People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master in English

Option: *Language and Communication*

Investigating the Use of Group Work in the Oral Expression Module.
Case study: First Year BMD Students in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

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Academic Year: 2014/2015

Dedication

I dedicate this work:

- ❖ To the memory of my father Mohamed.

- ❖ To my sympathetic mother Rosa whose love always strengthens my will.

- ❖ To my confident brother Farid.

- ❖ To my lovely brother Hamid.

- ❖ To my beloved grand-mother and grand-father.

- ❖ To my uncles and aunts especially Nadia.

- ❖ To all my best friends who always push me forward especially Khalida, Sylia, Amel, Sihem, Sally, Hadji, Massi, Yazid, Samih and Khaled.

Lila

Dedication

This work is dedicated:

- ❖ To my dear parents Ali and Fatma who made me what I am and encouraged me a lot.

- ❖ To my best sisters Malika and Fariza whose support and encouragements were always pushing me up.

- ❖ To all my brothers: Said, Moumouh, and Karim.

- ❖ To my aunts and uncles.

- ❖ To my grandfather and grandmother.

- ❖ To my sweet nephew Syphax and my little cousins Sylia and Aylan.

- ❖ To all my friends with whom I shared the best memories especially Nassima, Sonia, and Hassina.

Ouerdia

Acknowlegments

We wish to express our deep and sincere gratitude to our supervisor Mrs. ADEM Karima for her constant help and precious suggestions. We appreciate her comprehension and valuable advice during the process of writing this paper.

Also, we wish to express our sincere thanks, in advance, to the board of examiners namely Mr. Aouine Akli and Mr. Chetouane Madjid for reading and evaluating our dissertation.

We are very grateful for the oral expression teachers at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou for their help and collaboration. We will not forget to express our gratitude to the first year BMD students of English for their effective participation, collaboration and time.

We are extremely grateful to all our friends and colleagues who helped us.

In the end, we would like to thank all our teachers and any person who contributed to this research.

List of Abbreviations

- BMD= Bachelor Master Doctorate.

- EFL= English as a Foreign Language.

- ESP= English for Specific Purposes.

- IMRAD= Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion.

- QCA= Qualitative Content Analysis.

Abstract

This study is concerned with investigating the use of group work in the oral expression module with the first year BMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. To carry out our study we have relied on Brown and Ellis's theory of group work. the study aims at checking whether the group work technique is used by teachers of the oral expression module, and if it could enhance the students' speaking skill. The investigation is based on the mixed research method. It combines a questionnaire that is addressed to first year BMD students and an interview that is conducted with their teachers of oral expression module. In fact, the study combines the quantitative and the qualitative methods. It uses statistical method to elicit statistical data, then, adopts qualitative content analysis for the interpretation and the explanation of the results. After the discussion of the results, we have found out that the teachers of the oral expression module in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou use the group work technique with the first year BMD students. Also, the results provide evidence that group work is the right technique that could help for increasing the students' oral participation in interactional environment.

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General Introduction

Introduction

The teaching of a foreign language is an interactive process that involves the participation of the teacher and the learner. Sometimes, it is not an easy task to identify the relevant technique that works best to permit the learners to interact in the classroom; because language is learned best when students interact with each other in groups to solve a task or to learn a course content. Teachers of English as a foreign language are in a constant search of what may help their learners increase their level of language proficiency because using the language in class frequently should be achieved through active participation techniques and procedures. Group work is one of these techniques that enhance the learners' level of the language, because it involves active participation of both teachers and learners.

1. Statement of the Problem

The main objective of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate using that language. But we find that EFL learners meet difficulties in using English. So, teachers have to take into consideration the learners' needs and find techniques that will pave the way for them to interact in the target language.

One of the most important aspects that human beings have to deal with as they grow up and participate in society is to work in groups. Teachers cannot leave this aspect aside. On the contrary, they have to incorporate it in their classes and teach students to get the best out of it. Group work is seen as a beneficial strategy in foreign language learning for both teachers and learners. It helps students and teachers to bridge the gap between input and output. In other words, students show what they have learned and use the target language by playing and using language with their peers. Yet, there are teachers who apply this group work and others don't. Thus, this research tries to answer the following questions at the end of

the study: Is group work used by teachers of the oral expression module with first year BMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou? And could it help the learners to promote their speaking skill?

2. Aim and Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from the following points: Recent studies in the field of language teaching and learning. More precisely, second language teaching and learning emphasize the importance of the learning process and central role of the learner (learner-centered process) with the new role assigned to the learner. So, more emphasis has to be given to the learner. That is why this study investigates group work and identifies its usefulness in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. Furthermore, we will try to make teachers more aware of the effectiveness of using the group work technique in EFL classes to create a successful learning atmosphere in the classroom in order to improve the students' speaking skill.

