-A dog.
-A hamster.
-A fish.
-A parrot.
-A cat.

Use the following

I prefer getting a ....
Me too I like/So do I.......
Me neither/I don't either.......

Say it with the right words

❋
    -1-Pair work. A boy desiring to have a pet is with his mother at the pet shop. Imagine the talk that may carried out with the shop assistant. Use tag questions when possible.

 Example

  The boy: You will show me how to take care of it. Won't you?

 Shop assistant: Sure, I will.

❋
    -2-Pair work. Form tag questions to ask your partner either real questions or requests for agreement. Use the appropriate intonation.

Example 1:(a real question)

A: You have fed the cat. Haven't you?

B:No, not yet.

Example 2:(a request for agreement)

A: This parrot is wonderful. Isn't it?

B: Yes, it is.

❋
    -3-Pair work. Talk about animals using adjectives ending with -ful or –able. Use the dictionary.

Example:

A: We have to be careful with fish.

B:I agree with you.

Discussion: (to be prepared a day before)

Consider the following questions to be discussed with your classmates:

-Are pet robots as enjoyable as real animals?

-Why do people get pets? Do they feel lonely, or do they see that animals' company is better than social relationships?

-Isn't it better for animals to live in nature than is cages and small spaces?

LESSON THREE:

Holiday Jobs

Brainstorming

Tell who these people are and imagine what they are saying.
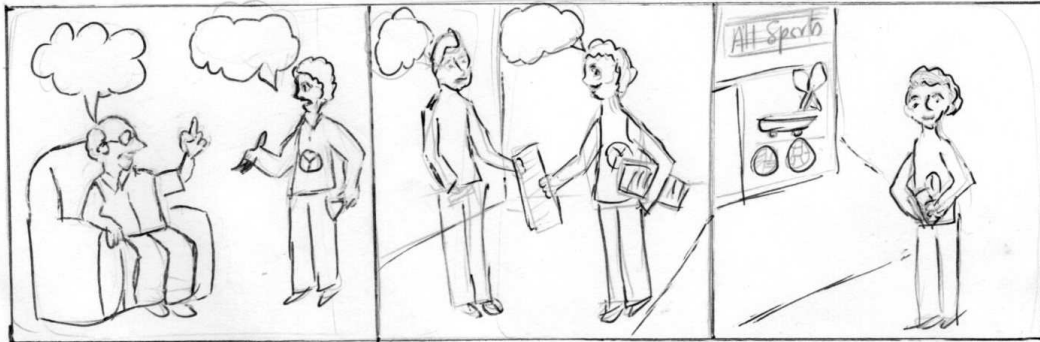
Listen then have a talk

✱
Group work: Listen to the conversation then answer these questions:

-What are the cues that indicate that Bryan and Kevin are teenagers?

-Does Kevin enjoy the work he does?

-What are the jobs Bryan is thinking of?

Bryan: This is an awesome skateboard. When did you buy it?

 Kevin: A couple of weeks ago...from the sports' equipment shop.

Bryan: It must have cost you a big deal.

Kevin: Em.....yes. I've been saving money for er...about three months. It's the

money I got from growing and selling vegetables during the holidays.

Bryan: So you work with farmers?

Kevin: Not exactly. I help my father in his farm, I like doing that, and I get some

money from the crops I sell in the market.

✱
    Pair work: With your partner, and in a talk of about four speaking turns, speak about your hobbies that may help you gain money.

- Needle crafts.
- Breeding birds.
- Gardening.
- Painting/ drawing.
- Preparing cakes.

Use the following

I am good at ....
I am able to.......
I can ....

Say it with the right words

✱
    -1-Pair work. You decide to get a temporary job next holidays. Talk about your plans using 'I will', 'I am going to' or 'I intend to'.

Example:
A: Summer holidays are coming soon, do you intend to take a temporary job?
B: Yes, I'm going to work as a waiter in a restaurant.

✱
    -2-Pair work. Talk with your friend about your hobbies. Use 'I like to', 'I like doing'.

Example:
A: What is your hobby?
B:I like drawing landscapes.
   I like to grow roses.

✱
    -3-Choose the correct meaning of the underlined words.

-The tea is not very hot it is good.(hot,warm,tasty)
-The stuff is very beautiful. It can be used as a cover to the table.(tablecloth, cat, vegetable)
-She is a nice person, she doesn't accept to be paid for the help she gives.(courageous, intelligent, kind)

N.B. These words can only be used when speaking. In compositions you have full time to check the dictionary and look for the exact words.

Discussion: (to be prepared a day before)

  Consider the following questions to be discussed with your classmates:
-Should people beyond the age of 18 become financially independent?
-What are the possible needs that get teenagers look for a temporary job?
- Do you think that holidays are meant for fun not for work?
-Do temporary jobs make teenagers more responsible people?

LESSON FOUR: Being a Teenager

Brainstorming

Guess why the mother is angry. Fill in the bubbles.

Listen then have a talk

✱   Group work: Listen to the conversation then say whether there is someone who is right or wrong.

Father: Do you really enjoy staying alone in your room with your computer?

Son: I'm not alone, dad. I'm chatting with some friends.

Father: How can you call someone a friend if you don't be with him in the same place, play with him football or stroll with him in the streets?

Son: But exchanging ideas is more important than all this. I know many friends from many countries. I like to know how they live, think...

Father: You may be right, as for me when I get bored I get out of my room and don't lock myself inside it.

❋
  Pair work: With your partner, and in a talk of about four speaking turns, speak about the main points on which parents and teenagers disagree.

-Way of clothing.

-School results.

-The choice of friends.

-Household chores.

Use the following

I think/ I guess ....

It is probably because.......

May be the main reason ....

Say it with the right words

❋
  -1-Group work. Use the dictionary to select the right words.

-The family (cares for/cares/cares on) their children.

-Tomorrow, we'll have a match in the morning. So you must (get/get by/get up) early.

-If you (keep/keep on/keep in) practising sport you will lose weight.

-He is tall and slim, he (looks like/ looks after)his father.

❋
  -2-Pair work. Talk about the main qualities distinguishing teenagers of people of other age.Use 'more' and 'less'.

Example:

A: Teenagers are more adventurous than adults.

B: Yes, and they are less dependent than children.

❋
  -3-When writing, teenagers use a special language these are some examples . think of other signs discuss their meaning together.

-Happy   :)

-Sad   :(

-Angry   >:(

❋
 -4- Pair work :Use stickmen drawings to represent a joke that your partner will interpret. Then exchange roles.

Discussion:

 What interests you most? Classify the following five points according to the importance you give to each. Justify your choice.
-Practising sport to get a nice looking body
-Getting good grades.
-Having good relationships with friends.
-Practising competitive sports.
-Having fun through games, television, music, dancing....
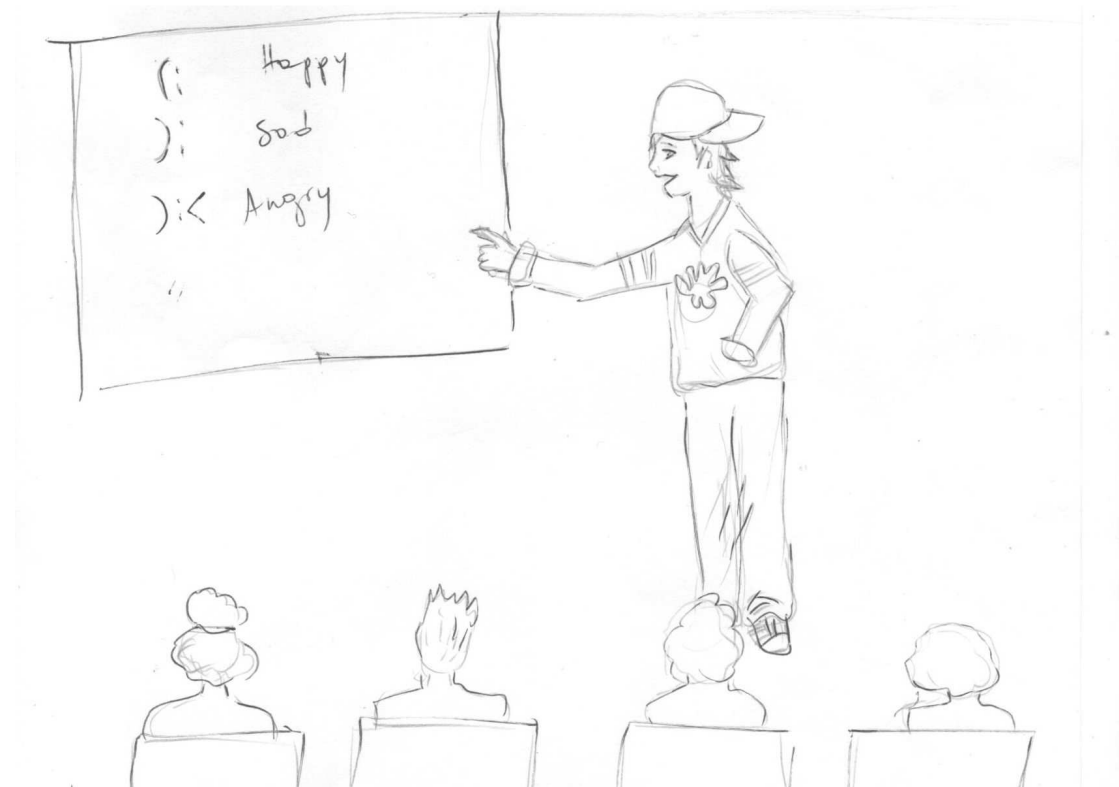
General conclusion

The attempt to see whether the salient features distinguishing the speaking skill, which are addressed by a number of researchers in different fields, can have some practical implications on classroom practices required from us to gather relevant information from three sources; the learners, the teacher and the textbook; using each time the suitable instrument of research for data collection.

