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Developing the Speaking Skill through Classroom Interaction: The Case of Third Year Students at UMMTO

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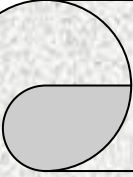Mrs AMMOUR Kamila, MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi- Ouzou; Examiner.

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I dedicate this modest work:

- To my parents *ZEHRA* and *M^{d} AMEZIANE*, for their continual encouragement, help and support.

- To all my sisters.

- To my nephews *GHILES* and *AKSIL*.

- To my sole brother *YAZID* to whom I wish all the best of the world.

- To my cousins *SARAH*, *MOHAND SAID* and *LYSIA*.

- To all my friends especially *YAMINA*, *KAISSA*, *MERIEM*, *SYLIA*, *KATIA* and *FARIZA*.

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"FATMA"

- To my parents, who always encourage me

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- To all my family members.

- To all my friends, with whom I shared the most memorable lifetime moments.

- To all my teachers.

"Celia"

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The present study is concerned with the development of the speaking skill through classroom interaction. It aims at checking whether third year students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou are given opportunities for interaction during oral sessions or not. To this end, our investigation is based on Mixed Methods Research. It combines two questionnaires that are addressed to a group of third year students and their teachers of oral expression. For the sake of gathering more data about the issue addressed in this study, we have opted for classroom observation relying on a checklist adapted from Ur (1996). The outcomes are analysed according to the Interaction Hypothesis, Qualitative Content Analysis and statistical methods of analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. On the basis of the results of the study, it is concluded that learners' speaking skill would develop if they were given opportunities for interaction inside classes since classroom interaction gives them the opportunity to use English spontaneously and express their ideas and thoughts in a flexible way.

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List of Abbreviations

CA: Communicative Approach

FL: Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

L1: Mother Tongue

Q: Question

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SL/ FL: Second language or foreign language

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TL: Target Language

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General Introduction

The fundamental concern of teaching and learning a language is to be able to use it for the sake of interaction and communication. For learners who are studying English as a foreign language (FL), it is very important for them to learn and use this target language (TL) through interaction. In reality, the vast majority of learners pay more attention to the speaking skill than the other ones (Richards, 2008). But it may be claimed that they face many difficulties while using the language for communication and in finding opportunities to practise this skill in a meaningful way. The main reason behind the failure to speak the TL is that the teaching of the English language focuses on the grammatical properties of language rather than the communicative ones (Ellis, 2002). This means that the mastery of the English language is limited to the learning of grammar rules, vocabulary and producing correct sentences without giving much importance to the teaching of the communicative skills. The latter enable students to express themselves naturally and freely and express their thoughts, ideas and views in different situations. Indeed, in order to become fluent in a foreign language, learners need to find opportunities inside the classroom so as to practise and use that language for communicative purposes (Ellis, 2002).

Classroom interaction seems to be a necessary and useful educational strategy that is used by second/ foreign language teachers to enhance the learning process; it plays a significant role in the process of second language learning and foreign language learning (FLL). As far as this dissertation is concerned, it tries to shed some light on the development of the speaking skill in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou (UMMTO). Indeed, speaking fluently the TL appears to be the aim of many Algerian English students.

Classroom interaction as an educational strategy is likely to be used during oral sessions. The latter are of a big importance for both teachers and students in Algerian

universities where English is considered as a foreign language. Nowadays, students need to get opportunities inside the classroom from their teachers in order to develop their speaking skill. And in this research, the issue addressed is related to the opportunities given to students for interaction among them during the oral sessions.

A brief glance at the literature points out that interaction plays a significant role in the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Therefore, it has been the concern of many studies around the world. In this context, many scholars have dealt with the issue of interaction and SLA (Hatch, 1978; Rivers, 1987; Richards and Lockhart, 1996; Pica, 1996; Ellis, 1999). They see interaction as a paramount element for language learning and it is of a central importance in developing second or foreign languages. Said differently, all those works emphasise the importance of interaction for SLA. Notwithstanding the works which deal with the issue of interaction and SLA, conducting a research in this field is of crucial importance.

As far as our study is concerned, it is a case study which studies the development of the speaking skill through classroom interaction in the department of English at UMMTO. The investigation attempts to see whether students are given opportunities for interacting and expressing themselves freely or they are just passive learners of the English language.

Aim and Significance of the Study

Our investigation is conducted in the light of the "Interaction Hypothesis" which is suggested by the British academic Michael Long in 1981 (Thu, 2009).

This dissertation is first and foremost concerned with determining whether students are given opportunities for interaction among them during the oral sessions or they are just passive learners of the English language. That is, to see whether the students are active or passive learners inside the classroom.

Research Question

A focus on developing the speaking skill through interaction in the classroom context raises forcefully one fundamental question:

1- Are students given opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas inside the classroom?

Research Hypothesis

To achieve our aim and in an attempt to answer our research question, we put forward the following hypothesis:

a- If the students are given the opportunities for interaction in the classroom, their speaking skill would develop since they can use English spontaneously and flexibly to negotiate and express their intended meaning.

Research Techniques and Methodology

To conduct the investigation, we adopt the Mixed Methods Research at the level of data collection. That is, two research tools are combined to collect our data. Concerning the first data collection instrument, it refers to two questionnaires addressed to both teachers and students to obtain quantitative and qualitative data from our participants. As a sample to our research, we have randomly selected a group of third year students and their teachers of oral expression at UMMTO. The teachers' questionnaire aims at investigating their views and opinions regarding classroom interaction, its relevance and effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking abilities. For the one addressed to third year students, it attempts to investigate their views towards classroom interaction and to find out whether they give importance and value to the interaction that takes place in the classroom. As for the second research tool, we tend to use a qualitative research instrument which is the classroom observation. It attempts at finding out whether students are given opportunities for interaction

during oral sessions or they are just passive learners of the English language. The results of the classroom observation are presented in the form of a narrative account. Concerning our two questionnaires, they are analysed in the form of tables, pie charts and bar graphs.

Structure of the Dissertation

The overall structure of this dissertation follows the traditional simple model as described by Paul Thompson (1999, cited in Paltridge and Starfield, 2007). It consists of a general introduction, four main sections and a general conclusion. Preceded by an overall introduction, the first section constitutes the literature review. It presents a review of classroom interaction; the main focus is on the theoretical framework upon which our study is based on. It presents also definitions of interaction as well as its main aspects and types. Within the same section, we review the speaking skill; its definitions, importance, integration of listening and speaking, characteristics of the speaking skill, then we present some learners' speaking difficulties and we end with some communication strategies.

The second section named "Research Design" presents the data collection and analysis procedures. It describes the research design, the research instruments, and the procedures of data analysis. Section three is entitled "Presentation of the Findings"; it provides the results of our investigation. The fourth and last section is named "Discussion of the Findings", it discusses the main results and the outcomes included in the previous section, trying to provide answers to the research question. Lastly, our dissertation ends with a general conclusion summarising the main research findings, presenting the limitations of the study, some pedagogical implications and directions for further research.

Introduction

This review of the literature is composed mainly of two parts. The first part is entitled Classroom Interaction and the second one is named The Speaking Skill. The first part reviews the literature relating to the issue of classroom interaction. It deals with the notion of interaction as a strategy which takes place inside the classroom, starting with a brief glance at the Communicative Approach (CA) since interaction is considered as one of its main principles. Moreover, different definitions of the concept of "interaction" are provided and its main aspects and types are explained. We finish with two main strategies that teachers tend to use in the classroom namely pair work and group work. Concerning the second part of this section, it reviews the literature relating to the issue of the speaking skill. The main focus is on the description of the speaking skill. Further, its importance is presented. Then, some light is thrown on some speaking difficulties that learners face inside classes and it ends with some communicative strategies that interlocutors may use to overcome the difficulties that arise while speaking.

I. Classroom Interaction

1- The Communicative Approach

The language teaching/ learning field has witnessed the emergence of various methods and approaches which rise, either as an extension or a reaction to one another, amongst which we find The Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audio- lingual Method and the most recent one, the Communicative Approach. The latter refers to an approach for SL/ FL teaching which was advanced in the eighties by British applied linguists as a replacement to the earlier Grammar- based approaches since they were looking for an approach which enhances interaction and communication (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). According to Littlewood (1981), CA emphasises "meaning" rather than the "linguistic form". That is, meaning is extremely important in this approach.

CA is based on the principle that people use language for the sake of communication and interaction. Therefore, its main goal is for learners to develop their communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), i.e. its ultimate objective is to use language in different real life situations for communicating and interacting.

1-1- Communicative Competence

The concept of "communicative competence" was first attributed to Dell Hymes's paper On Communicative Competence (1972) (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). Hymes suggests this concept as a reaction to Chomsky's description of linguistic competence (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Furthermore, Dell Hymes (1972) makes a clear distinction between linguistic competence, which refers to the knowledge of the language forms and structures, and communicative competence, which refers to the knowledge of the linguistic forms and how to use them in different situations and contexts freely and appropriately. That is, the concept of "communicative competence" involves knowledge of the language and how to use it in different situations and contexts.

There have been many researchers who sought to define the concept of communicative competence. However, the most known framework is the one which is provided by Canale and Swain. Canale and Swain (1980) design one of the first theoretical frameworks of communicative competence. Their initial framework includes three different components:

1) Grammatical Competence: it refers to the understanding of lexis, morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology. That is, it refers to the knowledge of the rules of grammar.

2) Sociolinguistic Competence: it refers to the knowledge of the rules of use such as politeness and appropriateness and also the rules of discourse as cohesion and coherence, i.e. it refers to the ability to use the language properly in different situations and social contexts and it shows the learners' ability to go beyond the literal meaning of utterances.

3) Strategic Competence: it consists of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that learners may use whenever they fail in communicating.

In 1983, Canale broke sociolinguistic competence into two separate components which are: sociolinguistic competence (it refers to appropriateness and politeness, etc.) and discourse competence (cohesion and coherence) (Celce- Murcia et al., 1995).

1-2- Interaction and the Communicative Approach

Pica (1996) claims that interaction plays a significant role in developing learners' language, more specifically their communicative competence. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), one of the major principles of CA is that language is mainly used for the sake of interaction and communication. Zainuddin et al. (2011) state that the implementation of CA inside classrooms requires different practices which, in turn, involve negotiation of meaning and also interaction using the TL. Moreover, *"information gap"* is sought in order to allow learners to interact (ibid.). For Brown (2000b), people interact with others in different real life situations for the sake of "negotiating meaning". Thus, it is for this reason that advocators of communicative competence focus on interaction and communication.

2- Classroom Interaction

"... [I]nteraction is, in fact, the heart of communication: it is what communication is all about" (Brown, 2000b: 165). As the quotation asserts, interaction and communication go hand in hand, that is, communicating messages and negotiating meaning is the result of interaction among people. Thus, the overall aim of learning any language is to use it in communication in its spoken and written forms.

According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008), to interact means *"to communicate with or react to"*. Wagner (1994) defines the concept of interaction as *"reciprocal events requiring two objects and two actions. Interactions are suggested to occur when objects and events mutually influence one another"* (cited in Wagner, 1997: 20).

Therefore, interaction involves two or more people or things which have an effect on each other. Stressing the importance of classroom interaction in FLL, Rivers (1987: 4) argues that

> … Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals….. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language – all they have learned or casually absorbed – in real life exchanges …

Long (1996) asserts that the process of language acquisition is mainly achieved and improved through interacting with others (cited in Ellis, 2005a). Moreover, he claims that the process of acquisition is highly seen when there is a breakdown in communication and interlocutors manage to negotiate meaning (ibid.).

2-1- Interaction and Theories of Second Language Acquisition

It has been argued that language learning is an *"interactive process"* (Richards and Lockhart, 1996:138). In fact, interaction is seen as inevitable since it fosters language acquisition/ learning. Many researchers have investigated issues related to interaction and SLA among them: Hatch (1978), Rivers (1987), Richards and Lockhart (1996), Pica (1996) and Ellis (1999). When we talk about interaction and SLA or in general language learning, it is necessary to make reference to three main theories which are: the input hypothesis, the interaction hypothesis and the output hypothesis.

a- The Input Hypothesis: it is a theory of SLA which is proposed by Krashen in 1981. It states that only the input which is easy to be understood is essential in order to acquire a second language (Krashen, 1985 cited in Johnson and Johnson, 1999). The input hypothesis is based on the principle that learners should comprehend *"input"* which comprises *"i+1"* (comprehend what is meant by a specific point and not the structure of the point) in order to shift from one level, named *"i"* to the next level, named *"i+1"* (Krashen, 1982: 22). Said differently, the process of acquisition only occurs if learners comprehend and get an additional input, which is just further than their actual level of competency (Krashen,

1982). Krashen (1982) asserts that acquiring and understanding languages occur with the help of the situation where language is used, the understanding of the external world and all what help us to understand a specific message.

b- The Interaction Hypothesis: it is a theory of SLA which gives importance and value to face-to-face interaction and communication (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). It is usually associated with the work of Michael Long in 1981 (Thu, 2009). In the early version of the interaction hypothesis, Long asserts that when people engage in a talk either with native speakers or other interlocutors, they negotiate meaning through making changes in their speech and this is considered as a very important and necessary aspect for learning languages (ibid.). That is, learners can acquire/ learn linguistic forms by negotiating meaning with others to make the input comprehensible.

According to Ellis (1991), the updated version of the interaction hypothesis has two main principles: language acquisition requires comprehensible input and producing input which is understandable is highly seen when learners are able to negotiate meaning whenever there is a breakdown in communication. Long (1989) argues that although comprehensible input is essential for language acquisition, it is not the only condition to acquire the TL (cited in Ellis, 1991). Furthermore, he asserts that acquisition is highly fostered through interaction and this is by giving opportunities for learners to express themselves (ibid.). Said differently, negotiation of meaning facilitates acquisition. Moreover, Long asserts that negotiation of meaning supplies learners with opportunities to get feedback from the others (cited in Pica, 1996). Likewise, Ellis (2005b) points out that the changes that arise during negotiation facilitate the understanding of the intended messages and this is through the corrective feedback that learners receive from the others. The feedback allows them to alter their production.

c- The Output Hypothesis: it is a theory which was developed by Swain in 1985 (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). Swain (1985) asserts that the output hypothesis is based on the statement that learning a second language may be fostered by simply producing language in both the spoken and the written form (cited in Swain, 1993). That is, producing and practising language is an essential factor in language learning. In the same vein, Swain (1985) asserts that there should be a production of language, which is understandable, if learners want to enlarge their competencies in language (cited in Johnson and Johnson, 1999).

At the end, we can say that all the three theories have established important elements that influence SLA and language learning. While Krashen recognises the importance of comprehensible input in SLA and language learning, Long stresses the need to interact and negotiate meaning so that input can be comprehensible for the learner. Swain, on the other hand emphasises the importance of production in SLA. Therefore, to guide our work we have relied on the interaction hypothesis. That is, the interaction hypothesis is used as a useful theoretical framework for the current study. The reason why we have chosen this theory is that because it has tight relations with our work which investigates the development of the speaking skill through classroom interaction.

2-2- Aspects of Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction requires two essential aspects, which are related to negotiation of meaning and feedback. These two elements are very important in the field of language teaching and learning.