The overall aim of our investigation is to answer our research questions which focus on identifying whether group work is used in the first year BMD classes during the oral expression module in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. Also to discern if group work could help the learners to promote their speaking skill, and to test the validity of our hypotheses. The reason that lies behind our choice for this subject is the experience we have had as students of English at the University.

3. Research Questions

In order to guide our investigation we ask the following questions:

General Introduction

1. Do teachers of the oral expression module of the first year BMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou use group work?

2. Could group work help to promote the learners' speaking skill?

4. Hypotheses

In an attempt to answer these questions, we have advanced the following hypotheses:

H1: Teachers of the oral expression module use group work with first year BMD students.

H2: Teachers of the oral expression module do not use group work with first year BMD students.

H3: group work could enhance the students' speaking skill

H4: Group work could not enhance the students' speaking skill.

5. Research Tools and Methodology

To conduct the investigation, we adopt the mixed research method. We combine quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and data analysis. Our procedure for collecting data is: a questionnaire for the students and an interview with the teachers. The participants are the first year BMD students and their teachers of the oral expression module in the department of English at MMUTO.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

The overall structure of this dissertation follows the IMRAD structure. It consists of a General Introduction, four chapters and a General Conclusion. The first chapter deals with the review of the literature related to the major theoretical concepts as well as definition of

terms. The second chapter presents the research design in addition to the procedures of data collection and data analysis. The third chapter presents the findings of the questionnaire and the interview in the form of diagrams. The last chapter is devoted to discussion of the findings on the basis of the theoretical framework in order to answer the research questions as well as to confirm or refute the hypotheses. Finally, the general conclusion presents the summary of our work.

The Review of the Literature

Introduction

The recent teaching methods in the field of language teaching and learning are known as learner- centered methods in contrast to traditional ones where the teacher plays the major role. Many of the learner- centered learning approaches integrate students' participation and interaction in small groups.

The use of group work meets the requirements needed for the effective use of the communicative activities and thus the development of speaking. To develop the speaking skill, the students need intensive practice. The speaking practice is usually done in pairs and group work.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first is entitled group work and the second one is named the speaking skill. This work discusses the importance of using group work in the teaching and the learning process to enhance the learners' proficiency in speaking, and its benefits on the students' motivation.

I. Group Work

1. Definition of Group Work

Brown (2007) describes group work as follows: "*group work is generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are designed a task that involves collaboration and self initiated language. It implies small group work that is, students in groups of perhaps six or fewer*" (224). So, the group work model involves the arrangement of learners in pairs or small groups to work collaboratively and achieve a common goal in the target language. It is a core instrument in the teaching scenario. The variability of this tool has been found to have great benefits for learners and also it brings a certain dynamism to the classroom. However this instrument is often sidelined in classes.

The Review of the Literature

As regards the movement of learners during a group activity, Harmer (1998) and Ur (1996) make a distinction between two types of group work. On the one hand, flexible groups and, on the other hand, fixed groups. Whilst working in flexible groups, Harmer argues that: "*students start in set groups, and as an activity progresses, the groups split up and reform, or they join together until the class is fully reformed.*" (1998:246).

Contrary to flexible groups, we find fixed groups or semi permanent groups. Ur suggests:

> "The physical reorganization can be done very simply by getting students to turn face those behind them if they are normally in rows…once the learners are settled into fixed groups, they will assume them quickly and with the little fuss each time". (1996:7).

Ur (1996) prefers using fixed groups in order to avoid problems each time the students form groups.

Group work is similar to cooperative/ collaborative learning since this latter refers to the division of students with varying levels into small groups in order to achieve common goals. According to Johnson et al (1998) cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each others' learning.

1.1. The Advantages of Group Work

A variety of techniques have been used in order to encourage oral interaction and participation among learners. The best method that is connected to this is group work as it is said in Kramsch's words:

> "Speaking a language means more than referring to the world, it also means relating to one's interlocutor. It is through the interaction with this social group that the language is used and learned, and the group is given a social reality" (1992:17).

The Review of the Literature

Group work is a method of instruction that gets students to work together; it can be one of the most emotionally charged areas of students' lives, where many of the students' goals may be achieved through working together with others.

Group work looks like cooperative or collaborative learning or peer learning because it involves a high degree of interaction. Its effectiveness is determined by the extent to which the interaction enables the members to clarify their own understanding and builds upon each others' contributions and asks and answers questions.

Through the use of group work, students move from units and pieces to more complex sentence structures spontaneously when they are processing language. This means that they shift from accuracy to fluency. The students are required to use the target language while communicating with one another in the group. Brown states that: "*overanalyzing language, thinking about much about its forms and consciously lingering on rules of language all tend to impede this graduation to automaticity*". (2001:56).

In addition, putting the students in groups gives them more chance to interact and use the target language more freely. students develop and practice skills in: decision making, problem solving, communication, critical thinking, negotiation, conflict resolution, and also the students can participate longer in small groups and feel more confident to give their opinions. Brown (2001) argues that:

> "Small groups provide opportunities for students' invitation, for face to face, give and take, practice negotiation of meaning, and for extended conversational exchanges, and for students' adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible". (Ibid:178).