The analysis of the obtained information has revealed a number of facts. Concerning the learners' aptitudes and preferences; we find a complete conformity between them and the characteristics of spoken language. The learners' tendency to use simple language consisting of short sentences and less specific words does not contrast with what happens in real conversations that native speakers engage to.

The teachers, however, are facing a real dilemma. They wish to teach the skill in conditions similar to real life discussions using a language having the characteristics of casual speech and tolerating silence pauses, false starts and so on; but at the same time they feel compelled to prepare the learners for the written test and train them to use a language which is proper only to the written mode. They, hence, devote much time and effort to the tested skills at the expense of speaking which is not tested.

As regards the textbook, the analysis revealed clearly that conversational skills, strategic and communicative competences are given equal importance as linguistic ones. But in spite of this systematic and obvious intention to teach speaking in conditions similar to casual talks, the tasks are not sufficiently productive and interactive.

On the whole, it can be claimed that oral interactive skills can be taught in a very simple way using modest linguistic resources. This, however, cannot be attained only if there is a shared will from curriculum designers, material developers and teachers to teach

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the skill for its own sake by devoting it sufficient time and affording the requirement that facilitate its teaching.

It has been hypothesized that the speaking skill can be taught more effectively if the nature of the speaking skill is taken into account. In other words, if the suitable kind of language is carefully selected, the speaking and listening skills are integrated and the use of communication strategies is encouraged. It has also been hypothesized that better results, in terms of communicative effectiveness can be achieved if the skill is taught for its own sake not for reinforcing language elements. The information obtained from the three research tools, reveal the far extent to which both learners and teachers desire to learn / teach the skill in circumstances and with practices that are in conformity with the nature of the skill. This confirms the hypotheses set before and proves that more satisfactory results can be achieved if the skill is taught for its own sake.

The question of how to design effective speaking courses continue to fuel the language practitioners to adopt the theoretical grounds that help them frame what they think are ideal speaking courses. Hence, it cannot be claimed, neither in the present study nor in other ones that the criteria of successful speaking course are identified in a definitive and assertive way as long as researchers are still suggesting new ideas that can be implemented in language classroom contexts, on the one hand. On the other hand, each teaching/ learning situation can be communicatively considered according to its objectives and contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix I

أعزائي الطلبة:

في إطار بحث في حقل تعليمية الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، هذا الاستبيان يهدف إلى سبر الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب دروس التعبير الشفوي و معرفة الطرق المحببة إليهم في تلقي الدروس ، و من ثم التوصل إلى أنجع الطرق التي بها يمكن تحقيق فعالية في التعليم.

هذه الدراسة الميدانية تقوم بها طالبة دراسات عليا في معهد الآداب والعلوم الاجتماعية في جامعة فرحات عباس سطيف.

نحرص على تنبيهكم أنه لا توجد إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة على الأسئلة المحتواة في هذا الاستبيان ، ما يهمنا هو آراؤكم الشخصية وطبيعة رؤيتكم المسائل المذكورة مع العلم بان سرية الآراء تبقى محفوظة .

الرجاء ملأ الاستبيان إما بكتابة الأجوبة أو وضع علامة × في الخانة المناسبة.
مع خالص الشكر و التقدير لتعاونكم

القسم الأول:

1 ـ ما هو سنك؟ ....
ـ هل أعدت سنة أو أكثر في الطور الإكمالي؟
أ. نعم   □
ب. لا   □
3 ـ هل تعتبر نفسك؟
أ. شخص منفتح يحب التواصل مع الغير. □
ب. شخص انطوائي يفضل السكوت.   □

القسم الثاني:

1- رتب المهارات التالية من 1 إلى 4 حسب الصعوبة التي تمثلها لك، إبدأ من الأكثر صعوبة
أ. الاستماع.   □
ب. التحدث .   □
ج. القراءة .   □
د. كتابة .   □

2 - هل تستفيد من مصادر أخرى للاستماع إلى الإنجليزية ؟

أ. نعم . ☐

ب لا . ☐

إذا كان الجواب نعم ، الرجاء ذكر هذه المصادر .

....

3 -عندما ترغب في التحدث بالإنجليزية ماذا تحاول أن تقلد أو تتخذ كنموذج؟

أ. حديث الأستاذ . ☐

ب . حديث الطلبة النجباء. ☐

ج. نصوص كتاب الإنجليزية . ☐

4 - ما نوع المشاركة التي تقوم بها في حصة التعبير الشفوي ؟

أ. تكرار كلمات منفردة . ☐

ب. تكرار جملة كاملة . ☐

ج. تمثيل حوار مقدم من طرف الأستاذ. ☐

د. إنتاج جمل من دون مساعدة أحد. ☐

5-عندما تفكر فيما ستقوله ، هل :

أ.تُكوّن الجملة بالعربية ثم تترجمها إلى اللغة الإنكليزية . ☐

ب. تُكوّن الجملة مباشرة باللغة الإنكليزية . ☐

6 - عندما تتحدث الإنكليزية ما هي أهم الصعوبات التي تواجهها؟

أ. لا تجد الكلمات . ☐

ب. لا تعرف كيف تربط الكلمات . ☐

ج. لا تعرف كيف تنطق . ☐

د. لا تجد الأفكار . ☐

7-ماذا تفعل في حال أردت أن تتكلم و لم تجد الكلمات؟

أ. تصرف النظر عن التحدث . ☐

ب. تتحدث بالعربية والأستاذ يعطيك المقابل بالإنجليزية . ☐

ج. تشرح الكلمة بجملة كاملة . ☐

د. تستعمل الإشارات و الإيماءات . ☐

8 - أي هاتين الفئتين من الكلمات بإمكانك استعمالها لربط الجمل؟

أ. and, or, because, but . ☐

ب.while, which, who. ☐

9 - هل تتراجع عن المشاركة في الحديث إذا كان منتظرا منك أن تنتج جملة طويلة ؟ .

أ. نعم ☐

ب. لا ☐

.

القسم الثالث:

1-ا ما طريقة العمل التي تفضلها في تمارين التحدث ؟رتب من 1إلى3

أ. العمل الثنائي. ☐

ب. العمل الجماعي. ☐

ج. العمل الذي يشمل القسم كله . ☐

2 - إذا ارتكبت خطأ في الحديث ماذا تكره؟

أ.تصحيح الأستاذ . ☐

ب تصحيح الزملاء . ☐

ج كلاهما. ☐

د. لا أحد منهما . ☐

3 - ما هي التمارين التي تحب المشاركة فيها؟

أ. المسرح و تبادل الأدوار. ☐

ب النقاش . ☐

ج. الألعاب . ☐

د. القصص . ☐

4 - ما هي طريقة العمل الأسهل بالنسبة إليك :

أ.تحضير التمرين الشفوي مسبقا في البيت ؟ ☐

ب. القيام بالتمرين مباشرة في القسم؟ ☐

6 -هل تجد المواضيع التي تطرح في درس اللغة الإنجليزية مثيرة للاهتمام؟

أ. نعم . ☐

ب لا . ☐

7 - هل تفضل أن يكون لك دور أنت و زملائك في اختيار المواضيع ؟

أ. نعم . □

ب لا . □

8 -مع من تفضل أداء التمارين الشفوية ؟

أ. مع صديق . □

ب. مع زميل ذو قدرات لغوية جيدة . □

برر اختيارك...

....

القسم الرابع :

1- ما هي الفوائد التي تعود عليك من إتقان الحديث بالانجليزية ؟

أ. في الوقت الحاضر...