2-2-1- Negotiation of Meaning

According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), in any interaction among people, meanings are negotiated. That is, interlocutors try to discuss with others their ideas and opinions. Said differently, "negotiation of meaning" is a process which occurs when speakers seek to prevent misunderstanding (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). Long (1983) asserts that students should be

provided with abundant prospects to negotiate meaning and thus avoid misunderstanding with others (cited in Tuan and Nhu, 2010). However, whenever there is a lack of comprehension or the message is not well understood among the interlocutors, different strategies can be used in order to guarantee and assure the interaction. Mackey (2007) states that there are three main ways which help students to create an environment of understanding and to reach the intended meaning. They are as follows: first, *"Repetition"* in which learners are obliged to utter their exact words, phrases or speech again and may be more than once. Second, *"Segmentation"* aims at repeating the utterance but by dividing it into different linguistic segments. Third, *"Rewording"* which involves uttering the original speech by using other simple and clear words (Mackey, 2007).

To sum up, it is worth mentioning that Long (1996) has argued that the process of learning a new language is best developed and with a greater rate when learners are given the chance to negotiate meaning whenever they face communication problems (cited in Ellis, 2005b). That is, negotiation of meaning facilitates comprehension (i.e. makes input comprehensible) and it plays a significant role in the development of a second language.

2-2-2- Feedback

A lot of researchers claim that feedback is a key aspect of interaction which plays a significant role in enhancing learning and in acquiring a new language. Littlewood (1981: 90) asserts that *"Feedback provides learners with knowledge of how successful their performance has been"*. Hence, feedback is what learners receive in response to their output for the sake of enhancing it. According to Mackey (2007: 30), *"[T]hrough interaction that involves feedback, the attention[s] of the learners are paid to the form of errors and are pushed to create modification"*. That is, learners notice their mistakes when they receive feedback from others and then they make changes to their output and adjust it.

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Ellis (2005a) states that corrective feedback is the feedback students receive from their instructor or other students whenever there is a mistake in their output. Furthermore, Li (2010) asserts that corrective feedback is a concept in SLA which refers to a reaction against learners' mistakes when they produce an output (cited in Bower and Kawagushi, 2011). According to Bower and Kawagushi (2011), there exist two types of corrective feedback, which are explicit corrective feedback and implicit one. Explicit corrective feedback shows directly and clearly that there is an error in the learners' speech or production. That is, teachers notify them about their mistakes immediately. On the other hand, implicit corrective feedback does not show the error directly, but teachers push students to make changes and adjust their utterances. On the same subject, Long (1996) in his recent version of the "interaction hypothesis" favours the notion of "implicit negative feedback" (cited in Mackey, 1999). He says that the latter fosters SLA.

Notwithstanding the importance of implicit corrective feedback in language learning, as learners are given chances to modify their output by themselves, there are some researchers (Krashen, 1981; Truscott, 2007) who argue that only what is important in the learning process is the correct language (cited in Bower and Kawagushi, 2011). From this, we understand that the researchers favour explicit corrective feedback.

2-3- Types of Classroom Interaction

To understand the influence and the impact of classroom interaction in improving the speaking skill, one should understand its main types: Teacher- Learner/s interaction and Learner- Learner interaction.

2-3-1- Teacher- Learner/ s Interaction

Teacher- Learner/s Interaction refers to a form of interaction which is ensured when a teacher talks to the whole class at the same time, that is, the teacher takes the role of a leader/ a controller inside the classroom. Moreover, this type of interaction is generally based on

questioning (i.e. question answer activities) (Snell, 1999). This model is suggested by Scrivener (2005: 85) and it is shown in the following figure:

St	St	St	St	St	St	St
St	St	St	St	St	St	St
St	St	St	St	St	St	St
St	St	St	St	St	St	St
St	St	St	St	St	St	St
			T			

A teacher interacts with a student   **St**   Student

A student interacts with a teacher   **T**   Teacher

Figure 1: Interaction between the Teacher and Students (Scrivener, 2005: 85)

Though teacher- learner/s interaction is important, many problems are confronted when using it. As one of them, we can find the passivity of the learners inside classrooms and it may be noticed in a question- answer activity in which a teacher can wait for a very long time in the hope of receiving an answer or getting learners' feedback (Snell, 1999). Scrivener (2005) argues that although students learn a lot of things from their teachers and grasp many ideas when they listen to them, the teachers' talk should not dominate the class.

2-3-2- Learner- Learner Interaction

Scrivener (2005) asserts that inside classes, learners are more interacting with their teachers than among them. Yet, he suggests some points in order to increase learners' interaction amongst which: establishing a relaxed atmosphere inside classes, learners should have time to express themselves, design pair work and group work that promote interaction among learners, etc. (ibid.). This type of interaction is presented by Scrivener (2005:86) and it is shown in the following figure:

Student- Student interaction   **St**   Student   **T**   Teacher

Figure 2: Interaction among Students (Scrivener, 2005: 86)

2-4- Pair Work and Group Work

There exist a lot of strategies which enhance communication and interaction inside the classroom among them: pair work and group work (Choudhury, 2005). Nowadays, working together in a collaborative way is worthwhile and Harmer (1998) asserts that both pair work and group work give learners extreme opportunities to express themselves freely without the help of the instructor at each time. That is, everything is centred on the learner. Pair work and group work are considered as two strategies which augment directly learners' talking time (ibid.). Thus, they allow learners to become more active inside the classes and achieve better in the oral skill.

Lindsay and Knight (2006) claim that in order to speak freely and fluently, students should be allowed to work in pairs and groups since talking only to teachers, the opportunities of practising the language are reduced. Richards and Lockhart (1996: 152) agree with the above view asserting that:

> Through interacting with other students in pairs or groups, students can be given the opportunity to draw on their linguistic resources in a nonthreatening situation and use them to complete different Kinds of talks. Indeed, it is through this kind of interaction that researchers believe many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence are developed.

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Although many scholars believe in the effectiveness of pair/ group work for language learning, there are some scholars who criticised these two strategies. For instance, Prabhu (1987) assumes that learners may feel a kind of embarrassment when making mistakes in the sight of their partners than in the sight of their teachers (cited in Ellis, 2005a). Moreover, group work may not help learners who pay much caution to forms and structures (Williams, 2001 cited in Ellis, 2005a). Also, in some classes, learners may consider themselves as leaders and then control all the others of the same group (Harmer, 1998), and in crowded classes, disturbance may take place (ibid.)

From the aforementioned assertions, it is worth to highlight that there are many criteria or principles that teachers can use when designing pairs and groups such as *"friendship"*, *"streaming"* and *"chance"* (Harmer, 2001). However, in some cases it is better to let learners choose their own partners. In fact, the majority of learners suffer from inhibition and this prevents them from behaving spontaneously and speaking freely. Thus, as it is claimed by Sullivan (2000) the notion of "choice" is highly recommended when designing pair and group work (cited in Yu, 2008).

II. The Speaking Skill

1- The Speaking Skill

The process of learning English as a FL involves the exposure to the four language skills namely: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and reading are considered as receptive skills; whereas speaking and writing are considered as productive skills (Harmer, 2001). Yet, Speaking is considered as the most desirable skill to be developed, and many FL learners give it priority because learners who know a specific language are often considered as speakers of that language (Richards, 2008). Said differently, learners assess their achievement in knowing the TL in terms of their success in developing their speaking skill.

The speaking skill has received diverse views and it has been defined differently. Chaney and Tamara (1998: 13) assert that speaking is *"the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non- verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts"*. Indeed, speaking refers to the procedure of constructing meaning among the interlocutors in different real life situations, and most of the time, it is accompanied with gestures and body language. Al Hosni (2014: 22), likewise, argues that *"Speaking is the active use of language to express meaning"*. Moreover, Cook (1989) emphasises that speaking refers to the ability of the learners to express themselves verbally in correct, coherent and fluent ways for a better and significant interaction among them.

2- The Importance of Speaking

The process of learning a FL implies noticeably the mastery of the speaking skill. Indeed, speaking is assumed as being vital and inevitable in the learning process. Therefore, speaking is the primary aim that the majority of learners want to develop and seek to improve. Ur (1996:120) declares that:

> Of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as ' speakers' of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing…

This reveals that speaking is paramount in comparison with all the other skills namely: listening, reading and writing. In addition to this, CA emphasises speaking and it encourages learners to use and practise the TL in the early stages of the learning process (Zainuddin et al., 2011). Similarly, Scrivener (2005:146) states that *"There is no point knowing a lot about language if you can't use it"*. That is, language learning is a matter of practising it and it is not enough to know just the grammatical forms of a language. From what is stated above, we can say that speaking is a very significant element in the learning process since with speaking, learners can express their personal feelings, opinions or ideas; tell stories; inform or explain;

converse and discuss, etc. Yet, one cannot deny the value of the other skills. For instance, listening can develop students' speaking abilities because the former refers to the ability to understand spoken language, and if students do not listen well, then they fail to communicate their intended messages. Moreover, Burns et al. (1996) assert that learners tend to speak as they have something written. Thus, speaking and writing are related to each other.

3- The Integration of Listening and Speaking

When dealing with aural and oral skills, it is important to make reference to two fundamental skills, known as: listening and speaking. The integration of listening is crucial during the speaking process. According to Redmond and Vrchota (2007: 120) *"speakers are at the mercy of listeners"*. This means that the one who talks necessitates someone else who listens to him/ her because most of the time speaking rarely occurs in isolation. Listening too does not occur in isolation since it requires a speech to be listened to. Nunan (2003) proposes that listening is *"the gasoline that fuels the acquisition process''* (cited in Bozorgian, 2012: 658). That is, listening plays a significant role in the acquisition/ learning process. It is very important to mention that both a speaker and a listener must take part when communicating and negotiating meaning verbally as interaction involves listeners and speakers at the same time to keep the communicative channel open. Therefore, to communicate effectively with others, a learner must listen to the spoken language and understand what is said.

4- Aspects of Speaking

When producing language and practising the speaking skill, two aspects are the focus of either teachers or students inside classes, which are known as: accuracy and fluency (Brown, 2000b). Therefore, learners should distinguish between these two aspects.

4-1- Accuracy

Accuracy refers to the *"[A]bility to produce grammatically correct sentences"* (Richards and Schmidt, 2002:204). This means that it is related to the correct use of the

grammatical rules. Harmer (2001) asserts that accuracy involves the right use of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. In brief, accuracy is related to correctness and the production of non- mistaken utterances. Therefore, to be accurate and to be understood, learners should pay attention to the correct use of the grammatical structures and they should master the grammatical rules (tense, word order, etc.). May be the majority of people see accuracy as being a very simple characteristic to develop, though, it is the most difficult one to attain since it is time consuming.

4-2- Fluency

Fluency refers to the *"[A]bility to produce [...] spoken language with ease"* (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 204). This means that fluency is related to the use of language spontaneously and without any difficulty while speaking with others. Moreover, interlocutors produce language without making a lot of stops and without paying much attention to the errors when communicating messages and in expressing their thoughts, views and ideas (ibid.). We have to mention that thanks to the emergence of CA that fluency becomes a paramount aspect in speaking (Richards, 2008).

5- Speaking Difficulties

Speaking English in everyday life and interaction with others is usually considered as a difficult task to perform in FL contexts (Li, 2003 cited in Zhang, 2009). In fact, any interaction among learners may be affected by many difficulties (Al Hosni, 2014). Many researchers have dealt with speaking difficulties that EFL learners may face. For example, Dil (2009) in his research on the problems that Turkish EFL learners face inside classes found that *"anxiety"* and *"unwillingness"* are the major problems that they encounter (cited in Al Hosni, 2014). Moreover, Littlewood (1981) asserts that being communicatively competent involves motivation in language learning. Thus, if EFL learners are not motivated in the

learning process, this may affect negatively their speaking abilities. That is why motivation plays a fundamental role in the process of language learning.

In addition to this, in an attempt to reveal the learners' difficulties in speaking, Ur (1996: 121) suggests four main obstacles that learners face while speaking in language classes and which prevent them from accomplishing their communicative tasks. They are as follows: inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation and mother tongue use.

a- Inhibition

This problem is mainly seen when learners try to participate in the classroom, but they fail. In fact, the majority of learners suffer from inhibition inside classes. In this regard, Littlewood (1981:93) asserts that *"it is all too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibitions and anxiety"*. That is, this factor refers to the manifestation of negative feelings inside classes, such as anxiety, worry and shyness, etc. According to Ur (1996), most of the time, students fear of making mistakes and of being criticised or sometimes they are just feeling uncomfortable when they speak. Therefore, this affects negatively speaking.

b- Nothing to Say

It has been noticed that inside classes, the majority of students keep silent and they are not active. The main reason behind this problem can be interpreted in terms of either students' lack of motivation or their communicative incompetency. Harmer (2001:131) argues that: *"... [I]f students are not using English [,] everyone is wasting their time"*. This reveals the importance of using language and practising the speaking skill. However, it is for the teacher to give students opportunities for speaking inside the classroom in order to express themselves freely and to be active because learners cannot speak if they are not encouraged and motivated by their instructors. Thus, they limit their role just to the reception stage.

c- Low or Uneven Participation

Participation is considered as one of the golden keys during the oral sessions since it allows learners to practise and enhance their speaking skill. According to Harmer (2001), making learners in groups increases their talking time and then their participation. He suggests that it is possible to put together learners who are not really involved in participation (ibid.). Thus, in such a case, these learners will not be able to disguise behind the most involved elements and to attain a high level of participation. Moreover, according to Ur (1996), this phenomenon may occur in crowded classes where the opportunities given for learners to speak are reduced. Indeed, the lack of participation inside classes may prevent learners from being fluent while speaking (Tsou, 2005).

d- Mother-Tongue Use

This phenomenon generally occurs in areas where the EFL learners have the same mother tongue (L1) and they opt to use it in classes very often (Ur, 1996). According to Harmer (2001), there exist many reasons for the use of L1 amongst which, learners tend to use L1 as an alternative aid to cover their inability to use the TL and most of the time because of their lack of vocabulary. In addition to this, sometimes the instructors opt for the L1, and then learners too feel at ease to use it.

The use of L1 seems to be the easiest and secure solution that most of the learners tend to use in order to keep the communicative channel open. However, it represents a kind of failure in learning a FL as long as learners still use their L1.

6- Communication Strategies

A lot of researchers such as Varadi (1980), Corder (1981), Faerch and Kasper (1983), scholfield (1987), Rubin (1987) and Tarone and Yule (1989) have dealt with the issue of communication strategies in their researches (Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1991). Faerch and Kasper (1983a: 36) describe communication strategies as *" [P]otentially conscious plans for solving*

what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (cited in Brown, 2000a: 127). This means that they correspond to a set of helpful stratagems that learners tend to use in order to attain their purposes and to handle the communicative difficulties in language classes. Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) claim for the effectiveness of communication strategies in the process of learning/ teaching a foreign language since they are used whenever there is a misunderstanding between the interlocutors and this helps them to develop their abilities to communicate effectively.

There exist many communication strategies that are used inside classrooms. However, as far as we are concerned, we will shed light on two basic strategies *"compensatory"* and *"avoidance"* ones which are proposed by Dörnyei in 1995 (cited in Brown, 2000a: 128).

6-1- Compensatory Strategies

Compensatory strategies or *"risk taking"* (Corder, 1978) refer to strategies which are used to face the difficulties that may arise during communication among people (Johnson and Johnson, 1999), i.e. these strategies represent a kind of substitution plans and optional solutions, frequently adopted by communicators for the sake of maintaining and reaching understanding among humans and conveying the intended meaning.

According to Dörnyei (1995:58), this type of strategies suggests a lot of ways in order to cover the learners' gap. This category offers eleven possibilities amongst which *"literal translation"* in which learners change what they say from one language into another TL. *"code switching"* in which learners often use their L1 while producing a speech in a second language. *"non- linguistic signals"* which involve the use of gestures, body language and *"appeal for help"* in which learners ask the others for help (cited in Brown, 2000a:128).

6-2- Avoidance Strategies

They are also called *"risk- avoiding"* (Corder, 1978). In these strategies, learners tend to decrease their amount of speech production. That is, they avoid talking too much or keep

silent (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). The aim behind the use of these strategies is probably to prevent making mistakes (ibid.). Dörnyei (1995: 58) divides avoidance strategies into two main sub- categories namely: *"topic avoidance"* and *"message abandonment"* (cited in Brown, 2000a: 128).

In topic avoidance, when learners encounter difficulties in speaking, they directly opt for easiest ways to escape and as a solution, they avoid any communication or interaction among others and they reject any attempt to negotiate meaning (Brown, 2000a). Hence, this reaction may be due to linguistic reasons (Hua et al, 2012). As for the message abandonment, the communicators begin their talking and start their communication tasks, but they discontinue them because of their linguistic difficulties (Dörnyei, 1995 cited in Brown, 2000a). Topic avoidance and message abandonment, then, permit the learners to escape from the interactional situations and stop directly their talking (Brown, 2000a).

Conclusion

The review of literature in this section shows that all researchers in the area of SLA state that interaction plays a significant role in the learning process. Hence, interaction is at the core of learning/ acquiring languages. Classroom interaction is also considered as a technique that teachers tend to use inside classes. In fact, it is thanks to interaction that learners may communicate with each other and negotiate meaning. Regarding the speaking skill, it is considered as a paramount skill that learners want to develop since they measure their success in learning a language in terms of their proficiency in using that language. However, to speak is a very hard task to accomplish because one should be very active either inside or outside classrooms. Besides, speaking involves a lot of efforts and it may be time consuming in comparison with the other skills namely: Listening, Reading and Writing.

Introduction

This section deals with the research design of the study. It describes the research techniques used to carry out our investigation and to answer the fundamental research question stated in the general introduction of the work. It comprises four main points which are related to the research methods used in social sciences namely: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, the context of investigation and sample population, the procedures of data collection which consist of classroom observation. And then, it presents the second research tool which refers to two questionnaires. The first is administered to teachers of oral expression in the department of English at UMMTO and the second one to third year students. Furthermore, it shows the procedures of data analysis; the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to analyse the closed ended questions. As for the analysis of the open ended questions of the questionnaires, Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is used to interpret the data. Moreover, the notes of the classroom observation and the questionnaires' results are explained together.

1- Research Methods

In the present study, data collection and data analysis techniques from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used. Therefore, the mixed-methods approach is adopted as the methodology of this research since it guarantees credibility in reporting the findings and assures great flexibility.

In our investigation, Mixed Method Research is adopted as quantitative and qualitative data are gathered through the two questionnaires since they comprise both closed items and open ended questions. Besides, qualitative data is collected via classroom observation. As for the analysis of our collected data, both methodologies are used. On the one hand, closed ended questions are analysed through quantitative analysis, using percentages, tables, pie charts and histograms to represent the statistics. On the other hand, open ended questions are

analysed and interpreted by adopting QCA to gain qualitative data. Moreover, the notes of our observations and the questionnaires' results are explained and analysed together and in relation to Ur's patterns of interaction.

2- Context of Investigation and Sample Population

The investigation is carried out in a realistic setting. That is, in the department of English at UMMTO. The population, which is considered as the source of the data in this research, comprises third year students (436 students) and their teachers of oral expression from the department of English at UMMTO. However, because of the impossibility of dealing with all the subjects, a representative sample is randomly chosen. Thus, in our research, we have randomly selected fifty five students, which stand for 12.6 % and six teachers from third year level.

Our research is considered as a case study. The latter is defined by Arsenault and Anderson (1998: 121); Flick (2004) as*: "[A]n investigation into a specific instance or phenomenon in its real- life context"* (cited in Cohen et al., 2007: 170). Furthermore, the case study *"provides an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth"* (Bell, 2005: 10).

3- Procedures of Data Collection

When conducting investigations, researchers can collect information and data with the aid of different types of data collection procedures. For the sake of collecting data in our investigation, we have adopted two main research instruments namely: the classroom observation and the questionnaire.

3- 1- The Classroom Observation

For the sake of gathering the appropriate data needed for our study and in an attempt to find out whether students are given opportunities for interaction inside language classes, classroom observation has been used as a data collection tool. According to Bell (2005:184),

classroom observation is *"[a technique that] can reveal characteristics of groups or individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means"*. This shows the importance of observation and its usefulness in finding information about what really happens inside classrooms. In fact, in our research, it is extremely important to know about the different opportunities given by the teacher to the students to express themselves freely and fluently.

Our procedure of gathering data is likely to be explained as follows: after getting the permission from the head of the department of English at UMMTO to carry out our study, we start our observations of different classes. Qualitative data are collected through a series of attendances to classes of oral expression randomly chosen from the third year level. These observations have taken place in May 2015; our focus is on the opportunities given to students in oral sessions to interact with others (either with the teacher or among students). The data is collected using written field notes with the help of an adapted checklist. Our adapted checklist is based on some patterns of interaction that are mostly used inside classes, which are suggested by Ur (1996: 228). We limit ourselves to only four criteria out of ten patterns and they are: *"group work"*, *"individual work"*, *"collaboration"* and *"full- class interaction"* since our focus is mainly on the given opportunities to students to interact.

a. Group Work: Most of the time, learners work in groups which are designed by the teacher in order to provide them with opportunities for interaction. The teacher ought not to interrupt frequently the students while talking (Ur, 1996).

b. Individual Work: According to Ur (1996), the instructor provides learners with individual activities; each one tries to do them in an independent way, no collaboration among learners and without interacting with their peers and classmates.

c. Collaboration: According to Ur (1996), learners work in a collaborative way with their partners; most of the time in pairs.

d. Full-class interaction: the teacher provides learners with debates and discussions in which the whole class ought to speak or give their opinions and views concerning a specific topic; sometimes the instructor may intervene to motivate students to interact (Ur, 1996).

3-2- The Questionnaire

"The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher…" (Wilson and Mc Lean, 1994 cited in Cohen et al., 2007: 317). This means that the questionnaire is one of the most common tools for gathering data which is often used in FL/ SL research. Generally, questionnaires include two types of items: closed and open-ended (Cohen et al., 2007). In the first type which is known as closed-items, the researcher suggests the possible answers that can be chosen by the respondents. In the second type which is known as open-ended questions, the respondents answer in a less restricted or oriented way and express their own thoughts and ideas in their own manner. As far as we are concerned, the questionnaire, which is intended as a part of this investigation, is addressed to both teachers of the oral expression and a group of students in the department of English at UMMTO.

3-2-1- The Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is headed by an introduction which explains to the teachers that it is a part of our research work and aims at figuring out the relationship between classroom interaction and the speaking skill. It is made up of twenty (20) items and it is handed to third year teachers of oral expression. The items are of different types: closed and open questions. They are arranged into three sections: 1) - *"Background Information"* which aims at showing teachers' profile; 2) - *"Classroom Interaction"* that is intended to obtain information about teachers' views concerning interaction inside classrooms; 3) – *"Teaching the Speaking Skill"* which aims at getting data from teachers of oral expression concerning the

main speaking aspects they usually focus on in the classroom (i.e. accuracy, fluency or both) as they are considered as the main objectives behind teaching speaking. Further, some questions seek the strategies and the activities used by the teacher to create a successful interaction. Moreover, it presents some speaking problems and difficulties that students face inside classes.

3-2-2- The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is addressed to third year students, who are studying in the department of English at UMMTO; its purpose is to find out their opinions and views about classroom interaction and the speaking skill. It is made up of nineteen (19) items. The latter are of different types: closed and open questions. They are arranged into three sections: 1) - *"Background Information"* which aims at showing the participants' profile. 2) – *"Learners' Views about Classroom Interaction"* which is intended to obtain information about students' views and opinions concerning interaction inside classrooms 3) –*"The Speaking Skill"* which aims at getting data from third year students concerning the focus of their teachers inside classes (accuracy, fluency or both). Moreover, some questions seek the difficulties that students face while speaking, and the strategies that they tend to use to surmount those difficulties. It is worth mentioning that this questionnaire is disseminated to the subjects from April 12th, 2015 to April 16th, 2015.

4- Procedures of Data Analysis

This point includes the procedures of data analysis. It presents the statistical and Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) methods used to analyse the data gathered from the two questionnaires and the classroom observation. Thus, our collected data are analysed according to the mixed method approach, which involves the combination of quantitative and qualitative means of analysis.

The analysis of the questionnaires includes the analysis of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions, which contain numerical data, are analysed through the use of the statistical analysis software program SPSS version 20. As for the open-ended questions, which contain qualitative data, are analysed and interpreted by adopting QCA. Similarly, with the open-ended questions, the classroom observations have provided us with qualitative data which are explained together with the questionnaires and in relation to Ur's patterns of interaction (whether they are implemented or not).

4-1- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

SPSS is a package that is most used in social sciences (Landau and Everitt, 2004). It is concerned with the statistical analysis and presentation of the quantitative data (ibid.). Our results are presented and shown in tables, pie charts and histograms which show the number of the answers given and their equivalent percentages.

4-2- Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

For the sake of describing, analysing and interpreting the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions of the two questionnaires of this study, QCA is adopted. QCA is obviously defined by Mayring (2014:31) as *"a systematic procedure of assignment of categories to portions of text"*. This means that QCA is intended to analyse texts. Indeed, QCA is *"a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns"* (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1278). That is, QCA is a matter of interpreting the meanings of texts. Moreover, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) state that it exists three approaches to QCA namely: conventional, directed and summative content analysis. In fact, the analysis of the open-ended questions is based on the conventional approach. The latter gives the researcher the opportunity to get information directly from the sample of the investigation without

"imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives" (ibid, 1279). Therefore, it allows us to describe, explain and interpret the outcomes obtained from open-ended questions.

Conclusion

This section focuses on the research design of the study by presenting the instruments of data collection and then data analysis procedures. It first presents the research methods used in the investigation and its context with the sample population. Then, it provides a description of the procedures of data collection, explaining how the data are gathered. Furthermore, it supplies the tools of data analysis. The statistical analysis software program SPSS is the most common technique that is used in social sciences to analyse quantitative data. In addition to this, QCA is adopted to analyse and interpret the open-ended questions of the two questionnaires. For the notes of the classroom observation, they are explained together with the questionnaires and in relation to Ur's patterns of interaction (whether they are implemented or not). The analyses enable us to identify the relationship between classroom interaction and the speaking skill. In the next section, we present the results obtained from the two questionnaires in the form of tables, pie charts and histograms and the outcomes of the classroom observation in the form of a narrative account.

Introduction

This section presents the results reached through the questionnaires addressed to a group of fifty five (55) third year students and their teachers of oral expression in the department of English at UMMTO. It aims at showing whether students are given opportunities for interaction by their teachers or they are just passive learners of the English language. For the sake of readability and visibility, the results are presented in percentages, showed in tables, pie charts and histograms. The section is arranged into two main subsections. The first subsection presents the results obtained from the two questionnaires. As for the second subsection, it presents the results obtained from the observations which have taken place in the department of English at UMMTO.

I- Presentation of the Questionnaires' Results

I-1- Results of the Students' Questionnaire

a- Identification of the Participants in terms of Gender
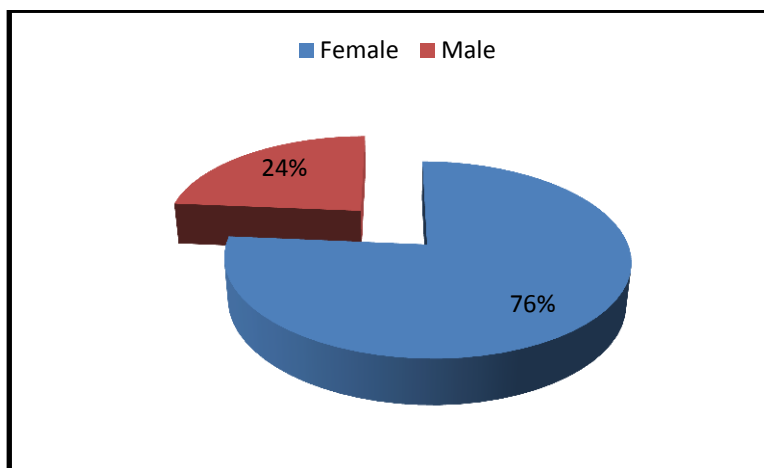
Diagram 1: Students' Distribution according to Gender

These results clearly show that females (76%) are about three times the number of males (24%).

b- Learners' Views about Classroom Interaction

Q2: How would you describe the atmosphere inside classrooms?

	A pleasant atmosphere with friendly relationships	A non enjoyable atmosphere	No answer
■ Participants	33	21	1
■ %	60	38,2	1,8
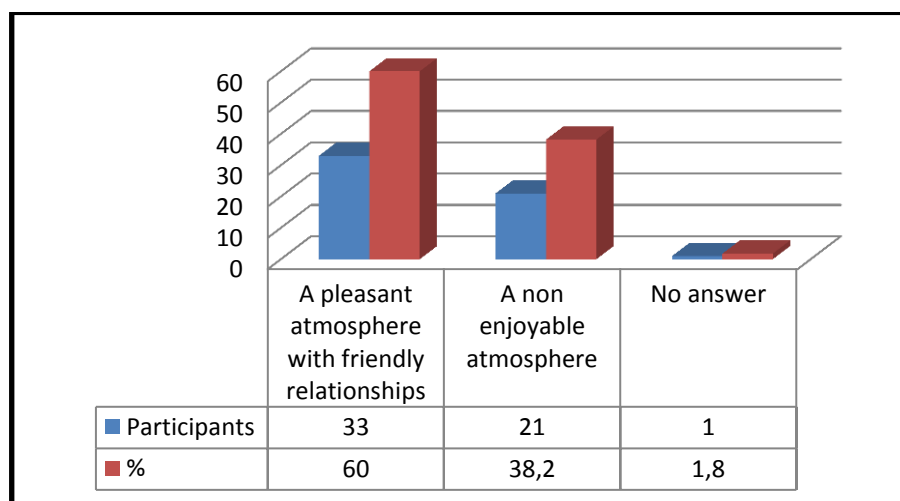
Diagram 2: The Atmosphere inside Classrooms

The results displayed in diagram 2 show that the majority of participants (60%) affirm that the atmosphere inside classes is pleasant with friendly relationships. In contrast, the minority which stands for 38.2 % assert that a non-enjoyable atmosphere exists inside classes. Only one student has not provided any answer.