....

ب. في المستقبل ....

....

Appendix II

The Teacher's Interview:

<u>Section one:</u> The teachers' profile

1-what are your qualifications?

....

2- How long have you been teaching?

....

<u>Section two</u>: The teacher's perception of the importance attached to the speaking skill.

3.Classify the four skills according to the importance it is given to each skill in the curriculum.

   a -Listening.

   b -Speaking.

   c -Reading.

   d -Writing

4.Do you agree with this order of importance, provide an alternative classification if your answer is no?

....

5.Do you think that learners give more importance to the skills that are tested and neglect those that are not tested?

6-What is the skill that you judge most helpful to the speaking skill?

   a-Listening.

   b-Reading.

   c-Writing.

7-Do you consider the oral practices that precede the listening, reading and writing skills a speaking activity?

....

Section three: The teaching' practices and stances adopted by teachers.

8-Do you think that the grammatical structures and vocabulary that are used in the writing skill are suitable to the speaking skill?

....

9- Do you agree with the idea of raising the learners' awareness about the differences between the written and the spoken forms of language?

....

10-How do you select the vocabulary to use in speaking activities from the range of words suggested in the course book?

....

11-How do you select the grammatical structures to be used in the speaking activities?

....

12-What is more important for you,

   a- To get learners produce correct language in terms of grammar ,vocabulary and

    pronunciation. Or

   b- To get learners communicate messages using whatever available resources.

....

13-To what extent do you think visual aids can contextualize language use ?

....

14-Do you consider that producing sentences which are not interrupted with silence pauses is a sign of good oral competence?

....

15-How do you react towards the pauses that occur in the students talk?

....

16-What do you do to encourage learners to produce longer turns in speaking activities?

....

17-Do you think that learners should be induced to produce language right from the earlier levels or wait until they acquire an acceptable linguistic repertoire?

....

18-What can be done to get beginners benefit from the linguistic resources they have and start language production?

....

19-When trying to help learners produce given patterns, do you believe it is better to provide the model before any production is started or to get the learners try to communicate then provide a model at the end?

20-What do you suggest to achieve better results in teaching speaking?

21-When you set pair or group works on what basis do you choose partners?

....

Section four: External factors influencing the speaking course

22-To what extent does the number of learners in a class determine the amount of opportunities to practice oral production?

....

23-Do you think that three hours per week are enough to help learners develop oral skills in addition to written ones?

....

24-Do you agree with the fact that there should be a written task on the copybook at the end of a lesson which may constitute a constraint for the teacher to devote a whole lesson for speaking activities?

....

25-Do you find the speaking tasks suggested on the course book satisfactory or do you feel obliged to devise tasks yourself?

....

Thank you.

Appendix III

The transcription of the teachers' interviews

Teacher: A

Question:1- What are your qualifications?

-A Bachelor of Arts.

Question: 2- How long have you been teaching?

-Since 2001,which makes nine years.

Question3: Classify the four skills according to the importance it is given to each skill in the curriculum.

a -Listening.

b -Speaking.

c -Reading.

d -Writing.

-For fourth grade program, it is as follows **:**

1st reading 2nd writing 3rd speaking and4_{rth} listening.

Question: 4.Do you agree with this order of importance, provide an alternative classification if your answer is no?

-No, I prefer this one:

1st listening 2nd speaking 3rd reading and 4_{rth} writing.

Question: 5.Do you think that learners give more importance to the skills that are tested and neglect those that are not tested?

-Yes; learners are, mostly interested in getting marks. The fact that English is not used in the students' daily life is another reason for not giving speaking much importance.

Question: 6-What is the skill that you judge most helpful to the speaking skill?

   a-Listening.

   b-Reading.

   c-Writing.

-It is listening because language acquisition comes after listening. One strong evidence of this fact is the immigrants' immersion into second language communities which permit to them to acquire the speaking skill.

Question: 7-Do you consider the oral practices that precede the listening, reading and writing skills a speaking activity?

-Yes, while learning the other skills learners are involved at the same time in the production of language and the use of vocabulary items and grammar patterns.

Question:8-Do you think that the grammatical structures and vocabulary that are used in the writing skill are suitable to the speaking skill?

-No, the language that we speak is not the same as the one we write in terms of grammar. The use of paralinguistic features and gestures in argumentation is one area in which the difference is clear.

 Question: 9- Do you agree with the idea of raising the learners' awareness about the differences between the written and the spoken forms of language?

-No, beginners are not ready yet for this step. It is difficult to raise their awareness to this issue but it is possible for the teacher to provide feedback when necessary, that when a situation arises and requires the explanation of any differences.

Question: 10-How do you select the vocabulary to use in speaking activities from the range of words suggested in the course book?

-I choose words that serve most the topic and I keep recycling them to facilitate their learning.

Question: 11-How do you select the grammatical structures to be used in the speaking activities?

-I limit myself to what is suggested in the curriculum and do not bring any changes.

Question: 12-What is more important for you,

a- To get learners produce correct language in terms of grammar ,vocabulary and

pronunciation. Or

b- To get learners communicate messages using whatever available resources.

-To get the message is more important than correctness .The best example that proves this fact is the tradesmen that succeed to make bargains with people speaking other languages with a limited language.

Question: 13-To what extent do you think visual aids can contextualize language use ?

-They are very useful and help simplify meanings even the abstract ones.

Question: 14-Do you consider that producing sentences which are not interrupted with silence pauses is a sign of good oral competence?

-No, silence pauses are a sign of thinking activities. What is important is language production and not rote learning. Speech without silence pauses sounds like rote learning.

Question: 15-How do you react towards the pauses that occur in the students talk?

-I try to infer what they want to say then, help them by providing the right pronunciation, vocabulary idea...Knowing the level of the learner helps me to decide if he is expected to produce something or not.

Question: 16-What do you do to encourage learners to produce longer turns in speaking activities?

-The classroom dynamic is the secret. Creating an atmosphere that encourages discussion and stimulating learners to communicate are very important .Then, it becomes a habit Students tend to say more if you reject short answers and ask for more explanations, details, arguments...

Question: 17-Do you think that learners should be induced to produce language right from the earlier levels or wait until they acquire an acceptable linguistic repertoire?

-Learners should pick up the language implicitly and this through processes of habit formation. So the sooner language production is started the better language acquisition is achieved.

Question: 18-What can be done to get beginners benefit from the linguistic resources they have and start language production?

-Teachers can induce their pupils to speak by providing the accessible input through listening and reading so that they find at their disposal a model to imitate. Motivation and collaborative learning are other elements that may create a n ideal atmosphere for language production.

Question: 19-When trying to help learners produce given patterns, do you believe it is better to provide the model before any production is started or to get the learners try to communicate then provide a model at the end?

-For me**,** it is much preferable to start with input first; then expect pupils to produce an output.

Question: 20-What do you suggest to achieve better results in teaching speaking?

-Dialogues that have the aspect of real life discussions are the best to encourage learners to be more productive in speaking tasks. The teacher should diminish his amount of talk and restrict his interventions to the guidance of the learners. He should also be moderate concerning the corrective

feedback; excessive feedback is often discouraging. In sum, the psychological and affective factors should be given much importance.

Question: 21-When you set pair or group works on what basis do you choose partners?

-Sometimes I assign pupils sitting next to each other; but in general I try to stimulate all the elements of the class. So, I select a good partner to work with a weak one; this can increase motivation and involve timid pupils in classroom discussions.

Question: 22-To what extent does the number of learners in a class determine the amount of opportunities to practice oral production?

-A class size including 43 pupils is not a good environment to practice oral tasks. It is difficult to give a chance to every pupil to participate in discussions. So, I suggest to teach listening and speaking in groups of 21 members. The group should be like a small family whose members are taking part in a discussion.

Question: 23-Do you think that three hours per week are enough to help learners develop oral skills in addition to written ones?

-This amount of time is not sufficient and does not allow the teachers to give equal importance to all the skills. So, they focus on the skills which will be tested at the end of the year and neglect those which will not be tested namely speaking and listening. I we want to develop all the skills without giving more importance to one skill at the expense of another we need five hours weekly.

Question: 24-Do you agree with the fact that there should be a written task on the copybook at the end of a lesson   which may constitute a constraint for the teacher to devote a whole lesson for speaking activities?

-Yes, but we can devote a whole lesson to speaking tasks. Even some inspectors are in favour of this idea; they just ask to mention it on the log book.

Question: 25-Do you find the speaking tasks suggested on the course book satisfactory or do you feel obliged to devise tasks yourself?