Q3: Comprehensible input is necessary inside classes? (Justify your answer)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Participants	16	33	3	1	2	**55**
%	29.1	60	5.5	1.8	3.6	**100**

Table 1: The Necessity of Comprehensible Input inside Classes

As shown in the above table, the majority of students 89.1% (60%+29.1%) claim for the necessity of *"comprehensible input"* inside classes. They justify their answer by stating that comprehensible input is the most important aspect inside classes in order to better understand, get more information, exchange ideas, establish a pleasant atmosphere and

develop their skills since the lack of comprehension means the lack of skills' development. While very few ones claim that comprehensible input is not always needed by asserting that at this level, students are normally able to understand everything and it is for them to search for specific meanings and not always relying on teachers to explain everything.

Q4: In your opinion, is classroom interaction: beneficial, non-beneficial (justify your answer)
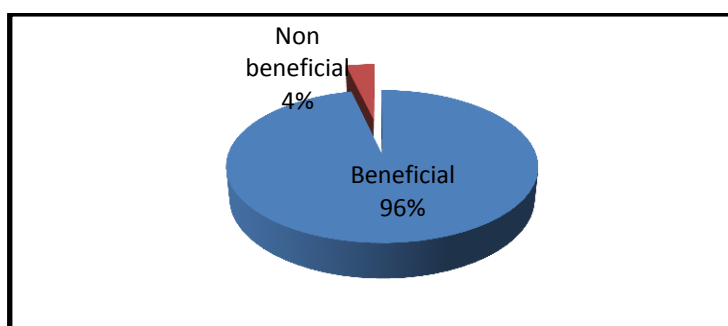
Diagram 3: Students' Views towards Classroom Interaction

The above diagram represents students' views towards classroom interaction. As it is shown, the majority of students (96%) regard classroom interaction as beneficial since it allows them to improve their level in English, express themselves freely and exchange ideas with others. The remaining (4%), on the other hand, say that classroom interaction is not beneficial by stating that interaction inside classes is not at all helpful since most of the students keep silent.

Q5: The interactional process helps you to improve your speaking abilities.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
Participants	22	25	4	1	2	1
%	40	45,5	7,3	1,8	3,6	1,8
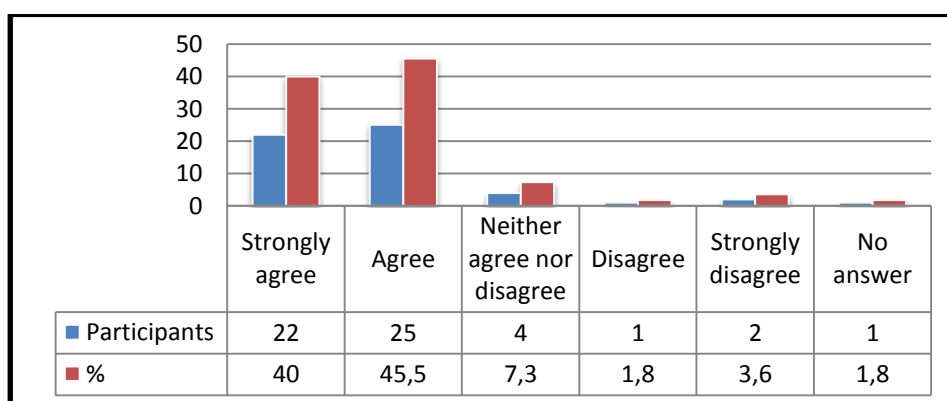
Diagram 4: Interaction and the Improvement of the Speaking Skill

From diagram 4, it is clear that the majority of students 85.5% (40%+ 45.5%) either strongly agree or agree that interaction helps in improving their speaking abilities and they argue that interaction is very effective and it helps them to enhance their speaking skill.

Q6: How often does the teacher give you the opportunity to interact with him/ her during oral sessions?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Very rarely
Participants	9	29	13	4
%	16,4	52,7	23,6	7,3
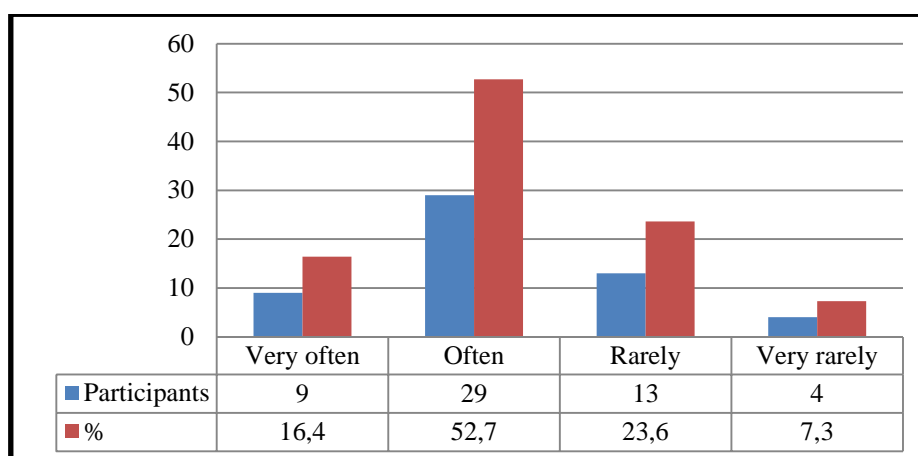
Diagram 5: Frequency of Teacher- Learner/s Interaction

The above diagram represents the frequency of interaction between teachers and students during oral sessions. Thus, 52.7% of teachers *"often"* give opportunities to students to interact with him/ her, 23.6% *"rarely"* while 16.4% do it *"very often"*. Only four students who stand for 7.3% say that their teachers provide them with opportunities for interaction *"very rarely"*.

Q7: How often do you interact with your classmates inside the classroom in English?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Very rarely	No answer	Total
Participants	7	16	21	10	1	**55**
%	12.7	29.1	38.2	18.2	1.8	**100**

Table 2: Frequency of Learner- Learner Interaction

Table 2 represents the students' frequency of interaction among them inside classes using the English language. Thus, 41.8% of the participants (29.1+12.7) assert that they

interact with their classmates frequently. While, 56.4% (38.2%+ 18.2%) of the respondents argue that most of the time they do not interact with their classmates. One student has not answered this question.

Q8: According to you, does interaction and negotiation of meaning facilitate comprehension and the development of a foreign language?

From the gathered data, it has been noticed that the vast majority of participants argue that interaction and negotiation of meaning facilitate comprehension and the development of a foreign language. Thus, these two concepts are very necessary to comprehend meaning and play a significant role in the development of a foreign language. While, very few ones claim that the two concepts do not play any role in comprehension and the development of a foreign language.

Q9: How often do you try to negotiate meaning when you want to convey a certain message?

	Very often	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Very rarely**	**Total**
Participants	8	34	10	3	**55**
%	14.5	61.8	18.2	5.5	**100**

Table 3: Frequency of Students' Negotiation of Meaning

As shown in the above table, the majority of participants 76.3% (61.8%+14.5%) tend to negotiate meaning frequently while 23.7% of the respondents (18.2%+5.5%) assert that they do not negotiate meaning frequently.

Q10: Do you receive any feedback from your teacher whenever you make a mistake?

From our results, it has been perceived that the greater part of our participants assert that they do receive feedback (both explicit and implicit feedback) whenever they make mistakes. On the other hand, very few ones argue that they are not always receiving feedback and this is depending on the teacher. Some of them too, assert that they do not at all receive

feedback from their teachers and they see that as a very positive thing since they are allowed to express themselves freely without the interruption of their teachers at each time.

Q11: During the oral sessions, which of the following techniques do you enjoy best?
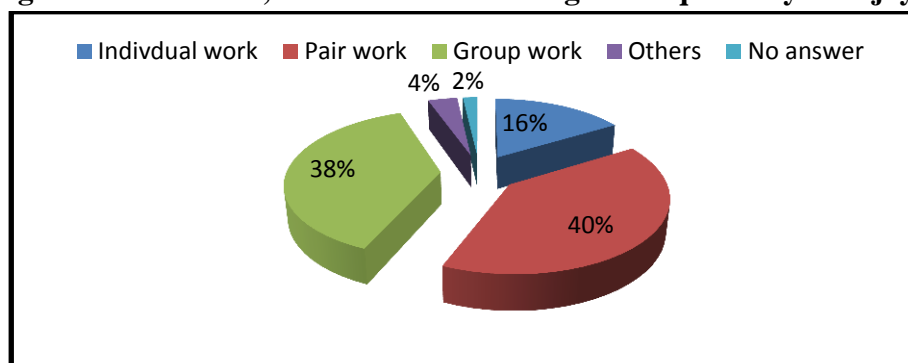
Diagram 6: Students' Preferred Techniques

As shown in the above diagram, the majority of participants 78% (40%+38%) enjoy pair work and group work while 16% of the participants prefer to work individually. Only two students out of fifty five, which stand for 4%, have suggested other techniques to be used by teachers. One student who stands for 2% has not answered the question.

Q 12- Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in pairs and groups?

Some students argue that they find a lot of difficulties when working in a collaborative way since there are some students who are passive and they let others do all the work instead of participating with them, they suggest that teachers should let them choose with whom they will work. However, the vast majority of the respondents argue that they do not find any difficulty either working in pairs or in groups since they are allowed to exchange ideas, feel at ease to speak, improve their speaking abilities, learn from others, etc. Moreover, they assert that they should choose their partners in order to feel more comfortable.

c- The Speaking Skill

Q13: Which of the following language skills do you prefer?

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	No answer	Total
Participants	16	20	11	7	1	**55**
%	29.1	36.4	20	12.7	1.8	**100**

Table 4: Students' Preferred Language Skill

As highlighted in table 4, it is apparent that the majority of students (29.1+36.4) prefer listening and speaking. 20% of the students prefer reading. While writing is the least preferred one (12.7%). Only one student did not select any of the four language skills.

Q14: Do you think that the amount of time devoted to Oral Expression is sufficient? (Justify your answer?)
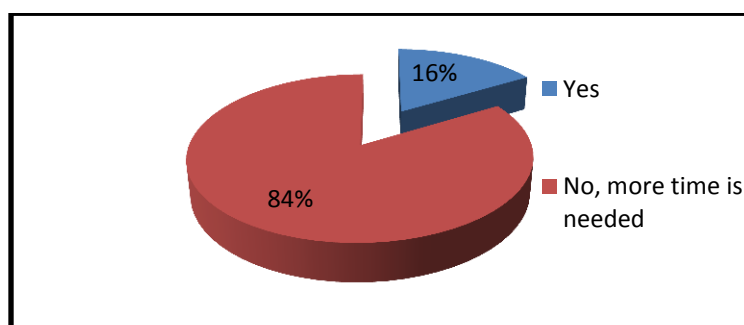
Diagram 7: The Amount of Time Devoted to Oral Expression

The above diagram shows that the majority of students (84%) assert that more time is needed to oral expression and they justify their answer by indicating that in order to master any FL and to develop the speaking skill, the allotted time should be sufficient and practising the TL should be regular inside classes. However, only 16% of the students claim that the amount of time devoted to oral expression is sufficient because it is for students to practise the English language outside classroom to develop their speaking skill and interaction inside classes is just an additional support.

Q15: How often does your teacher interrupt you to correct your mistakes?
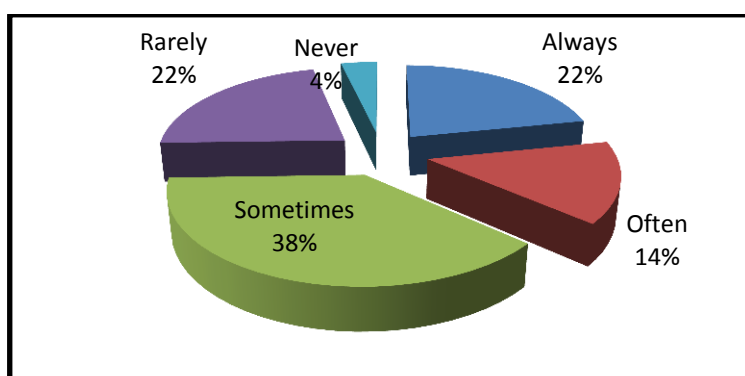
Diagram 8: Teachers' Interruptions for Correcting Students' Mistakes

From diagram 8, it appears that the frequency of correcting students' mistakes is not fairly equal among participants. Therefore, 38% say that teachers *"sometimes"* correct their mistakes, 22% *"rarely"* and 22% too affirm to be corrected *"always"* while 14% state that teachers do it *"often"*. Only 4% say that teachers *"never"* correct their mistakes.

Q16: What is your reaction when the teacher interrupts you?

	Encourage you more to participate	Disturb you	Inhibit your participation	Try to negotiate meaning	No answer	Total
Participants	34	6	2	12	1	**55**
%	61.8	11	3.6	21.8	1.8	**100**

Table 5: Students' Reaction towards Teachers' Corrective Feedback

As it is highlighted in the above table, the majority of students (61.8%) are encouraged more to participate and 21.8 % try to negotiate meaning when they are interrupted by their teachers. While 10.9 % argue that their teachers' corrective feedback disturbs them. 3.6% state that it inhibits their participation. One student has not provided any answer.

Q17: What is the focus of your teacher during oral sessions? (Please explain)
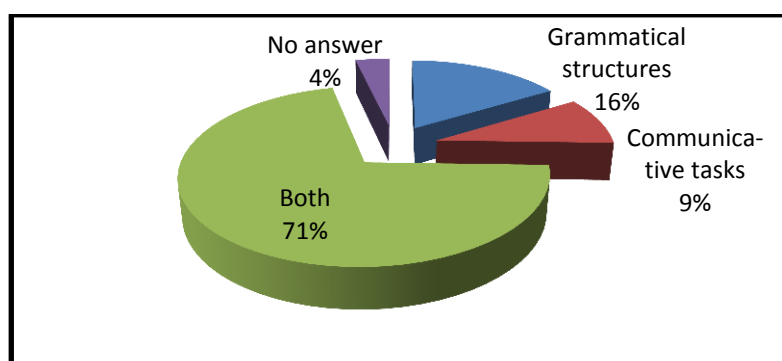
Diagram 9: Teachers' Focus during Oral Sessions

As displayed in diagram 9, the majority of students (71%) assert that during the oral sessions, teachers tend to focus on both grammatical structures and communicative tasks. They argue that both aspects are very important in learning English because people cannot communicate effectively and fluently with others if they lack accuracy in language and thus they cannot transmit their messages. While 16% assume that teachers focus only on grammatical structures because most of the time they are controlled and do not feel free when expressing themselves and teachers always correct their mistakes. 9 % of the participants assert that the focus is on communicative tasks only and they explain this by asserting that their teachers give importance to interaction and speaking fluently without paying attention to grammar mistakes. 4% of the participants did not answer this question.

Q18: If you do not interact and speak in English, is it because:

	You suffer from inhibition	You have nothing to say	You still use your mother tongue	Not interested to participate
■ participants	14	17	20	13
■ %	21,9	26,6	31,2	20,3
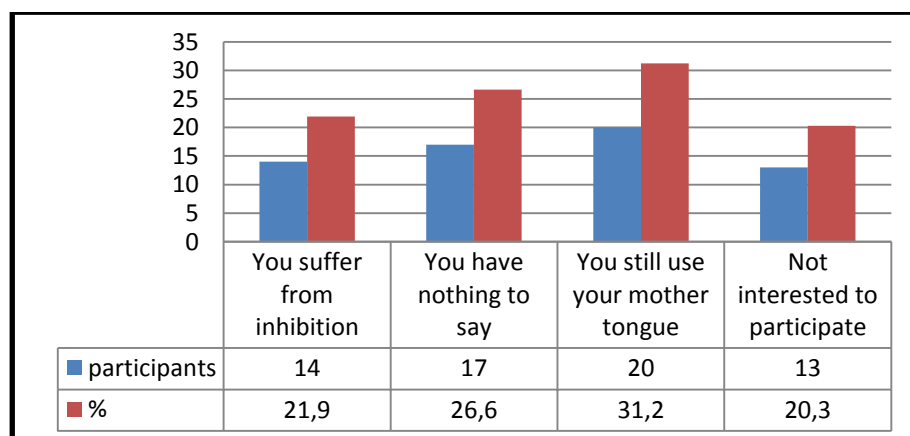
Diagram 10: Students' Problems while Speaking

As the participants are asked about their problems while speaking and interacting, diagram 11 shows that all the participants encounter problems when they want to interact with others. Thus, 31.2% affirm that they still use their mother tongue, 26.6% of the respondents assert that they have nothing to say, 21.9% suffer from inhibition, while 20.3% say that they are not interested to participate.

Q19: Which solution do you most use when you fail in interacting?

Pie chart with legend:
- 12% — You use the mother tongue instead
- 28% — You keep talking using paraphrasing
- 16% — You ask for help
- 22% — Use of gestures and body language
- 16% — The use of translation to Arabic and French
- 4% — You stop talking and avoid negotiation
- 2% — No answer
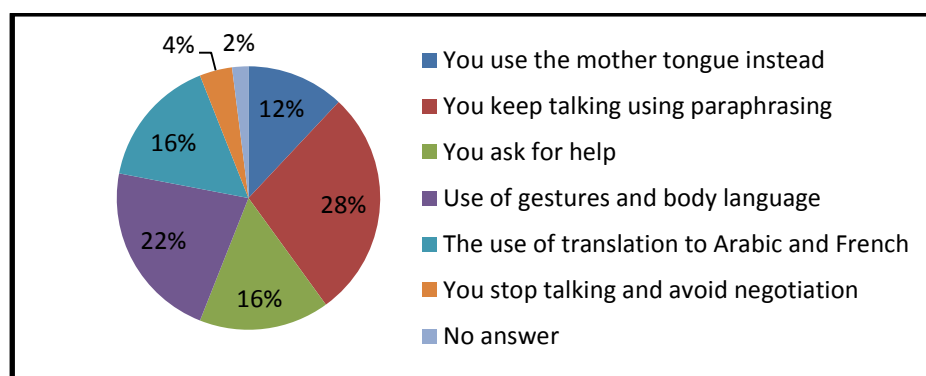
Diagram 11: Strategies Used by Students

From diagram 11, it is clear that the majority of students use different strategies in order to ensure interaction. This means that they are all interested in communication and interaction among others. While very few ones (4%) prefer to stop talking and avoid negotiation.

I-2- Results of the Teachers' Questionnaire

a- Identification of the Participants in Terms of Gender and Degree(s) Held

In our research, six teachers of oral expression at UMMTO are given a questionnaire to be filled. The teachers are all teaching third year students. All of them have either Master/ Magister degree. Five of the teachers are all females. Only one who is a male teacher.

b- Classroom Interaction

Q3: How would you describe the atmosphere inside your classes?

Based on the gathered data, it has been noticed that four of the participants declare that the atmosphere inside classes is satisfactory and warm with friendly relationships. One asserts

that it is not easy to speak about the atmosphere since students are not always motivated. The other one says that everything is related to the teachers' competence in creating an enjoyable atmosphere.

Q4: "Comprehensible input" is necessary inside classrooms.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Participants	3	3	0	0	0	**6**
%	50	50	0	0	0	**100**

Table 6: The Necessity of Comprehensible Input inside Classrooms

According to the results of the questionnaire, all the participants (50%+50%) either strongly agree or agree that *"Comprehensible Input"* is necessary inside the classroom context.

Q5: Do you agree that learning a foreign language requires comprehensible input? (Explain.)

From the gathered results, we have noted that all the respondents agree that learning a foreign language requires comprehensible input, and they suggest that before speaking, students should enrich their vocabulary through comprehensible input which facilitates their interaction.

Q6: How often do you provide your students with opportunities for interaction during oral sessions?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Very rarely	Total
Participants	5	1	0	0	**6**
%	83.3	16.7	0	0	**100**

Table 7: Opportunities Given to Students for Speaking

From the results displayed in table 7, it has been perceived that all the participants assert that they provide students with opportunities for interaction frequently.

Q7: How often do your students try to negotiate meaning when they want to convey a certain message?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Very rarely	Total
Participants	0	5	0	1	**6**
%	0	83.3	0	16.7	**100**

Table 8: Frequency of Students' Negotiation of Meaning

From the above table, it is apparent that 83.3% of the participants assert that students often tend to negotiate meaning. Only one participant who stands for 16.7% says that students tend to be passive inside classes most of the time. So, they negotiate meaning very rarely.

Q8: According to you, does negotiation of meaning facilitate comprehension and the development of a foreign language?

From the gathered data, it is clearly seen that all the respondents agree that negotiation of meaning facilitates comprehension and the development of a foreign language by arguing that negotiation gives learners the opportunity to develop their communicative competence, express themselves freely and improve their speaking abilities.

Q9: In your opinion, how would you characterise classroom interaction?
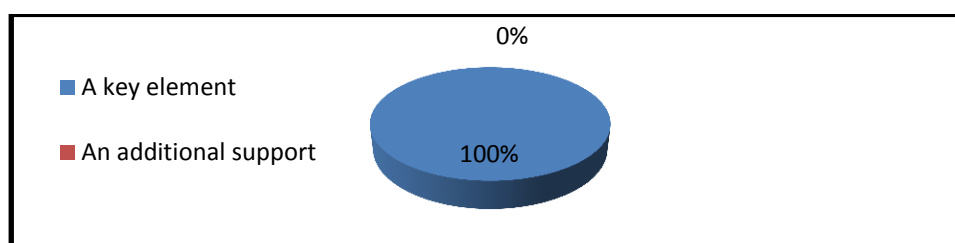
Diagram 12: The Characterisation of Classroom Interaction

As it is shown in diagram 12, all the respondents view classroom interaction as a key element, and they explain this by arguing that classroom interaction plays a significant role

in second language learning and FLL since it helps learners to be active. They add that classroom interaction is a way to express oneself freely and to share others' ideas and views.

Q10: What is the nature of the classroom interaction do you adopt in classes? (Explain)
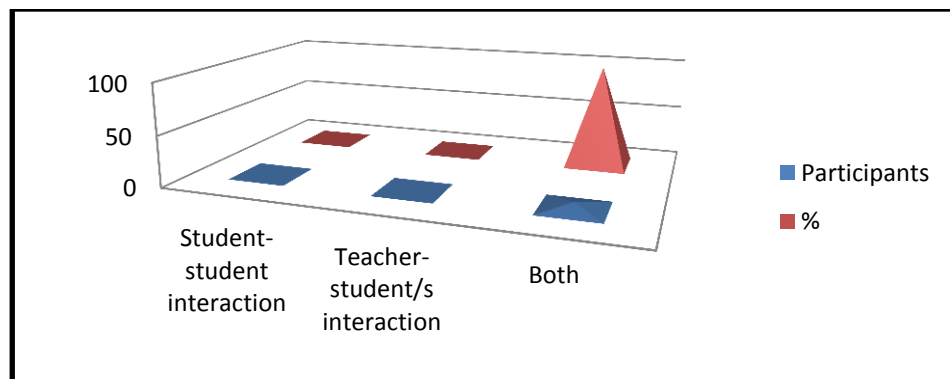
Diagram 13: The Nature of the Classroom Interaction Adopted

As it is shown in diagram 13, all the participants assert that they do adopt both student- student interaction and teacher- student/s interaction during the oral sessions because for them it is for the teacher first to initiate the session then let the floor to students.

Q11: How would you measure your students' interaction? (Please, explain)
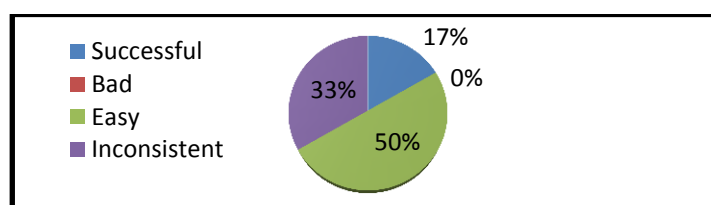
Diagram 14: Students' Interaction

From diagram 14, it is apparent that half of the participants (50%) assert that students' interaction is easy since they express themselves freely and without hesitation or inhibition. 33% of the respondents affirm that the interaction is inconsistent as most students tend to be passive. Only 17% claim that students interact successfully since they are always motivated and encouraged to speak.

Q12: What is/ are the technique(s) that you use to make your students speak?

	Individual work	Pair work	Group work	Others	Total
Participants	2	3	3	0	**8**
%	25	37.5	37.5	0	**100**

Table 9: The Techniques Used by Teachers to Make Students Speak

From the results obtained, it is clearly seen that 75% of the participants tend to use pair work and group work activities inside classes. 25% of the respondents focus on individual work.

Q13: Which type of corrective feedback do you adopt?
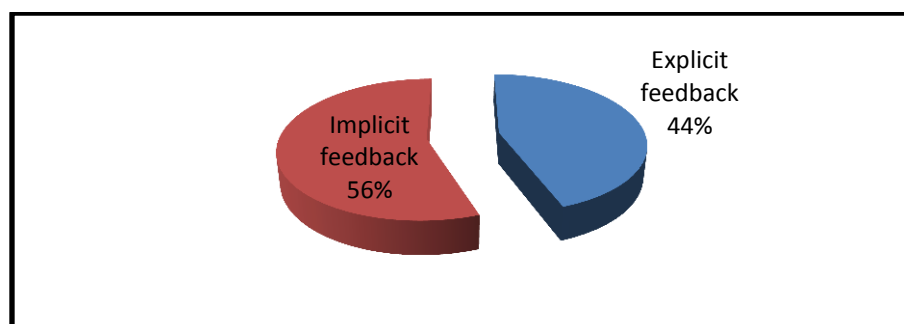
Diagram 15: Types of Corrective Feedback

As shown in the above diagram, 44% of our participants use explicit feedback and 56% tend to use implicit feedback.

c- Teaching the Speaking Skill

Q14: How much time do you devote to practise speaking inside classes?

	Less than 15% of the total lessons' time	20-25% of the time	50% of the time	More than 50% of the time	Total
Participants	0	0	5	1	**6**
%	0	0	83.3	16.7	**100**

Table 10: The Time Devoted to Practise Speaking inside Classes

As displayed in table 10, it is apparent that 83.3 % of the participants assert that they devote half of the time (50%) to practise speaking. Only one participant says that she devotes more than 50% of the time to practise it.

Q15: Do you think that the amount of time devoted to Oral Expression is sufficient? (Justify your answer)

	Yes	**No, more Time is Needed**	**Total**
Participants	0	6	**6**
%	0	100	**100**

<p align="center">Table 11: The Allotted Time to Oral Expression</p>

From the gathered data, it has been noticed that all teachers say that the allotted time to oral expression is not sufficient and more time is needed. They justify their answer by asserting that developing the speaking skill, which is the aim of oral expression, is not an easy task. Thus, having more time helps teachers to make all students speak and interact.

Q16- Is it possible to make all the students participate in the speaking activities?

From our results, it has been noticed that all the respondents affirm that it is possible to make all students speak and interact but with small groups (pair work and group work), also by providing them with interesting topics to talk about and knowing how to organise the class.

Q17: What is your focus during the oral sessions? (Please explain why?)

	Grammatical Structures (Accuracy)	**Communicative Tasks (Fluency)**	**Both**	**Total**
Participants	0	3	3	**6**
%	0	50	50	**100**

<p align="center">Table 12: Teachers' Focus during the Oral Sessions</p>

As shown in the above table, three participants assert that they tend to focus on communicative tasks inside classes because for them communication is a paramount element during the oral sessions. The three others assert that they tend to focus on both grammatical structures and communicative tasks because they are complementary to each other; we cannot speak fluently if we do not have knowledge of grammar.

Q18: What are the speaking activities you focus on most to create a successful interaction?
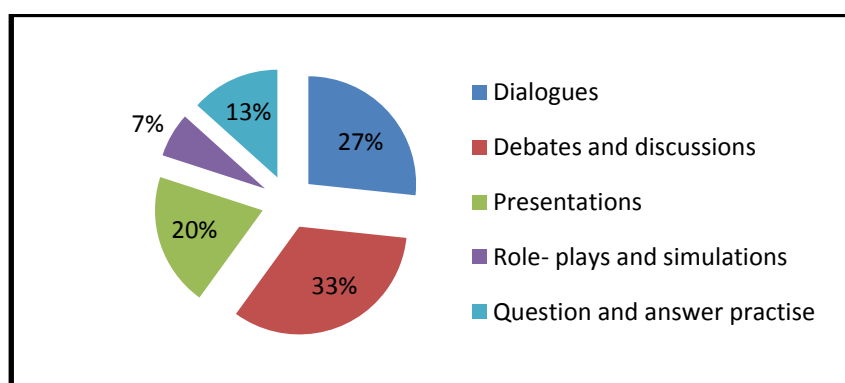
Diagram 16: The Speaking Activities Used by Teachers

From the above diagram, it is clearly seen that teachers use different speaking activities inside the classroom. 33% tend to focus on debates and discussions, 27% on dialogues, 20% on presentations, 13% on question and answer practice. Only 7% tend to focus on role- plays and simulations.

Q19: What are the frequent problems/ difficulties that your students encounter when they speak?

	Inhibition	Nothing to Say	Low Participation	Use of the Mother Tongue	Total
Participants	1	1	2	2	**6**
%	16.7	16.7	33.3	33.3	**100**

Table 13: Students' Frequent Problems while Speaking

As tabulated in the above table, students face many problems while speaking such as inhibition, nothing to say, low participation and the use of the mother tongue.

45

Q20: What are the strategies learners use to surmount those problems/ difficulties that arise while speaking?

Legend:
- use of the mother tongue instead
- use paraphrasing
- Ask for help
- the use of translation to Arabic and French
- use of gestures and body language
- stop talking and avoid negotiation

Values shown: 11%, 5%, 28%, 28%, 17%, 11%
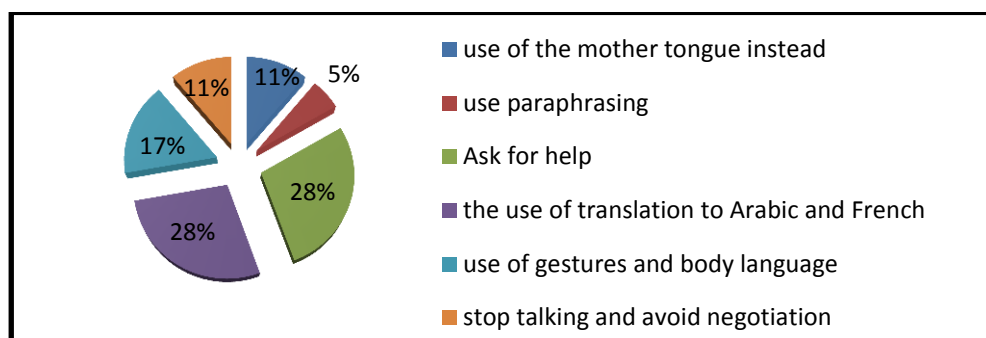
Diagram 17: Students' Strategies to Overcome their Speaking Difficulties

From the above diagram, it is apparent that students use different strategies in order to overcome those problems. Thus, the majority of teachers say that their students in their majority tend to ask for help (28%) and they use translation to other languages frequently (28%).