-It is satisfactory only to a certain extent, and I feel obliged to devise some tasks by myself. The modifications I bring can be for the following reasons. Tasks which have not real life value should be excluded. The language used in the task should serve the topic especially vocabulary. The examples provided in the task should be motivating otherwise if they are not so I replace them. This applies with task 1 page 58 where pupils are supposed to talk about their likes and dislikes and where Shakespeare is given as an example. So I replaced it with more recent and interesting items.

Tasks should also be amusing motivating and including the grammar items studied in the current file.

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Teacher: B

Question:1- What are your qualifications?

-A Bachelor of Arts.

Question: 2- How long have you been teaching?

-Six years.

Question3: Classify the four skills according to the importance it is given to each skill in the curriculum

a -Listening.

b -Speaking.

c -Reading.

d -Writing.

-Reading, writing, speaking, and then listening. This order is adopted because of the written test taking place at the end of the year.

Question: 4.Do you agree with this order of importance, provide an alternative classification if your answer is no?

-Yes, I agree with this order because learners do not really need to speak the foreign language outside the classroom. They just need to pass an exam.

Question: 5.Do you think that learners give more importance to the skills that are tested and neglect those that are not tested?

-Generally speaking, pupils are interested in what guarantees for them more marks. So they study to prepare for written exams.

Question: 6-What is the skill that you judge most helpful to the speaking skill?

a-Listening.

b-Reading.

c-Writing.

-Reading is the skill that helps most the development of speaking because it enriches the pupils' lexicon; it introduces and reinforces the retention of grammar patterns. In general it provides the language necessary for the production of language.

Question: 7-Do you consider the oral practices that precede the listening, reading and writing skills a speaking activity?

-Yes, these practices offer opportunities for interaction by asking questions and answering them .

Question:8-Do you think that the grammatical structures and vocabulary that are used in the writing skill are suitable to the speaking skill?

-No, certainly written vocabulary and structures are not the same in the written and oral forms. It differs in many ways; for example when writing we use the word `consequently´ to talk about a result but in oral production, speakers do not use any word at all they just mention the consequence after the cause.

Question: 9- Do you agree with the idea of raising the learners' awareness about the differences between the written and the spoken forms of language?

-Yes, it is preferable to draw the learners' attention to this aspect so that they become aware of the differences. It is possible that learners may come across situations where they need to distinguish how language in both forms functions. There are also possibilities of talking or listening to native speakers in the future.

Question: 10-How do you select the vocabulary to use in speaking activities from the range of words suggested in the course book?

-The most useful words are the ones which are chosen, that is, those which will be met in the following files or those which are likely to be met in real life situations such as in computer programs, TV shows or sit coms.

Question: 11-How do you select the grammatical structures to be used in the speaking activities?

-I follow what is suggested in the curriculum. However, sometimes I need to introduce simple structures before complex ones. For example, we can not teach the present perfect without knowing the past participle. Other examples of useful words can be adjectives and simple tense forms.

Question: 12-What is more important for you,

  a- To get learners produce correct language in terms of grammar ,vocabulary and

   pronunciation. Or

  b- To get learners communicate messages using whatever available resources.

-Transmitting messages successfully is more important than just mastering the rules of language. In real life communication what matters most is to get the message even if the pronunciation or the vocabulary is not exact as in the example of `She are speaking´. The meaning is clear in spite of the misuse of the grammatical rule. The same thing is true when a speaker uses just one word to stand for a whole sentence. The word `water´ can substitute `I want to drink some water´.

Question: 13-To what extent do you think visual aids can contextualize language use?

-Visual aids can contribute largely in the contextualization of language use. Even with advanced levels they can be useful. Take the example of expressing the idea of getting impatient ;though it is an abstract one it can be conveyed with a picture representing a person waiting for the bus and having the facial expression that reflect his annoyance.

Question: 14-Do you consider that producing sentences which are not interrupted with silence pauses is a sign of good oral competence?

 - Absolutely no. Silence pauses do not mean that the learner is weak. They can be tolerated as long as they do not waste much time and take the other learners´ share of time. The amount of lesson time should be shared equally between learners.

Question: 15-How do you react towards the pauses that occur in the students talk?

-When facing this situation, I try to guide the pupil with vocabulary, conjunctions or whatever word is missing. However, if the pause stretches longer I move smoothly to another volunteer.

Question: 16-What do you do to encourage learners to produce longer turns in speaking activities?

-Repetition of models given earlier helps much in finding ready sentences to produce. I can also show my dissatisfaction with the short contribution they made so they try to say more.

Question: 17-Do you think that learners should be induced to produce language right from the earlier levels or wait until they acquire an acceptable linguistic repertoire?

-It is better to start from the first years of instruction. Even if learners give very short sentences composed of two words at the beginning, they will be able to form longer sentences with time.

Question: 18-What can be done to get beginners benefit from the linguistic resources they have and start language production?

-When skills are integrated this offers continuously chances to produce language. One of the most efficient techniques is repetition of models provided by the teacher; it is easy for learners to imitate examples given to him and by time he will try to produce his own sentences.

Question: 19-When trying to help learners produce given patterns, do you believe it is better to provide the model before any production is started or to get the learners try to communicate then provide a model at the end?

-I prefer to create situations with clear communicative purposes that induce learners to speak, and then to provide a model which will be imitated. This will guide learners to the right use of language. An example of this procedure can be to suggest to learners the need to make a polite request by showing that it is too hot in the room and that someone should open the window. Once the learners make several attempts to express the polite request, the teacher provides his example to them to show them how the message can be formulated.

Question: 20-What do you suggest to achieve better results in teaching speaking?

-It is important to afford the affective conditions that help the learners feel willing to speak. I can show encouragement and support with short phrases or gestures. To motivate pupils peer criticism should be avoided and we can add marks as a reward for their efforts. Correction of errors should be done in a very subtle way so that they do not feel embarrassed.

Question: 21-When you set pair or group works on what basis do you choose partners?

-In most of the cases, I try to form mixed level groups. For example in a group of five pupils, I select two weak pupils, one active pupil, one excellent and one average. For pair works, it is

generally pupils sitting next to each other who work together; this helps to maintain control over the class.

Question: 22-To what extent does the number of learners in a class determine the amount of opportunities to practice oral production?

-In crowded classes, there is the advantage of having the chance to listen to many repetitions of the same example and the chance to get a lot of different contributions and examples. But it is hard to gain control over such classes. Interaction occurs in a noisy atmosphere which makes things difficult.

The class size should not, normally exceed 30pupils and it is preferable to assign group works which require the participation of five pupils .

Question: 23-Do you think that three hours per week are enough to help learners develop oral skills in addition to written ones?

-It is not enough. Five hours a week is the amount of time suitable to teach all the skills evenly.

Question: 24-Do you agree with the fact that there should be a written task on the copybook at the end of a lesson   which may constitute a constraint for the teacher to devote a whole lesson for speaking activities?

-We can not deny that the written task helps pupils, especially weak ones, to find something to revise and situate their progress in the program. Yet, teachers should give more time and importance to the oral practices when teaching speaking to assure efficiency and productivity.

Question: 25-Do you find the speaking tasks suggested on the course book satisfactory or do you feel obliged to devise tasks yourself?

-Not all what is in the course book is satisfactory. I feel obliged to modify if the task does not serve language objectives. I try to conceive tasks that have many objectives that is to get pupils

speak to reinforce grammatical rules and to make use of a certain vocabulary pertaining to the topic of the file.

Teacher: C

Question:1- What are your qualifications?

    - BAC + four years at the ENS.

Question: 2- How long have you been teaching?

    -Six years.

Question3: Classify the four skills according to the importance it is given to each skill in the curriculum.

 a -Listening.

 b -Speaking.

 c -Reading.

 d -Writing.

  -All the skills are given equal importance.

Question: 4.Do you agree with this order of importance, provide an alternative classification if your answer is no?

    -Yes, I agree because all the skills can be integrated and serve each other whether directly or indirectly. Since it is not the mother tongue of the pupils and it is not used outside the classroom, pupils need all the skills equally.

Question: 5.Do you think that learners give more importance to the skills that are tested and neglect those that are not tested?

-Yes, average and week pupils are interested only in what is tested. But good pupils are interested in everything. They want to know about everything even about details such as stress intonation and so on.

Question: 6-What is the skill that you judge most helpful to the speaking skill?

  a-Listening.

 b-Reading.

 c-Writing.

   -Listening is. The more pupils listen the better they can talk. It makes them acquainted to native like pronunciation and to new vocabulary. It introduces the contexts of situation where vocabulary can be employed and raises awareness about the levels of language formality.

Question: 7-Do you consider the oral practices that precede the listening, reading and writing skills a speaking activity?

   -Yes, it gives opportunities to set discussions among pupils. They ask questions and answer them. The teacher may just give hints about a specific topic and pupils develop them.

Question:8-Do you think that the grammatical structures and vocabulary that are used in the writing skill are suitable to the speaking skill?

   -There are some differences like in mother/mum, policeman/cop, am going/gonna...but they are not so numerous.

 Question: 9- Do you agree with the idea of raising the learners' awareness about the differences between the written and the spoken forms of language?

   -When opportunities are presented, yes we need to explain those differences.

Question: 10-How do you select the vocabulary to use in speaking activities from the range of words suggested in the course book?

-I opt for the vocabulary that helps me present the lesson and help the learners solve the tasks. The most common in the course book and the most useful. Those which help pupils understand the topic and develop ideas about it.

Question: 11-How do you select the grammatical structures to be used in the speaking activities?

-I follow the program suggested in the course book especially for fourth year classes. But at times I feel obliged to explain again structures dealt with previously to refresh the pupils' memories.

Question: 12-What is more important for you,

a- To get learners produce correct language in terms of grammar ,vocabulary and

pronunciation. Or

b- To get learners communicate messages using whatever available resources.

-To get learners communicate messages is more important. Sometimes we do not need to give full and complete sentences in order to convey an idea. If the context of language use is clear, we can use just single words to mean whole sentences. For instance when talking about preferences, the word ' football' can stand for 'I like playing or watching football matches'.

Question: 13-To what extent do you think visual aids can contextualize language use?

-When introducing situations, it is better to show a picture of two people in a restaurant than explaining it verbally. The picture of the menu by itself can guide the pupils to the topic. This will save time and facilitate understanding. In addition to this, they attract the pupils' attention especially those who are distracted, noisy and talkative ones.

Question: 14-Do you consider that producing sentences which are not interrupted with silence pauses is a sign of good oral competence?

-Not necessarily. Even excellent learners sometimes need time to form correct and meaningful sentences. So, they make silence pauses. The pupils who do not make pauses generally make more

errors. So, pauses are a sign of thinking for excellent pupils but those who are weak and find difficulties in developing their ideas pauses do not bring any fruits.

Question: 15-How do you react towards the pauses that occur in the students talk?

-Sometimes, I find myself obliged to wait for the pupil to finish his contribution. I can help him by providing some vocabulary items if the pupils ask for the equivalent of an Arabic word. But sometimes I find myself obliged to move smoothly to another pupil because of the time constraints. I do so too if I know that this pupil will not be able to produce something meaningful.

Question: 16-What do you do to encourage learners to produce longer turns in speaking activities?

-I help them language that is providing vocabulary, reformulation of questions, rectification of their answers, suggesting some hints and details about the topic that can be developed by the learners, giving examples and ask pupils to do the same thing to facilitate things for them. If the pupils are reluctant or not interested because the topic is not interesting for them, I try to motivate them with marks. I ca as well use funny ways of reformulating questions and create a relaxing atmosphere to make them feel at ease and willing to speak. I also encourage collaborative learning by getting pupils help each other discuss together the work in groups and so on.

Question: 17-Do you think that learners should be induced to produce language right from the earlier levels or wait until they acquire an acceptable linguistic repertoire?

-Pupils should be induced to produce language right from the start, from beginner levels. This will familiarise them with language, give them opportunities to make mistakes and correct themselves. At the same time they get the habit of speaking without being afraid of committing errors.

For beginners, even a word can mean a whole sentence; for example the word 'drink' can mean 'I want to get out and drink some water.' It is also an opportunity to the teacher to correct the mistakes and provide the learners with full sentences which can be learnt by all the pupils and not by the one who made errors.

The classroom is the only place where pupils can use language, so we need to make them familiar with language production from the beginning. Teachers should make profit of the simplicity of language in early levels and of the pupils' enthusiasm to know this foreign language and make them produce simple language. Speaking is not important only for its own sake but for the development of other skills.

Question: 18-What can be done to get beginners benefit from the linguistic resources they have and start language production?

- Creating the suitable communicative context in which the pupils can use language in accordance with their level is efficient. Also, limiting oral activities to the topics they have learnt. Sometimes, I need to move to more interesting topics to motivate the pupils and get them use the language.

It is also important to encourage pupils for their contributions by saying for example 'good, excellent...' even if their talk includes mistakes. The teacher should also make some corrections of the most common mistakes. The question of feedback is still closely tied to the availability of time. It should also be done without interruptions or intimidation especially from peers so that the pupils gain self-confidence.

Question: 19-When trying to help learners produce given patterns, do you believe it is better to provide the model before any production is started or to get the learners try to communicate then provide a model at the end?

-Both methods are useful; it depends on the grammatical structure I want to work on and on the class the teacher is dealing with. Sometimes, learners themselves create the communicative need which I exploit to provide a model for imitation in later use. With average and weak learners it is better to provide the model required for reproduction while to good learners a situation may be presented at the beginning then the model is presented afterwards.

Question: 20-What do you suggest to achieve better results in teaching speaking?

-We can benefit from the communicative situations that are presented in the classroom to prompt learners to use the language; for example if someone wants to go out to borrow a book or to ask for clarifications about the lesson the teacher should prevent them from using mother tongue.

-We can also involve the learners in more roles such as guiding a communication and organizing discussions by both asking questions and answering them and not be limited to the respondents' role. The teacher can select interesting topic and ask pupils to bring to the class the items serving as to realia to present the course; in doing so their involvement will increase.

-Story-telling is also an interesting activity, the pupils may be asked to give an end to an unfinished story. Alternatively, they may discuss the meaning of a poem or suggest a topic to be developed the following session.

Question: 21-When you set pair or group works on what basis do you choose partners?

-I group weak pupils with good ones. Sometimes, I accept friends to work together. Learners acquire much knowledge from each other, they feel less embarrassed, they do not hesitate to use the mother tongue and ask their peers to give them the equivalent in English. But in spite of its being an efficient technique it creates much noise in the classroom. For pair groups I prefer to let pupils sitting in the same table work together to maintain control over the class and avoid noise.

Question: 22-To what extent does the number of learners in a class determine the amount of opportunities to practice oral production?

-Certainly, the number of learners affects speaking courses. In a group of 20, there are more opportunities for all to produce language. However, in 40-pupil-class it is impossible to give a chance to everyone to speak because we are limited by the time. So it is preferable to diminish the number of the pupils in the class.

Question: 23-Do you think that three hours per week are enough to help learners develop oral skills in addition to written ones?

-We have talked about this issue with the inspector some years ago. We said that three hours are not enough, four or five hours can be much better because the teacher can work at ease and because this language is not used outside the classroom; so pupils need more time to express themselves.

Question: 24-Do you agree with the fact that there should be a written task on the copybook at the end of a lesson   which may constitute a constraint for the teacher to devote a whole lesson for speaking activities?

-There is an advantage from having a written task on the copybook pupils have something to revise. But in speaking activities it is better to drop it and devote the whole hour for discussion and talking because of the time constraint.

Question: 25-Do you find the speaking tasks suggested on the course book satisfactory or do you feel obliged to devise tasks yourself?

-Sometimes, I feel obliged to omit some tasks and I borrow from other sources or create materials by myself. I avoid tasks including a lot of new vocabulary. Too much explanation of vocabulary distracts the pupils from the primary objective and takes time too. I modify as well too long tasks and those beyond their actual level. I simplify some tasks so that the pupils will be able to give only one part of the answer and not all of it; for example working on both conditional type 1 and2 together.

To get varied tasks, I avoid giving many tasks having similar objective. I also add some items when I find it necessary, for example to the lesson of question tags I add 'am I not→aren't I'. I also innovate examples; Hassiba Boulmerka was known during a given period but now she is not for the current generation so I replace it by another name. The same thing goes for Shrek , this character will no more be famous in few years and since it is impossible to publish new books every year I have to choose what suits the current interests.

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Teacher: D

Question:1- What are your qualifications?

-    A Bachelor of Arts.

Question: 2- How long have you been teaching?

-Two years.

Question3: Classify the four skills according to the importance it is given to each skill in the curriculum.

  a -Listening.

  b -Speaking.

  c -Reading.

  d -Writing.

   -Listening, speaking, reading and writing.

 Question: 4.Do you agree with this order of importance, provide an alternative classification if your answer is no?

   -Yes, I find it good. When you listen you can speak for instance it is only through listening to pollution that one can have some ideas to say about this topic. The same thing goes for reading; texts provide models to be followed by learners. Speaking helps learners acquire vocabulary which is important for all the skills especially for writing. The aim of teaching should not focus only on getting good marks in the test but on helping learners produce language whether spoken or written.