II- Presentation of the Results of the Classroom Observation

For the sake of gathering qualitative data on teachers' classroom practices, classroom observation is used a research tool. After getting teachers' approval, a total of ten attendances have been assured with six teachers of oral expression (third year level) and they have taken place in May 2015. The oral sessions are observed in relation to the following categories: *"group work"*, *"individual work"*, *"collaboration"* and *"full- class interaction"*, which are adapted from Ur (1996). Three teachers have been observed twice for one hour and a half; except with one teacher, who has been observed twice but for forty five minutes and two others have been observed once (ten attendances).

1- Group Work

This pattern of interaction seems to be highly beneficial during the oral sessions. However, when observed, the majority of teachers do not use group work inside the classrooms. In fact, only two teachers out of six tend to use group work as a technique while teaching the module of oral expression. For instance, one teacher divides the whole group into

sub- groups; each sub- group comprises eight members, and she asks each sub- group to perform the role of the committee, each student speaks and gives his/ her point of view about the problems of the department of English exactly like the real life settings. Whenever students hesitate to speak, she gives them cues in order to allow for student- student interaction. This creates a very enjoyable atmosphere. For the other teacher, she designs small groups to hold conversations about different topics in a very agreeable atmosphere with friendly relationships too. Therefore, this created atmosphere seems to be the responsibility of teachers since they are able to attract their students' attention. However, in one class, we have noticed that the atmosphere is really boring and the majority of students are passive due to the teachers' domination in the whole session (teacher- centred) (i.e. teacher- student/s interaction is dominant).

2- Individual Work

Most of the time, teachers ask students to give their own opinions and views concerning a specific topic individually. In our attendances, it has been noted that only one type of interaction is focused on in the classes which is teacher- student/s interaction. Hence, the majority of teachers design question- answer activities in which all the students should answer the questions independently. As an activity, one teacher provides her students with a video (authentic material)**,** but the interaction is limited to students' answers of teachers' questions concerning the video. There is no student- student interaction, even no pair or group works. For the rest of teachers, they do not design collaborative activities; they only choose a topic and then ask students to give their views concerning it such as talking about *"facebook"*, *"friendship"*. For instance one teacher dictates a set of questions about *"facebook"*, and then she asks them to write paragraphs to be read aloud. All students speak but just by reading what they have written.

3- Collaboration

This pattern of interaction is highly seen when learners work together in a co-operative way. However, in our observations, it has been seen that not all teachers tend to put students together to work collaboratively. The majority of them tend to ask every student alone to speak, to give their opinions about a specific topic. This makes students not involved or engaged to participate. Only two teachers use collaborative activities; one of them has divided the whole group into two subgroups (each sub group consists of eight students), then she designs pair work in which she asks her students to hold a conversation concerning how to book a room in a hotel after getting the visa; allowing the pairs to use materials such as phones. Indeed, we have noticed that all students are active, feel at ease during the oral session since the teacher's role is mainly based on encouraging students to speak, interact and negotiate meaning using the English language. The other teacher uses a collaborative activity in which she has distributes handouts about idioms and asks her students to work in pairs without using dictionaries for the sake of developing their mental capacities. While correcting the task, students interact freely with each other and negotiate meaning since they are given opportunities to do so. Furthermore, in a second activity, which is cross- word game, she advises them to do it in pairs or even in small groups; the teacher tries to stimulate some passive learners to interact. As a result, the majority of students take part in the task and thus speak.

4- Full- Class Interaction

In this type of interaction, all students of the same class speak and the role of the teachers is limited to guide them. When observed, nearly all teachers do not adopt this pattern in their classes; only one teacher asks students to debate a topic and in their case, it is a debate about the strike observed in the department of English. Yet, not all learners take part in the

debate; very few ones discuss and give their views concerning the topic and most of them keep silent.

Conclusion

The questionnaires' results show that the subjects' answers to the different questions have given an important view on the significance and the importance of classroom interaction in developing students' speaking skill. In fact, the results reveal that classroom interaction is a helpful technique in improving learners' speaking abilities and capacities.

We have noticed from our observations that students are not really involved and motivated to interact with their classmates. In fact, the opportunities given for interaction during the oral sessions are not sufficient, as the interaction is mainly limited to teacher-learner/s interaction while student- student interaction is neglected by the majority of teachers.

The results of the teachers' questionnaire have also reported that students are given opportunities for interaction during the oral sessions and this is considered as a contradiction to what is stated above. Indeed, when observed, students are given opportunities for interaction with their teachers (question answer practice) or they speak individually when the teacher asks them to give their opinions and views about a specific topic.

Introduction

This section aims at discussing the results of the study. The findings, which are obtained from the two questionnaires and the classroom observation are interpreted and discussed together owing to the relationship that exists between the outcomes gathered from these two research tools. The discussion adopts the Interaction Hypothesis along with QCA for the interpretation and explanation of our outcomes. The section consists of two main parts. It opens with the discussion of the results of the students' questionnaire in relation to the classroom observation. It, then discusses the results reached from the teachers' questionnaire in relation to the classroom observation.

IV. I. Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire along with the Data Gathered from the Classroom Observation

1. Participants' Gender

Third year students who study English as a FL grow in number day after day. The obtained results revealed that females (76%) are dominant over males (24%) (See diagram 1). This implies that females are more interested in the study of FLs, more specifically, the English language. On the contrary, and as it is generally known, males prefer to be specialised in scientific and technical branches.

2. Learners' Views about Classroom Interaction

The results displayed in diagram 2 show that the majority of participants (60%) affirm that the atmosphere inside classes is pleasant with friendly relationships. In contrast, the minority which stands for 38.2 % assert that a non-enjoyable atmosphere exists inside classes. This is due to the fact that the majority of students see the learning conditions in the classroom context in a positive way; whereas the remaining participants perceive them negatively. Thus, it is worthwhile for our teachers to establish a relaxed atmosphere in order to satisfy learners' needs and achieve their objectives. Comprehensible input is a requirement

in the classroom context. Indeed, a high percentage of the respondents state that comprehensible input is necessary inside classes. One respondent, for instance, affirms that *"it is necessary to understand what the teacher says"*. More to the point, when observed, we have noticed that all teachers provide their learners with comprehensible input and an easy language about which no student complains. Pica (1996: 3) argues that *"comprehensible input is seen as sufficient for L2 learning"*. Thus, learners should comprehend the language and use it accurately and suitably in different situations in order to keep the communicative channel open and assure language development.

The main reasons for students' choice concerning the necessity of comprehensible input are related to the fact that they perceive it as a key element during the learning process, and a golden key to acquire languages. For instance, one student asserts that *"comprehension is the key for better understanding, and it motivates learners to study and to participate more"*. In addition to this, students assert that comprehensible input plays a significant role in the classroom atmosphere. For instance, one participant affirms that *"comprehensible input is a necessity in classes in order to establish a good atmosphere among the interlocutors"*. Therefore, we advise teachers to provide students with comprehensible input in order to be more motivated to participate and to be more active and thus the atmosphere will be more pleasant and funny.

However, few ones assert that comprehensible input is not enough. As one respondent argues: *"understanding what the teacher says is important, but sometimes it is preferable to let students guess what the teacher wants to say because it is very useful to develop our mind"*. In this regard, Long (1989) claims that comprehensible input is a necessity while teaching but it is not everything, that is, it is not enough (cited in Ellis, 1991).

a- Classroom Interaction and the Development of the Speaking skill

The findings of this work show that most students consider classroom interaction as beneficial (see diagram 3). They base their answer on different reasons. Thus, according to the outcomes, one participant, for instance, says that interaction is significant because *"it helps students to develop their knowledge in the target language"*. Another respondent argues that *"interaction in classroom is the only way for practising the English language"*. This implies that students are aware of the importance and the value of interaction in the development of their skills especially their speaking skill in the English language. This result goes hand in hand with Yu's (2008) assertion which suggests that classroom interaction is generally an effective technique in helping learners to enhance their language and this is by affording them many situations to practise the TL.

Accordingly, the questionnaire demonstrates positive results concerning students' perception of interaction in improving their speaking abilities. Therefore, the majority of the participants proclaim that interaction is important in improving learners' speaking abilities. One participant, for instance, says that interaction is important *"since when we interact, we exchange ideas, opinions, we tend to correct the false ones and thus we develop our speaking abilities"*. Another one asserts: *"it is really beneficial to interact in the classroom in order to have the habit to speak and improve our level in speaking"*. This may be explained in terms of students' awareness of the value and the importance of interaction in language development, more specifically the speaking abilities. This result is likely to prove Long's (1996) assertion which suggests that interaction with others plays a significant role in the process of language learning (cited in Ellis, 2005a). In this context too, Zainuddin et al. (2011) argue that the most recent approach to language teaching (i.e. CA) emphasises interaction and communication as two paramount elements while practising language. This will encourage students to use and practise the TL in the early stages of the learning process.

b- The Opportunities given to Students for Interaction

Concerning the frequency of student- student interaction and teacher- student/s interaction, it appears that third year students at UMMTO are more engaged to interact with their teachers than with their peers. Indeed, the results revealed that the majority of students tend to interact with their teachers frequently during the oral sessions (see diagram 5). However, when it comes to the point of student- student interaction, the findings tabulated, revealed that more than half of the respondents do not interact with their classmates inside classes (see table 2). Thus, these two different rates are likely to be interpreted by the fact that students are not given the opportunities for interaction with their peers. Or simply, they are not really motivated to participate and interact and thus they are passive. In this context, Rivers (1987: 9) argues that *"Real interaction in the classroom requires the teacher to step out of the limelight, to cede a full role to the student in developing and carrying through activities, to accept all kinds of opinions…"*. This shows clearly that teachers should motivate their students to interact inside classes and give them opportunities for interaction. Therefore, it is advisable and worthwhile for teachers to encourage student- student interaction since it makes learners active rather than passive participants. Moreover, it is better to design small groups to work in a collaborative way. This suggestion goes hand in hand with Ur (1996: 228) who asserts that *"Students […], work together, […] to try to achieve the best results they can"*.

The high rate in teacher- student/s interaction (69.1% as a whole) can be explained too by the fact that most teachers tend to focus on question- answer practice as an activity to develop the speaking skill. Indeed, the classroom observation allowed us to note that the majority of the teachers tend to use question- answer practice activities. In fact, these activities do not really help learners to be active inside the classes. This goes with Snell's

(1999) view that most of the time, teachers ask a lot of questions but without any response from the students and this creates passivity inside the classes.

c- Negotiation of Meaning and Language Development

The questionnaire revealed very positive results concerning students' opinions and views about interaction and negotiation of meaning in relation to comprehension and the development of a foreign language. The vast majority of the participants see that interaction and negotiation of meaning are very important in the process of comprehension and the development of a foreign language. For instance, one respondent says that *"Interaction and negotiation of meaning are very important in developing our speaking skills and abilities"*. Another one asserts that *"speaking is the most desirable skill to be developed by the majority of FL learners so interaction and negotiation of meaning are the paramount elements to reach that objective"*. This entails that students are aware of the role of interaction and negotiation of meaning in developing their speaking skill. In this context, Tsou (2005) argues that if learners interact and negotiate meaning inside the classrooms, they will achieve better in oral production and they will develop their speaking skill.

In the same vein, from the results displayed in the previous section concerning the frequency of students' negotiation of meaning, it appears that the vast majority of students are negotiating meanings frequently (see table 3). Indeed, the students' questionnaire revealed that the majority of students tend to negotiate meaning whenever they want to convey a certain message. This indicates that learners are aware of the importance of negotiating meaning in the learning process. These results confirm Long's claim in his early version of the interaction hypothesis, in which he testifies that negotiating meaning plays a significant role in the language learning process.

Notwithstanding these results, we have noticed from our observations that there are some students who do not at all interact in the class, thus do not negotiate meaning. This is

seen in some classes where some students tend to be passive and rarely speak. And this is also reflected in the activities that the teacher uses inside the class. Most of the time, instructors tend to focus on question- answer practices which do not really permit learners to interact as they like since they are a little bit restricted to specific answers. Besides, the teacher often speaks a lot instead of giving opportunities for learners to express themselves freely and negotiate meaning whenever there is a breakdown in communication. This is seen in two classes where out of twenty- one students in each class, only five to six students tend to speak and just if the teacher asks them a particular question and there should be an answer (it is more teacher centred). This means that talking too much to learners will not help them speak. In this context, Scrivener (2005: 85) claims that teachers should reduce their "talking time" inside classes since generally *"TTT (Teacher Talking Time) is actually time when the learners are not doing very much and are not very involved"*. The teacher ought to encourage student-student interaction since it makes learners active, it allows them express themselves freely and without hesitation and it is a way to develop their skills especially their speaking skill.

It has been found in the previous researches that negotiation of meaning facilitates the understanding of messages and this is through the corrective feedback that learners receive from the others (Ellis, 2005b). In our research, the obtained results revealed that the greater part of the respondents assert that they do receive corrective feedback from their teachers, either explicitly or implicitly. We confirm this from our observations. The teachers provide their learners with corrective feedback explicitly and implicitly during the oral sessions. For instance, one teacher never corrects her students' mistakes; she lets them express themselves freely without interrupting them. At the end of their talking, she gives them general remarks on their mistakes but without blaming them. One teacher directly corrects students' mistakes especially the grammatical ones. These results imply that both teachers are very conscious of the role of corrective feedback in FLL. And this goes hand in hand with the interaction

hypothesis, which upholds that corrective feedback is very important and necessary for SLA and then FLL to take place. On the contrary, few participants state that their teachers correct their mistakes in a non-pleasant manner. For instance, one respondent asserts that *"some teachers react badly when I make a mistake"*. And when observed, we have noticed that one teacher corrects students' mistakes in a negative way in which the students do not feel comfortable while speaking because of the negative corrections at each time.

d- The Techniques Used inside Classes

Concerning the students' preferred techniques inside classes, the results showed that the vast majority of the participants prefer pair work and group work which help them to develop their skill (see diagram 6). For instance, one participant affirms that *"pair work and group work are really beneficial to improve our skills"*. And this goes hand in hand with Harmer's (1998) view which states that both pair work and group work give learners extreme opportunities to express themselves freely without the help of the instructor at each time.

However, through classroom observation, we have noticed that these two techniques are not implemented at 100% during the oral sessions. Only two teachers always make their students in pairs and groups to perform a task in a collaborative way, for instance: to hold a conversation and a meeting. The remaining teachers, though they try at each time to make their students speak and interact, they do not design small groups to work collaboratively. Most of the time, they ask questions individually and each student should give his/ her point of view. Among the ones observed too, there is a teacher who talks most of the time during the oral sessions; he never gives the opportunity to his students to talk. All what he does is to ask them to give examples on specific grammatical structures and this creates a non-enjoyable atmosphere inside the classroom in which the majority of students are not at all interested in the lesson. Indeed, they do not perform any role and they are just passive learners since the teacher plays a central role inside the classroom.

In spite of the fact that these two techniques (pair work and group work) are not implemented inside classes by most of the teachers, the vast majority of the respondents assert that they do not find any difficulty when working collaboratively, either in pairs or groups. Thus, we suggest for teachers to use them during the oral sessions frequently in order to let learners express themselves freely. Some of the participants suggest that they like working in pairs and groups but teachers should let them choose their partners. One student, for instance, suggests that *"working in pairs or groups is not a problem, but it is more enjoyable and beneficial if students choose their partners"*. This suggestion goes with Sullivan's (2000) view that learners should choose their partners when designing pairs and groups (cited in Yu, 2008).

3. The Speaking Skill

The results of the third section of the students' questionnaire "The Speaking Skill" revealed that the majority of the respondents (36.4%) prefer the speaking skill rather than the other skills and this indicates that they want to develop their speaking abilities than the other skills, namely reading, writing and listening. This suggestion confirms Richards' (2008) view. He asserts that speaking is the most desirable skill to be developed by the majority of learners and they give it priority in comparison with the other skills. It is worth to highlight that many participants indicate that they prefer the listening skill (29.1 %) (See table 4). This suggests that the majority of the students (65.5%) prefer the aural and oral skills. Thus, these two skills should be incorporated as they are complementary. And this may stem from the fact that always the one who talks necessitates someone else who listens to him/ her because most of the time speaking rarely occurs in isolation.

Since speaking is the most desirable skill to be developed by the majority of students, a sufficient time should be devoted to the oral expression. Indeed, in our research, the results indicate that the allotted time to the oral expression is not sufficient. And as revealed in the

results' section, 84% of the respondents assert that the time given to the oral expression is not enough. For them, mastering any FL and developing the speaking skill is considered as a very hard task to perform. Therefore, practising the TL should be regular inside classes. In this regard, Scrivener (2005:146) argues that *"There is no point knowing a lot about language if you can't use it"*. That is, language learning is a matter of practising it and it is not enough to know just the grammatical forms and structures of a language.

a- Teachers' Corrective Feedback and Students' Reactions

The results of the questionnaire demonstrated that the frequency of correcting students' mistakes differs among the participants. From the outcomes as highlighted in diagram 8, we can assert that teachers do not interrupt students, most of the time. Indeed, 60% of the participants (38%+22%) argue that teachers interrupt them *"sometimes"* and *"rarely"* (see diagram 8). This high proportion of being not corrected constantly is likely to be interpreted by the fact that teachers tend to focus on communicative tasks and fluency activities, thus, they do not pay attention to the students' mistakes while speaking. Besides, when observed, the teachers confirm these findings of the questionnaire. The observed instructors do not, most of the time, interrupt their students while speaking except one teacher, who interrupts them often to correct their grammatical mistakes in a non-pleasant manner and does not let them express themselves naturally and fluently. In this regard, Harmer (1998:2) asserts that *"[a good teacher] should be able to correct people without offending them"*. This means that teachers should pay attention when correcting learners' mistakes and avoid negative corrections.

For students' reaction towards their teachers' interruptions, the results of the investigation revealed that the majority of participants (61.8%) are encouraged more to participate when the teacher interrupts them and 21.8 % try to negotiate meaning when they are interrupted while speaking. Some of the learners assert that they are disturbed while some

others argue that the interruption inhibits their participation. These results entail that the majority of students (61.8%+ 21.8%= 83.6%) in any case tend to defend their ideas, opinions and views. That is, they try to keep the communicative channel open.

b- Teachers' Focus inside Classes

Concerning the teachers' focus during the oral sessions, the results demonstrated that 71% of the participants affirm that their teachers tend to emphasise both grammatical structures and communicative tasks. One participant, for instance, says that it is necessary to use both *"because if we want to develop our level in the English language and to master any language, it is a mistake to focus only on one aspect"*. Another respondent argues: *"it is better to speak language easily, correctly and smoothly for communication to take place"*. This implies that teachers are aware of the necessity of both accuracy and fluency inside classrooms. In this regard, Harmer (2001) points that both accuracy and fluency are two important aspects in language teaching. He says that sometimes instructors should correct the students' grammar mistakes and suggest clues in order to help learners ensure their communication and interaction and help others to understand the intended meaning.

Other participants, on the other hand, assert that their teachers focus on the grammatical structures and give importance to accuracy. This is seen in two classes where the teacher focuses only on the grammatical structures and usually corrects immediately the students' grammar mistakes and does not let them express themselves freely. This indicates that the teacher sees students' speech mistakes in a negative way and thus correcting them is worthwhile. This goes hand in hand with Audiolingualism which views correcting students' mistakes as a paramount element in the learning process. Thus, teachers' role inside the classes is central since he should model the TL in order to avoid bad habit formation (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

c- Students' Speaking Difficulties and the Strategies used to overcome those Difficulties

The questionnaire revealed moderate results concerning students' difficulties inside classes while speaking. The outcomes show that students face many problems while speaking such as the use of the mother tongue, the sufferance from inhibition, low participation and having nothing to say (see diagram 10). This result implies that speaking is a very difficult skill to be developed by learners and many difficulties are encountered while practising it. This outcome goes hand in hand with Al Hosni (2014), who asserts that learners of the English language face many problems while speaking and trying to practise it.

In relation to the previous result, the questionnaire too demonstrated that whenever the participants fail in interacting, they tend to use different strategies in order to keep the communicative channel open or sometimes just to stop the interaction. Therefore, in our research the majority of the respondents (94%) tend to use diverse stratagems to ensure interaction and communication (See diagram 11) such as paraphrasing, asking for help, the use of gestures and body language in addition to the use of translation to Arabic and French languages (i.e. achievement or compensatory strategies). This indicates that most students want to convey their messages, defend their ideas and opinions and achieve their interaction. Thus, learners are aware of the importance of interaction and negotiation of meaning in the development of languages. These results are closely related to Hua et al's (2012) assertion which proposes that achievement strategies help the learners maintain their communication and interaction with others and ensure understanding among people. Moreover, the above outcome goes hand in hand with Richards' (2008: 2) claim which says that *"learners would develop communication strategies and engage in negotiation of meaning, both of which were considered essential to the development of oral skills"*.

The remaining of the participants (4%), on the other hand, assert that they stop talking and avoid negotiation (see diagram 11). Indeed, from our observations, it has been noted that the majority of students keep silent and rarely interact either with their teachers or with their classmates. However, whenever there is interaction inside the classes, students often use their mother tongue instead to keep the communicative channel open.

IV. II. Discussion of the Teachers' Questionnaire along with the Data Gathered from the Classroom Observation

1. Teachers' Views Concerning Classroom Interaction

a- The Classroom Atmosphere and Comprehensible Input

From the results displayed in the previous section, it appears that the majority of the participants assert that every time they try to establish a satisfactory and warm atmosphere with friendly relationships among them. One teacher, for instance, declares *"the atmosphere has never been boring; students are often motivated though they have some difficulties"*. Another one too asserts that *"it is a good atmosphere, my students feel at ease"*. This result is likely to be interpreted by the fact that teachers are aware that the atmosphere inside classes plays a significant role in students' motivation. Thus, if the atmosphere is pleasant, students will be more motivated and feel more at ease to interact either with their teachers or with their classmates. This result is likely to confirm Scrivener's (2005) suggestion which says that increasing learner interaction inside classes promotes a very positive and funny atmosphere. Moreover, when observed, we have perceived that the atmosphere differs from one teacher to another and from class to another. As an instance to that, there are some teachers who really create an agreeable atmosphere inside the classroom in order to attract their students' attention and motivate them to interact. However, with one teacher, who has been observed twice with different classes, really the atmosphere is not at all enjoyable; the students in their majority

are passive and they are not at all interested in the lesson. This indicates that the teacher cannot attract his students' attention and motivate them to speak and interact.

Comprehensible input is essential inside classes. Indeed, our results demonstrated that all the teachers agree on the necessity of "comprehensible input" inside classes (see table 6). Moreover, when observed, we have perceived that all the teachers provide learners with comprehensible input about which no student complains. This implies that teachers are aware of the significance of comprehensible input in language learning, in general, and more specifically in the development of the speaking skill. This outcome goes hand in hand with Krashen's (1982:23) claim which says that *"The best way, and perhaps the only way, to teach speaking [...] is simply to provide comprehensible input"*.

In accordance with what is asserted above, all our respondents agree that for the sake of learning a FL, comprehensible input is a requirement. One respondent, for instance, says that *"certainly, students should be provided with a comprehensible input in order to facilitate their interaction inside classrooms".* In this context, Ellis (1991) claims that one principle of the update version of the interaction hypothesis considers comprehensible input as a requirement and a necessity for the process of language learning.

b- The Given Opportunities to Students for Speaking

The questionnaire reveals very positive results concerning the opportunities given to students to speak and interact during the oral sessions. All the participants (See table 7) affirm that they do provide their learners with opportunities for interaction frequently. More to the point, when observed, most of the teachers tend to give opportunities for interaction to their students, but this interaction is often limited to teacher- student/ s interaction. This is deduced from the activities that the majority of teachers, observed, tend to use inside classes. In fact, there are some teachers who design *"individual work"* which permits learners to *"work independently"* (Ur, 1996: 102). Therefore, every student would speak individually.

Concerning the opportunities given to students to work in a collaborative way, it has been seen that two teachers tend to design pair work in which they ask their students to work in pairs to hold a conversation or to do a specific task (cross words) and group work in which one teacher asks her students to perform the role of the committee and holding a meeting. All these indicate that there are teachers who give importance and value to student- student interaction in the teaching/ learning process, and this confirms Ellis's (1991: 3) claim who suggests that "*[T]eaching can be profitably viewed as interaction that supplies learners with opportunities for learning".* However, when it comes to the ones who do not make all their students speak, there may be some factors which may prevent them from giving the chance to all their learners to interact such as overcrowded classes and insufficient time.

c- Students' Negotiation of Meaning

From the results displayed in the previous section, it appears that the majority of participants assert that their students tend to negotiate meaning whenever they want to convey a certain message (see table 8). This entails that most students are conscious of the value of negotiating meaning. However, in our observations, we have noticed that not all students tend to negotiate meaning. This may be due to students' inhibition or lack of motivation. Also, the outcomes of the questionnaire demonstrated that all teachers claim that negotiation of meaning facilitate comprehension and the development of a foreign language. One respondent, for instance, says that *"negotiation of meaning gives learners the opportunity to develop their communicative competence and thus develop their language".* Another one affirms that *"through such interaction, students can express themselves more freely and even improve their speaking abilities".* This result goes hand in hand with what has been found in the early research. Indeed, Pica (1996:5) notes that previous findings (Pica, Young and Doughty, 1987; Doughty, 1991) testify that *"negotiation assists comprehension".* Therefore,

it can be asserted that third year oral expression teachers' at UMMTO acknowledge negotiation of meaning as greatly relevant in the learning process.

d- The Importance of Classroom Interaction and the Techniques Used inside Classes

Similarly, the findings of this work show that all the teachers characterise classroom interaction as a key element (see diagram 12). They base their answer on different reasons. For instance, one respondent argues that *"students can develop their speaking skill through sharing ideas and interacting with others"*. Another one asserts that *"classroom interaction plays a significant role in FLL"*. These arguments confirm previous scholars' findings. Indeed, Ellis (1991) notes that interaction is a paramount element in the field of SLA. Likewise, the results about the nature of classroom interaction, that teachers tend to adopt inside classes, show that all of them do adopt both student- student interaction and teacher-student/s interaction. One respondent, for instance, argues that *"both types of interaction are used but with much focus on student- student interaction"*. This implies that teachers, most of the time, initiate talking during the lessons and then let learners speak. This result confirms Choudhury's (2005) assertion which suggests that for the sake of establishing an environment of interaction inside classes, the lesson would be better initiated by the teacher. However, the classroom observation allowed us to note that only one type of interaction exists in the majority of classes, which is teacher- student/s interaction. This is deduced from the fact that most teachers tend to use question- answer practice activities which do not really encourage student- student interaction.

With regard to what is asserted above, it is apparent from the teachers' questionnaire that three participants argue that students' interaction is easy (see the previous section). One participant, for instance, asserts that the interaction is easy since students can express themselves freely; one argues that it is successful while another one asserts that the interaction

is inconsistent. These different assertions imply that students' interaction differs from one class to another, may be, there are students who are more motivated to interact. Therefore, their interaction will be more easy and successful. Also, there are other students, who are not motivated by their teacher. Therefore, this affects negatively their interaction.

Concerning the techniques that teachers tend to use in order to make their students speak, the results tabulated, showed that the majority of the respondents (75%) use pair work and group work (See table 9). This outcome indicates that teachers are aware of the efficiency of these two techniques in the development of the students' speaking abilities (see the previous section). This result goes hand in hand with what has been found in the early research. Indeed, Tuan and Nhu (2010) note that previous findings (Long and Porter, 1984; Ur, 1996; Erten, 2000; Storch, 2001) testify that working in a collaborative way, either in pairs or groups makes easier the development of languages.

However, through classroom observation, we have noticed a big gap since the majority of the instructors observed do not implement these two techniques at 100% during the oral sessions. Only two teachers always put their students in pairs and groups to perform a task in a collaborative way, for instance: to hold a conversation and a meeting. Some teachers, though they try at each time to make their students speak and interact, they do not design small groups to work collaboratively. Most of the time, they ask questions individually and each student should give his/ her point of view. As it is revealed in the questionnaire, 25 % of the participants use individual work to make their students speak (table 9). This entails that the main objective of some teachers is to make students speak and interact whatever the technique used. Among the ones observed too, there is a teacher who adopts a teacher-centred approach inside his classes since nearly there is no interaction at all; he focuses more on the grammatical structures and he is a leader inside the classroom.

The findings of the questionnaire demonstrated that all the respondents tend to use corrective feedback inside their classes. Indeed, 56% of our participants use implicit feedback while the remaining (44%) use explicit feedback (see diagram 15). Moreover, when observed, we have noticed that all the teachers do correct students' mistakes explicitly and implicitly. These results imply that teachers are very aware and very conscious of the role of corrective feedback in language learning. In this regard, the outcomes go hand in hand with the assertion of the Interaction Hypothesis which claims for the importance and significance of corrective feedback in acquiring second and foreign languages (Bower and Kawagushi, 2011)

2. Teaching the Speaking Skill

The results of the third section of the teachers' questionnaire "Teaching the Speaking Skill" revealed that the majority of the participants assert that they devote half of the time (50%) to practise speaking. Only one participant devotes more than 50% of the time to practise it (table 10). In relation to our observations, we have found that five teachers really devote 50 % or more to practise speaking, however, one teacher, devotes the whole session not to make students practise their speaking but rather to practise his speaking abilities. These results entail that the majority of the teachers are aware of the importance of practising the speaking skill during the oral sessions. In this context, Swain (1985) asserts that the production and the practice of language is a paramount element in the learning process (cited in Swain, 1993). Moreover, all the teachers argue that the allotted time to oral expression is rather insufficient since developing the speaking skill is a very hard task; thus, more time is needed and also in crowded classes it is impossible to afford all learners with opportunities for interaction.