 Question: 5.Do you think that learners give more importance to the skills that are tested and neglect those that are not tested?

-Yes, learners are more interested in the skills that are going to be tested. When I try to motivate them with brainstorming techniques such as pictures or songs they show little interest but when it comes to writing they are deeply involved. They know that writing is the skill that helps them get good marks in the BEF. Yet, skills should be integrated, we cannot teach each skill in isolation.

Question: 6-What is the skill that you judge most helpful to the speaking skill?

   a-Listening.

  b-Reading.

  c-Writing.

   -Listening is the most helpful one. If we listen to songs we can get vocabulary and by watching TV we learn how to use gestures how to pronounce like native speakers in addition to knowing the cultural context in which language is used. Listening represents also an introduction to the topic of discussion.

Question: 7-Do you consider the oral practices that precede the listening, reading and writing skills a speaking activity?

   -Yes, it is a speaking practice. Before I start any lesson, I create a situation with pictures examples that illustrate the topic I invite the pupils to say something. Listening for example may need 15 minutes introduction, reading 10minutes and writing 30minutes. So this amount spent in oral practices serves indirectly the speaking skill.

Question:8-Do you think that the grammatical structures and vocabulary that are used in the writing skill are suitable to the speaking skill?

   -There are some differences between the written form of language and the spoken one. Styles of speaking are different from those of writing, and speaking to a relative is different from speaking to a teacher so there are levels of formality.

Question: 9- Do you agree with the idea of raising the learners' awareness about the differences between the written and the spoken forms of language?

- I partially agree with this proposal. It is true that our aim is to teach as much vocabulary as it is possible but it is hard to explain all the contexts in which the same word can be used. I prefer to teach them a word and get them use it even if it is in a wrong context better than loading them with much details about the uses of the vocabulary.

English is not their mother tongue, we have to imitate first language acquisition, let the pupils get the vocabulary then they will arrive at the stage of distinguishing their different uses. While progressing in their studies, they will learn about the differences. They are beginners and they are not supposed to know everything. But if we are faced with an activity whose objective is to distinguish between the different levels of formality it is important to know that language can have many differences when it is spoken or when it is written.

Question: 10-How do you select the vocabulary to use in speaking activities from the range of words suggested in the course book?

-Easy vocabulary that suits the level of the pupils and the context of language use. Easiness involves pronunciation, spelling and avoidance of long words containing too much letters. I also avoid words that may raise some ambiguities if they have different meanings in different contexts. I tend to choose words that can be easily explained through a synonym or an opposite because this helps pupils in their tests. I also prefer words whose meaning can be deduced from the similarity of the word to Arabic or French because they will easily be retained. The vocabulary should also serve the present topic.

Question: 11-How do you select the grammatical structures to be used in the speaking activities?

-Sometimes, I avoid teaching every detail to arrive at the targeted general structure. I start with the general and go to the detail. In communicative tasks I choose easy structures, I do not focus on grammatical structures themselves, I tend to allow errors and avoid too many remarks. This

encourages pupil and entails more talk. There are as well some structures which serve the topic better than others do.

Question: 12-What is more important for you,

a- To get learners produce correct language in terms of grammar ,vocabulary and

pronunciation. Or

b- To get learners communicate messages using whatever available resources.

-I prefer choice 'b' .It is difficult to reach a level where pupils can speak language free from errors. Therefore, the aim should be to get the learners speak and communicate. They can use gestures and focus on the message instead of worrying only about correctness by doing so the activity becomes more motivating. Pupils feel upset when the teacher corrects them repeatedly. In pronunciation, it is important to insist on the elements which affect meaning and neglect those which do not.

Question: 13-To what extent do you think visual aids can contextualize language use?

-Visual aids can be shown to pupils to suggest a content which they are supposed to guess. I may show a picture representing, say a daily activity and wait from pupils to talk about its content by giving key words even if in their first language then I help them to arrive at the English equivalent. Pictures offer to the teacher opportunities to ask questions which will be answered by pupils. They suggest hints and provoke interesting ideas that will be discussed by the pupils.

In addition to all this visual aids help the teacher save time and motivate pupils in that they guide them directly to the targeted topic. So, they keep boredom at bay.

Question: 14-Do you consider that producing sentences which are not interrupted with silence pauses is a sign of good oral competence?

-No. In fact silence is a sign of thinking activities occurrence. I rather prefer pupils who make silence pauses, they speak and at the same time think of what to say next and select the words they

are going to use. Quick and uninterrupted speech is ambiguous even if it is produced by adult native speakers in real situations.

All the process is similar to a chain the first link consists of preparing ideas then adapting it to the current situation. Selection of words comes after; the pupil may use general words such as; stuff' to mean a specific thing and whose exact word is not readily available. In addition to all this pauses serve to correct oneself if the error is already made.

Question: 15-How do you react towards the pauses that occur in the students talk?

-I never interrupt pupils. I permit for some time of silence to think about what to say especially if it is a warming up where time is needed most. I show the current speaker interest to what he is saying in an encouraging way. I give help if he needs to find a word but I do not insist on the correction of the structures. I may ask him some questions to guide him to the idea he wants to arrive at. I can even fill the pause with part of the answer.

I may ask the peers to interfere; they are more welcome than the teacher's correction especially if the peer's level is close or a bit better than the peaking pupil but not a much more excellent or a weaker classmate.

Question: 16-What do you do to encourage learners to produce longer turns in speaking activities?

-The way the topic is presented can encourage pupils to speak. Teachers can turn topics interesting even if they are not. I give hints and ask pupils to develop them. But it is preferable not to prepare the topic at home because they will not make mistakes and in this way there will be no corrections. Funny topics and real life situations are interesting themes on which the pupils prefer to work.

We can encourage the pupils to use easy language; this can be achieved if the teacher himself uses simple grammar structures and simple pronunciation. Simple language means fewer errors. If necessary the pupils can use gestures or ask for an equivalent of an Arabic word. The important is to transmit the message and not give up communication.

-I suggest changing the way the class is arranged. In real life situations speakers are in front of each other and not sitting behind like in classes. It is difficult in such a case to create an atmosphere where everyone feels involved in speaking. So, pupils should sit in front of each other and moreover I may suggest a room specially for teaching speaking with the necessary equipment and materials. This allows for example for watching a film and discussing its content.

Question: 17-Do you think that learners should be induced to produce language right from the earlier levels or wait until they acquire an acceptable linguistic repertoire?

-In the Algerian curriculum there is guided production there is no free production. We can expect beginners to produce language by just responding with a single word then they will be progressively be able to produce larger unities(phrase, clause sentence) in the second third and fourth years. The objective from learning is both to understand and produce language so we have to teach both parts from the beginning. It does not make sense to give production less importance than understanding.

Question: 18-What can be done to get beginners benefit from the linguistic resources they have and start language production?

-Tasks should be sufficiently varied and so the way pupils are grouped. Topics too should be varied. We have to avoid dealing with the same topic repeatedly. Pupils must be advised to use the language they know and not feel obliged to use many words and complex grammar. They should focus on the message, stick to the basic structures (subject, verb object) and use general words that go with a wide range of situations. Presenting models for imitation at the beginning makes things easier especially if they are repeated many times.

Peer learning is a good strategy it gets pupils help each other with ideas vocabulary and sentence formation. Pupils can refer to dictionaries or to notebooks.

Question: 19-When trying to help learners produce given patterns, do you believe it is better to provide the model before any production is started or to get the learners try to communicate then provide a model at the end?

-It is better to create a communicative need embedded in a situation before a model is given. Again after being presented the model, the pupils should be induced to produce language. Production is different when a model is given and before it. It is more beneficial to create the communicative need and present it within a context.

Question: 20-What do you suggest to achieve better results in teaching speaking?

-To give a mark for the speaking skill not a test as such but a reward for the active pupils this increases their motivation in language production. The type of tasks should include and stimulate questions and answers not only from the part of the teacher but pupils too can ask questions to their peers. The teacher can diminish his amount of talk and increase that of the pupils by creating competition or by constantly asking for their opinions.

The affective factor is very important; the teacher can encourage pupils and appreciate their contributions by saying "have you heard what he said ?" or by reproducing a rectified version of his talk and making him believe that it is him who has said it.

-Topics should be very close to teenagers' interests and to their daily life experiences such as teenagers concerns, swine flu, world cup and so on. It is important to introduce the topics gradually and not once for all.

Question: 21-When you set pair or group works on what basis do you choose partners?

-I choose pupils with different levels; in a group of say five, there should be one good two average and two weak pupils. In this way they help each other; and good learners will not monopolise talk. So, there must be only one good pupil and not more otherwise they will not let others speak. Learners having the same interests work better if they are grouped together. Concerning pair works, it is also more effective to select pupils of different levels but to avoid noise

and maintain control over the class I prefer to assign works to pupils sitting next to each other. I suggest to teach language production in groups like those of physics and biology so that there will be more opportunities to speak and enough time to correct.

Question: 22-To what extent does the number of learners in a class determine the amount of opportunities to practice oral production?

-To a great extent. Three hours is not a sufficient amount of time even for the repetition of one word with a class of 30. It is difficult to develop a topic and give opportunities to speak to a larger number of pupils. Learners know that they are supposed to speak lesser because of the lack of time and this affects the quality of language. Instead of using simple and correct language they use isolated words or do not say anything at all. Only few pupils can participate. Slow learners need more time to think how to formulate their sentences and correct oneself if necessary.

I suggest to divide the class into groups of five pupils each to increase the opportunities of participation.

Question: 23-Do you think that three hours per week are enough to help learners develop oral skills in addition to written ones?

-Tree hours are not enough. The teacher feels obliged to sacrifice speaking tasks and devote their share of time to writing because it is a tested skill. So, I suggest that in addition to four fix hours weekly, there should be some additional sessions where the teacher can teach extra curriculum tasks such as integrating more than one skill together.

Question: 24-Do you agree with the fact that there should be a written task on the copybook at the end of a lesson   which may constitute a constraint for the teacher to devote a whole lesson for speaking activities?

-I am with having something written at the end of the lesson. Pupils have different levels of proficiency. Weak learners who were not involved in the lesson need to have something to revise. Speaking lessons are not isolated from the other skills they serve them too. However this written

task should not be a long or a tough one. It should aim at fixing what has been dealt with. We can ask pupils to write the new vocabulary or the new structures on the notebook. We can have short tasks that can be corrected briefly ready on a booklet with their correction.

Question: 25-Do you find the speaking tasks suggested on the course book satisfactory or do you feel obliged to devise tasks yourself?

-I find it beneficial when the course book suggests many tasks and I select what suits my objectives. I try to avoid long tasks which take too much time and need much effort. Tasks causing ambiguities are also avoided. I select tasks that summarise many things; serve the objective of the lesson and other points taught before. Those which create a link between lessons and do not serve isolated objectives. This gives the impression that the tasks are arranged in a logical way and not permitting gaps.

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Teacher: E

Question:1- What are your qualifications?

-I have a BAC certificate and graduated from the ITE.

Question: 2- How long have you been teaching?

-20 years.

Question3: Classify the four skills according to the importance it is given to each skill in the curriculum.

a -Listening.

b -Speaking.

c -Reading.

d -Writing.

-Reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Question: 4.Do you agree with this order of importance, provide an alternative classification if your answer is no?

-Yes find it reasonable and suits the learners needs.

Question: 5.Do you think that learners give more importance to the skills that are tested and neglect those that are not tested?

-Certainly, learners are more interested in reading, because they expect to be tested in it at the end of the year. However the listening skill for example is neglected because it is taught but not tested.

Question: 6-What is the skill that you judge most helpful to the speaking skill?

a-Listening.

b-Reading.

c-Writing.

-Listening is. It always precedes speaking and serves as an introduction to speaking. There is a close relationship between both skills.

Question: 7-Do you consider the oral practices that precede the listening, reading and writing skills a speaking activity?

-Yes, they are. All these skills serve indirectly the speaking skill.

Question:8-Do you think that the grammatical structures and vocabulary that are used in the writing skill are suitable to the speaking skill?

-No, there are no differences.

Question: 9- Do you agree with the idea of raising the learners' awareness about the differences between the written and the spoken forms of language?

-No, since there are no chances to use English outside the classroom there is no need to teach particularities of oral language.

Question: 10-How do you select the vocabulary to use in speaking activities from the range of words suggested in the course book?

-I select the most useful. The ones which will be met in the other files.

Question: 11-How do you select the grammatical structures to be used in the speaking activities?

-I strictly follow the curriculum. I do not modify; if it is assigned in the program to teach conditional type one I do it I do not move to say the simple present or another item.

Question: 12-What is more important for you,

  a- To get learners produce correct language in terms of grammar ,vocabulary and

   pronunciation. Or

  b- To get learners communicate messages using whatever available resources.

-For me, it is more important to produce correct language. Since I have taught grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, learners are supposed to use them correctly.

Question: 13-To what extent do you think visual aids can contextualize language use ?

-I think that visual aids can be useful only to beginners to explain vocabulary, but when learners achieve a more advanced level they do not need them.

Question: 14-Do you consider that producing sentences which are not interrupted with silence pauses is a sign of good oral competence?

-Even good learners make silence pauses, and I do not feel disturbed about it. What imports is the correct answer. Pupils feel the need to stop to look for the right word or to form a correct structure.

Question: 15-How do you react towards the pauses that occur in the students talk?

-I just show patience and wait. I do not move to another pupil until he makes some attempts to finish his talk. I avoid interrupting the pupil in order not to embarrass him. The inspector insists on not interrupting pupils. I may help the pupil by giving him the word he is looking for.

Question: 16-What do you do to encourage learners to produce longer turns in speaking activities?

-I reject short answers. By using a gaze or gestures I can show that I need longer answers. I can ask them overtly to say more or to justify their answer.

Question: 17-Do you think that learners should be induced to produce language right from the earlier levels or wait until they acquire an acceptable linguistic repertoire?

-It is preferable to start from earlier levels, but gradually step by step. We can start by inducing the production of words then short sentences and then longer ones. We should not expect beginners to produce longer turns in a short period.

Question: 18-What can be done to get beginners benefit from the linguistic resources they have and start language production?

-They must be encouraged through the introduction of interesting dialogues, highlighting the communicative functions of language such as introducing oneself and so on. Guidance through examples given before production is also very helpful; these examples serve as models for imitation. Interesting topics and praising are other factors that can be very influential.

Question: 19-When trying to help learners produce given patterns, do you believe it is better to provide the model before any production is started or to get the learners try to communicate then provide a model at the end?

-Input is provided first through a dialogue, a paragraph or a text for reading. After this communication is started. Learners try to follow the input given at the beginning by taking from it the vocabulary and the grammatical structures.

Question: 20-What do you suggest to achieve better results in teaching speaking?

-Classroom dynamic can help an important role in encouraging pupils to produce language. Encouraging collaborative learning can also help achieve better results. The teacher can select the best contributions to praise them or to reward pupils with extra marks.

Question: 21-When you set pair or group works on what basis do you choose partners?

-Pupils learn better from each other and prefer the help of their peers. So, in a group of six, for example, I choose two good learners and four weak ones. I get good results even from slow pupils as they are guided by the god ones.

Question: 22-To what extent does the number of learners in a class determine the amount of opportunities to practice oral production?

-The number of the pupils affects the quality of oral production. In a class of 45, pupils feel embarrassed and get little chances to speak. However if the class is composed of 20 or less, there will be better chances to speak and correct possible mistakes.

Question: 23-Do you think that three hours per week are enough to help learners develop oral skills in addition to written ones?

-The matter is related also to the number of the class. It is not possible to listen to a big number of pupils if you have not enough time at your disposal. Correction of errors needs as well to be done at leisure. So three hours are not sufficient to teach the skills appropriately.

Question: 24-Do you agree with the fact that there should be a written task on the copybook at the end of a lesson   which may constitute a constraint for the teacher to devote a whole lesson for speaking activities?

-There must be a written task on the exercise book. Learners need to revise something when they are home. So, priority should be given to what will be left on the exercise book. Only if I have not time I do not assign a written task. I am against devoting a whole hour to the speaking tasks.

Question: 25-Do you find the speaking tasks suggested on the course book satisfactory or do you feel obliged to devise tasks yourself?

-Not all the tasks are satisfactory; I modify or omit some tasks. I try to avoid serving the same objectives many times repeatedly. I prefer tasks that serve as well the reinforcement of the grammatical structures.

Teacher: F

Question:1- What are your qualifications?

-Graduate from the ITE.

Question: 2- How long have you been teaching?

-From 1986, which makes 24 years .

Question3: Classify the four skills according to the importance it is given to each skill in the curriculum.

a -Listening.

b -Speaking.

c -Reading.

d -Writing.

-Writing, speaking listening and then reading.

Question: 4.Do you agree with this order of importance, provide an alternative classification if your answer is no?

-Yes, to a certain extent but I think that all the four skills should be given equal importance because all of them contribute to the development of language acquisition.

Question: 5.Do you think that learners give more importance to the skills that are tested and neglect those that are not tested?