From the outcomes too, it has been revealed that all the respondents assert that it is possible to make all the students participate in the speaking activities (see the previous section). They argue that designing small groups (either pair work or group work) will help

them to do so. This goes with Scrivener's (2005) assertion that it is easy to make all the students speak and interact with others if the instructor designs pairs and small groups and lets them work in a collaborative way. However, when observed, teachers do not make all the students speak, and this indicates that teachers do not design small groups and thus most of the time learners tend to be passive inside classes.

a- Teachers' Focus and the Speaking Activities Used inside Classes

Concerning the teachers' focus during the oral sessions, the findings of the questionnaire demonstrated that half teachers tend to focus on communicative tasks during the oral sessions (see the previous section). This implies that teachers are aware of the importance of designing tasks which promote interaction and communication in order to help learners to develop their speaking skill. However, the second half of the participants assert that they tend to focus on both grammatical structures and communicative tasks. This entails that teachers are aware of the importance of accuracy activities and fluency ones inside classes. One participant, for instance, asserts that *"a well-structured sentence might convey the desired meaning better than an ill- formed sentence".* Yet, from our observations, we have seen that one teacher in two classes focuses only on the grammatical structures and usually corrects immediately the students' grammar mistakes and does not let them express themselves freely and fluently.

In relation with the teachers' focus inside classes, it has been noted that teachers tend to use different speaking activities (see diagram 16). They are likely to use debates and discussions, dialogues, presentations, question and answer practice, role- plays and simulations. This suggests that teachers are conscious of the use of different activities inside the classes in order to stimulate their students to speak and interact either with their teachers or with their peers. It is worth to highlight that very few respondents (13%) assert that they use question- answer activities inside classes. In fact, the classroom observation permits us to

notice a very big gap and a kind of contradiction because most of the teachers observed tend to focus on question- answer practice which does not really help students express themselves freely and fluently since they are a little bit restricted to specific answers.

b- Students' Speaking Difficulties and the Strategies Used to Overcome those Difficulties

Concerning the difficulties that students face while speaking, the outcomes clearly show that they encounter many problems. These problems are seen in the use of the mother tongue, low participation, the sufferance from inhibition in which the majority of students limit themselves to provide short sentences and also having nothing to say (see table 13). In this respect, Richards (2008) asserts that speaking is a very complex skill to be developed by learners, thus, they face many difficulties while practising it.

In relation with the previous result, the questionnaire also demonstrated that whenever learners fail in interacting, they tend to use different strategies in order to keep the communicative channel open or sometimes just to stop the interaction. Hence, in our research, teachers assert that their students tend to use different tips and strategies while speaking such as paraphrasing, asking for help, the use of gestures and body of language in addition to the use of translation to Arabic or French language and the use of the mother tongue instead. The use of translation and the mother tongue seem to be the most used strategies inside classes (39% as a whole) (see diagram 17) and this phenomenon is noted when students have been observed. Indeed, it has been noticed that the majority of students, when they are given opportunities for speaking, most of the time they tend to use translation either to Arabic or French language or sometimes just they use their mother tongue instead. Though these two tips allow for interaction and communication to be ensured, they present a kind of failure in language learning because they do not ensure the practice of the TL at 100%. These results are likely to confirm Dörnyei & Thurrell's (1991) assertion which suggests that

communication strategies are very important in the field of FLL. That is, using strategies to keep the communicative channel open and ensure interaction are very essential for FL learners and they are known as compensatory strategies (Brown, 2000a).

Conclusion

The discussion of the gathered data from the two questionnaires and the classroom observation answers the fundamental research question stated in the general introduction and confirms the hypothesis suggested. In fact, the students' interaction is shown to be more passive than active. And this is despite the fact that both teachers and students are aware of the importance and the value of classroom interaction in learning, in general and more precisely, developing their speaking abilities and capacities.

With regard to the opportunities given to students inside the classes, the outcomes, from the teachers' questionnaire, revealed that students are given opportunities for interaction, however, from the classroom observations and the students' questionnaire, it has been seen that the given opportunities are neither sufficient nor efficient and may be the interaction, that teachers are talking about, is limited to and centred on teacher- student/ s interaction. This is shown in the activities that teachers tend to use during the oral sessions which are centred on *"question answer practice"* and *"individual work"* rather than *"pair work"* or *"group work"*. Thus, it is for teachers to provide collaborative activities in which learners work together in order to *"achieve the best results they can"* (Ur, 1996: 228). In fact, this confirms too our hypothesis which asserts that students' speaking skill would develop if they were given opportunities for interaction inside classes.

General Conclusion

This dissertation is concerned with the development of the speaking skill through classroom interaction. It is intended to determine whether students are given opportunities for interaction among them to express themselves freely and naturally inside classes or they are just passive learners of the English language. The investigation in this area is important since it tries to see whether the students' interaction inside the classroom is active or it is just characterised by its passivity.

For the sake of answering the advanced research question and confirming or refuting the hypothesis suggested in the general introduction, a mixed method approach is adopted and used, thus, quantitative and qualitative methods are joined together in order to analyse the data. Indeed, the data are gathered from two research instruments. Fifty five (55) third year students are randomly selected from UMMTO and six oral expression's teachers to answer the questions of the questionnaire. Besides, a classroom observation is conducted in order to gather data about the opportunities given to students to interact with others following a checklist adapted from Ur (1996) to be the focus of our observations. For the sake of analysing the quantitative data, a software package known as SPSS is used. In addition to the statistical analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis is used for analysing and explaining the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions of the two questionnaires. Moreover, the interaction hypothesis is used to verify our outcomes.

The discussion of the results of the two questionnaires and those of the classroom observation has provided answers to the fundamental research question. The outcomes from the two questionnaires show that classroom interaction, as an educational strategy, helps learners to develop their speaking abilities and skills. This result goes hand in hand with Long's Interaction Hypothesis, which claims that interaction is a paramount element in the acquisition/ learning process. This means that learning foreign languages is highly fostered

through interaction and this is by giving opportunities for learners to express themselves freely and naturally. The greater part of the learners (96%) perceive classroom interaction as beneficial and as an effective technique during the oral sessions since it allows them to improve their level in English, express themselves freely and exchange ideas with others. Moreover, the majority of students assert that interaction helps them in developing and improving their speaking abilities and it plays a major role in the development of the speaking skill.

As concerns the classroom observations, the findings revealed that the students are not really given opportunities for interacting among them during the oral sessions and the students' interaction is characterised by its passivity. We note that students tend to interact more with their teachers than with their peers. Indeed, from the students' questionnaire, we notice that the frequency of interaction between teachers and students is very high. In fact, 69.1% of the students interact with their teachers frequently whereas 56.4% (38.2%+ 18.2%) of them do not interact with their classmates inside classes. Therefore, teacher- student/s interaction is the most dominant during the oral sessions, though, 100% of the teachers assert that they give abundant opportunities for student- student interaction. In fact, it is for teachers to provide opportunities for student- student interaction rather than limit the interaction to teacher- student/s interaction or only by designing individual work, as the majority of teachers observed do, in order to let students express their thoughts and ideas inside the classroom. And this confirms too our hypothesis which states that learners' speaking skill would develop if they were given opportunities for interaction inside classes.

Some limitations in our study are noticed. First, considering the small scale of our investigation, our findings and outcomes cannot be generalised to the whole population. In fact, as our sample consists only of fifty five students out of 436 and only six teachers of oral expression, we shall not try to generalise our results. Yet, Bell (2005: 202) argues that *"There*

is no need to apologize about inability to generalize, but there would be every need to apologize if data were manipulated in an attempt to prove more than could reasonably be claimed". Moreover, the objective of our study is to find whether students are given opportunities for interaction among them during the oral sessions. Thus, the sample teachers' observed (third year level) cannot be generalised too to the whole teachers of oral expression.

Based on our research findings and evidence from the students' and teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation, the present study offers some pedagogical implications for teachers as well as suggestions for future research. First, teachers should design a great deal of activities encouraging pair work and group work in order to cope with learners' difficulties in interacting with their classmates and to develop a pleasant atmosphere where both cooperation and collaboration among the learners take place. Second, we propose reducing the teachers' talking time for some of them and give opportunities for students to interact in the classroom. That is, maximising student- student interaction and minimising teacher- student/s interaction.

Our dissertation dealt with the issue of developing the speaking skill through classroom interaction in the department of English at UMMTO. Yet, our corpus of the study is only limited to the third year level. So, further research on the same issue in the same setting but with different levels (first year and second year) can be conducted. In addition, other researches can be held using interviews with both teachers and learners. They would be very useful and effective for investigating teachers' and learners' views and attitudes towards classroom interaction.

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Appendix I:
The Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

We are preparing a research on developing students' speaking skill through classroom interaction. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your opinions and views towards the use of classroom interaction as an educational strategy. We promise that your answers will be only used for educational purposes.

Please, use a tick (√) to indicate your chosen answer, or by providing full statements whenever necessary. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section One: Background Information

1- Specify your gender

　　a- Female □

　　b- Male □

Section Two: Learners' Views about Classroom Interaction

2- How would you describe the atmosphere inside classrooms?

　　a.　A pleasant atmosphere with friendly relationships □

　　b.　 A non- enjoyable atmosphere □

3- Comprehensible input is necessary inside classes? (Justify your answer)

　　Strongly agree □　　　　agree □　　　　neither agree nor disagree □

　　Disagree □　　　　　　　strongly disagree □

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

4- In your opinion, is classroom interaction: (justify your answer)

Beneficial □   Non beneficial □

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

5- The interactional process helps you to improve your speaking abilities. (Please Explain)

Strongly agree □   agree □   neither agree nor disagree □

       Disagree □   strongly disagree □

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

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

6- How often does the teacher give you the opportunity to interact with him/ her during oral sessions?

Very often □   often □   rarely □   very rarely □

7- How often do you interact with your classmates inside the classroom using the English language?

Very often □   often □   rarely □   very rarely □

8- According to you, does interaction and negotiation of meaning facilitate comprehension and the development of a foreign language?

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

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

9- How often do you try to negotiate meaning when you want to convey a certain message?

Very often □   often □   rarely □   very rarely □

10- Do you receive any feedback from your teacher whenever you make a mistake?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

11- During the oral sessions, which of the following techniques do you enjoy best?

Individual work □   Pair work □   Group work □   others (specify) □

....

....

12- Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in pairs and groups?

....

....

....

Section Three: The Speaking Skill

13- Which of the following language skills do you prefer most?
    a- Listening □   b- Speaking □

    c- Reading □   d- Writing □

14- Do you think the amount of time devoted to Oral Expression is sufficient? (Justify your answer?)

    a- yes □   b- no, more time is needed □

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

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15- How often does your teacher interrupt you to correct your mistakes?

a. Always □   b. Often □   c. Sometimes □

                    d. Rarely □   e. Never □

16- What is your reaction when the teacher interrupts you?

   a. Encourage you more to participate □   b. Disturb you □

   c. Inhibit your participation □   d. You try to negotiate meaning □

17- What is the focus of your teacher during the oral sessions?

   a- Grammatical structures. (i.e. Accuracy) □

   b- Communicative tasks. (i.e. Fluency) □

   c- Both □

(Please explain)

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18- If you do not interact and speak in English, is it because:

a. You suffer from inhibition □   b. You have nothing to say □

c. You still use your mother tongue □   d. Not interested to participate □

19- Which solution do you most use when you fail in interacting?

a. You use the mother tongue instead □   b. You keep talking using paraphrasing □

c. You ask for help □   d. Use of gestures and body language □

e. The use of translation to Arabic and French □   f. You stop talking and avoid negotiation □

Appendix II:
The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire is part of our research work which deals with developing students' speaking skill through classroom interaction. We would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire to help us in our research for the Master's degree in language and communication, promising you that your answers will be only used for academic purposes and the anonymity of the participants is guaranteed.

You are kindly requested to answer the questions by using a tick (√) to indicate your chosen answer or by providing a full statement whenever necessary. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section One: Background Information

1- Gender:

Female	
Male	

2- Degree(s) Held:

a- BA (License) □

b- MA (Master/ Magister) □

c- PhD (Doctorate) □

Section Two: Classroom Interaction

3- How would you describe the atmosphere inside your classes?

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4- "Comprehensible input" is necessary inside classrooms, do you:

a. Strongly agree □   b. Agree □   c. Neither agree nor disagree □

d. Disagree □   e. strongly disagree   □

5- Do you agree that learning a foreign language requires comprehensible input? (Explain.)

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6- How often do you provide your students with opportunities for interaction during oral sessions?

Very often □   often □   rarely □   very rarely □

7- How often do your students try to negotiate meaning when they want to convey a certain message?

Very often □   often □   rarely □   very rarely □

8- According to you, does negotiation of meaning facilitate comprehension and the development of a foreign language?

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9- According to you, how could you classify classroom interaction? (Please explain)

a. a key element □   b. an additional support □

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10- What is the nature of the classroom interaction do you adopt in classes? (Explain)

    a. Student- student interaction □   c- both □

    b. Teacher – student/s interaction □

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11- How could you measure your students' interaction? (Please explain)

        a. Successful □   b. Bad □

        c. Easy □   d. Inconsistent □

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12- What is/ are the technique(s) you use to make your students speak?

a. Individual work □   b. Pair- work □   c. Group-work □

        d. Others (specify) □

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13- Which type of corrective of feedback do you adopt?

    a- Explicit feedback (tell them about their mistakes) □

    b- Implicit feedback (push your students to reformulate what they said correctly □

<div align="center">Section Three: Teaching the Speaking Skill</div>

14- How much time do you devote to practise speaking inside classes?

    a- Less than 15% of the total lessons' time □

    b- 20- 25% of the time □

    c- 50% of the time □

d- More than 50% of the time □

15- Do you think that the amount of time devoted to Oral Expression is sufficient? (Justify your answer)

    a- yes □   b- no, more time is needed □

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16-Is it possible to make all the students participate in the speaking activities?

         a. Yes □   b. No □

Please, explain?

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17- What is your focus during the oral sessions?

    a- Grammatical structures (i.e. Accuracy) □

    b- Communicative tasks (i.e. Fluency) □

    c- Both □

Please, explain why?

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18- What are the speaking activities you focus on most to create a successful interaction?

a. Dialogues □   b. Debates and discussions □

c. Presentations □   d. Role-plays and simulations □   e. Question and answer practice □

19- What are the frequent problems/ difficulties that your students encounter when they speak?

a. Inhibition □   b. Nothing to say □

c. Low participation □   d. use of the mother tongue □

20- What are the strategies learners use to surmount those problems/ difficulties that arise while speaking?

a. Use of the mother tongue instead □   b. Use of paraphrasing □

c. Ask for help □   d. The use of translation to Arabic and French □

e. Use of gestures and body language □   f. Stop talking and avoid negotiation □

Appendix III:
A Checklist to Classroom observation (Ur, 1996: 228)

The points that we will observe.	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Group work						
Closed-ended teacher questioning ('IRF')						
Individual work						
Choral responses						
Collaboration						
Student initiates, teacher answers						
Full- class interaction						
Teacher talk						
Self-access						
Open-ended teacher questioning						