- What I noticed is that learners are more motivated in oral skills. They like discussions and talks but when it comes to writing they are reluctant and this is due mainly to laziness. Writing requires more effort this is why it is less motivating than speaking for our learners.

Question: 6-What is the skill that you judge most helpful to the speaking skill?

a-Listening.

b-Reading.

c-Writing.

-Listening is. When we listen speaking becomes easier. It has many benefits especially as regards pronunciation. It guides pupils to the right pronunciation of words.

Question: 7-Do you consider the oral practices that precede the listening, reading and writing skills a speaking activity?

-Yes, all these practices serve the speaking skill and contribute to its enhancement..

Question:8-Do you think that the grammatical structures and vocabulary that are used in the writing skill are suitable to the speaking skill?

-In reality, spoken language is different from written one. Language used in the street is not the same as that used in administration or for academic purposes. But is school, language with its both forms should be taught in the same way.

Question: 9- Do you agree with the idea of raising the learners' awareness about the differences between the written and the spoken forms of language?

-No, we normally should focus on correctness. Grammatical accuracy should be given importance because pupils are interested in academic achievement and in succeeding in exams. So, written forms should be given more importance. I can, however, say while speaking `cause´ instead of `because´.

Question: 10-How do you select the vocabulary to use in speaking activities from the range of words suggested in the course book?

-I focus on key words; those which serve the topic. For instance, if we are working about football I use all the vocabulary items that have a relation with this topic.

Question: 11-How do you select the grammatical structures to be used in the speaking activities?

-I am obliged to follow a program. So, I strictly confine myself to what is included in the course book.

Question: 12-What is more important for you,

a- To get learners produce correct language in terms of grammar ,vocabulary and

pronunciation. Or

b- To get learners communicate messages using whatever available resources.

-In oral activities I accept mistakes. I focus on the message and communication. But in written tasks, I insist on correctness in terms of everything grammar, vocabulary...

Question: 13-To what extent do you think visual aids can contextualize language use ?

-Visual aids are very useful to teachers. Learners can be shown situations that they have to imagine. If the picture represents the supermarket then the topic is shopping, it is not sport and it is

not food. They motivate the pupils; they become eager to know what is coming next. They also prevent the teacher from appealing to translation.

Question: 14-Do you consider that producing sentences which are not interrupted with silence pauses is a sign of good oral competence?

-Silence pauses are a sign of thinking operations; which means that the pupil have not grasped yet the what he has been taught and that he has not attained yet the level that allow him to speak easily. S, I prefer pupils who do not make pauses and whose sentences do not include any interruptions.

Question: 15-How do you react towards the pauses that occur in the students talk?

-I give help to pupils from time to time; if they need a vocabulary item I give it. If there are any grammatical mistakes I correct them and I use gestures to suggest some useful ideas.

Question: 16-What do you do to encourage learners to produce longer turns in speaking activities?

-This can be done by asking for full answers and by questioning. Questioning helps pupils to produce long turns and provoke their thoughts. Translation should be the last solution, thus I do not accept switching to other languages. I advise them to read a lot during their free time. Memorization of dialogues and expressions is very beneficial; learners can keep in their minds extracts of language for many years and they can appeal to these memorized passages whenever they need them.

Question: 17-Do you think that learners should be induced to produce language right from the earlier levels or wait until they acquire an acceptable linguistic repertoire?

-Learners should start learning production right from the beginning. Certainly, they should be guided. We can accept from them words then phrases then long sentences. Repetition is a good technique it paves the way to autonomous production. Teachers should train the pupils to use very simple sentences including only subject, verb and object. This makes things easier for them.

Question: 18-What can be done to get beginners benefit from the linguistic resources they have and start language production?

-As I have said before memorisation, use of simple sentences and guidance from the teacher are the techniques that may lead to better results.

Question: 19-When trying to help learners produce given patterns, do you believe it is better to provide the model before any production is started or to get the learners try to communicate then provide a model at the end?

- Generally, I prefer starting with a model first, especially with beginners then pupils make attempts of language production guided by that model. However, it may happen that I ask fourth year pupils a question like this: suppose we are at a wedding party to which you are invited. You arrived late, what should you say to apologise?

Question: 20-What do you suggest to achieve better results in teaching speaking?

-By creating as much situations as possible and using the level of formality that fits them. We have to select topics that have direct relationships to the daily life and to the interests of the pupils. The more topics are interesting the more pupils are motivated. Games and task –oriented activities are good in that they encourage learners to provide a final answer, and where there is a clear end to be achieved.

Question: 21-When you set pair or group works on what basis do you choose partners?

-At the beginning I choose volunteers who select their peers by themselves. Then, I form groups. Mixed level groups give better results because when good learners work together they tend to monopolize talk and leave little space to shy and weak pupils. They also make everybody interested in the lesson.

Question: 22-To what extent does the number of learners in a class determine the amount of opportunities to practice oral production?

-The less the number of the class if the best participation is generated. A 15- pupils-group gives good results. This does not concern only speaking; to teach all the skills more efficiently we should have a group not exceeding 20 pupils. Correction of grammar errors for example needs a lot of importance especially because learners are motivated in getting good marks in the exam.

Question: 23-Do you think that three hours per week are enough to help learners develop oral skills in addition to written ones?

-Three hours per week are not enough at al. There are too much items to teach. The skills, grammar, remedial works, tests and their corrections, all these are much time consuming. Each file contains many lessons. So, we need five hours, it would better. This program is good and it is better to keep it and not reduce its content.

Question: 24-Do you agree with the fact that there should be a written task on the copybook at the end of a lesson   which may constitute a constraint for the teacher to devote a whole lesson for speaking activities?

-I see that there should be a task at the end of the lesson so that pupils get something to revise at home. For more balance there should be both an oral and written task at the end.

Question: 25-Do you find the speaking tasks suggested on the course book satisfactory or do you feel obliged to devise tasks yourself?

-In general they are acceptable. Yet, I feel obliged to omit some tasks. When there is for example a repetition of the same structure or the topic is not motivating. I avoid too ambiguous tasks or when you have to repeat explanations.

Résumé

Due aux progrès que les nouvelles technologies de collecte et stockage des informations, et à la croissante demande d'apprendre à parler une langue étrangère, l'oral a bénéficié d'une grande considération. Des domaines de recherche tels que la didactique des langues et la linguistique appliquée ont essayé de caractériser la nature de l'habileté et les conditions requises pour améliorer son apprentissage. L'étude présente suggère d'enseigner l'oral en prenant en considération les résultats des études menées sur la particularité de cette habileté en termes de manière de production, relation dynamique avec l'habileté de l'écoute et les exigences cognitives de la communication verbale. On suppose, alors dans cette étude, que si la capacité orale est enseignée à travers le choix de la langue appropriée, intégrée avec la capacité d'écoute et avec les stratégies de communication, le cours de l'orale sera plus efficace et fructueux en terme de communication. L'étude est réalisée avec un échantillon de population des enseignants et élèves de quatrième année moyenne par le biais de questionnaires, entretiens et analyse des exercices de l'écoute /orale du manuel. L'interprétation et l'analyse des données ont fourni suffisamment de preuves pour confirmer les hypothèses, répondre aux questions de recherche et les implications pédagogiques.

ملخص

نظرا لتطور تكنولوجيات جمع و حفظ المعلومات و لتزايد رغبة الأفراد في تعلم و إتقان الحديث باللغة الأجنبية حظيت مهارة الحديث باهتمام كبير من طرف عدد من فروع اللسانيات التطبيقية وتعليمية اللغة. تلخصت البحوث عموما على الخاصيات التي تميز مهارة التحدث ، متطلباته الذهنية و طبيعة اللغة التي يتميز بها. تقترح هده الدراسة إذن بان تدرس مهارة التحدث مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار النتائج التي خلصت إليها الدراسات النظرية. العناصر التي تندرج ضمن هذا المعني هي: العلاقة الديناميكية بين مهارة التحدث و مهارة الاستماع، المتطلبات الذهنية للتعبير الشفوي و الارتباط الوثيق بالسياق اللغوي. تفترض هذه الدراسة،بأنه إذا درست مهارة التحدث من خلال اختيار اللغة المناسبة، و بإدماجها مع مهارة الاستماع واستراتيجيات التواصل، وستتحقق فعالية أكثر من ناحية التواصل. وأجريت هذه الدراسة مع عينة من معلمي و طلبة السنة الرابعة متوسط من خلال الاستبيانات، والمقابلات، وتحليل تمارين الاستماع / المحادثة المقترحة في الكتاب المدرسي. تحليل المعطيات وفر أدلة كافية لتأكيد الفرضيات، والإجابة على أسئلة البحث و اقتراح تعليمات ميدانية.