Moreover, grouping students into small groups help them to use language to talk about facts that are fascinating. They contextualize the language and they feel responsible and autonomous through group work. They don't expect everything from the teacher. They

complete their tasks with the help of other classmates. "*Group work reduces the dominance of the teachers' talk (TT) over the class*" (Mackay and Tom, 1999:26).

1.2. Disadvantages of Group Work

As every used method in teaching, group work has also some drawbacks in the teaching situation that are important to explore. The first negative aspect of group work is NOISINESS. When putting the students into groups, they speak all at once trying to solve their task. So, grouping learners is considered as a hassle, but Doff states that: "*The noise created by group work is usually "good" since students are using English and are engaged in a learning task*". (1991:141).

The second drawback is that some teachers cannot control the class. Sometimes the learners do not finish their work and also weaker learners may dodge behind stronger ones. So, in order to evade all that Doff highlights that: "*To stop activities getting out of control, it is important to give clear instructions, to give clear defined tasks and to set up a routine so that the students exactly know what and how to do*". (1991:142).

The other dislikable feature of group work is that learners use the native language between them in order to solve a given task so as to avoid the use of the mother tongue, Brown suggests a solution that is: "*To encourage students to practice using the target language in face to face contexts and to make them aware of the importance of some real users for English in their own lives*" (2001:180).

2. Group Work and Pair Work

Working with others gives the students the opportunity to interact with a variety of people and learn from one another. It also encourages cooperation which would help students get along in the classroom and could reduce the number of student outbursts too.

The Review of the Literature

Generally group work refers to the work that is done by three or more people working together when learning something, for instance: learning a language. While pair work requires only two people. Both group work and pair work change the interactional dynamics of the classroom. Harmer claims that group work is more dynamic than pair work. He states that:

> "There are more people to react with and against in a group and, there is a great possibility of discussion. There is a greater chance that at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises, and working in groups is potentially more relaxing than working in pairs". (1992:245-246).

On the one hand Groups give students the opportunity to create more complex dialogues, explore relationships between characters, pool knowledge together, and have a more social learning environment. Additionally, there is a better chance for self correction and for a discussion on a wider range of thoughts and opinions. On the other hand, in pair work the students may not have a wide knowledge about something so their understanding of something may be limited.

Doff confirms that: "*Learners feel secure within the group where they create a part of a whole. There is a real chance that learners who would never say anything in a whole class activity participate partially during the group work*". (1991:141). From Doff's words, we conclude that group work has a great influence on the learners, where we find that the learners feel secure and they express themselves without any fear.

3. Grouping Students

Putting students into groups may be done in different ways. Harmer suggests four basic ways: friendship, streaming, chance, and changing groups. Within the first method, it is up to the learner to choose their friends to work with. In the second method, the learners are put into groups according to their abilities (same ability group or mixed ability groups). That is to say,

same ability refers to the students with similar competencies whereas mixed ability refers to the students with different competencies. Chance method is selecting the members of the group randomly. Finally, changing groups, where the students keep changing the groups while the activity continuous. (2001:120-122).However, Byrne prefers not to leave students move during the class because it is necessary to take into consideration the time factor.Also it is hard to get the learners' attentions on the activity at the moment where the teacher allows them to move around the classroom. So, it is preferable to group the students once for all (1996:32-33).

4. Group Work Activities

Group work activities usually consist of role plays, problem solving, and discussions. These group work activities cannot be done at one time but teachers must be creative to choose the best activity that is suitable for any particular time. Ellis states that: "*Group work activities in learning foreign language is a significant feature for communication or interaction in classroom*". (1999:45).

4.1. Role Play

Many students earn a great benefit from role play. It can be used either to encourage general oral proficiency or to train students for specific situations especially where they are studying English for specific purposes (ESP). Role play is an authentic activity because it involves language use in real interactive contexts. It provides an environment for using elements of real life conversation and communication. (Forrest, 1992).

Revel sees role play as: "*An individual's spontaneous behavior reacting to other in a hypothetical situation*" (1979:16). This implies that role play invites students to speak

through a fictitious identity in an imagined situation to present the view of a person without necessarily sharing them.

Students usually find role play enjoyable, for example, one student might be given the role of a seller and the other the role of a customer. Therefore, the students have to prepare a dialogue for their presentation. Because role play imitates real life, the range of language functions that might be used expands considerably. It promotes spontaneous oral exchanges between participants instead of reciting already memorized stretches. Indeed as Dickson says: *"Learners say what they want to say and not what someone has told them to say"*. (1981:382).

Second, role plays allow hesitant students to be more forthright in their opinions and behavior than they might be when speaking for themselves, this is due to the fact that students do not take the responsibility of what they are saying.

Third, by broadening the world of the classroom to include the world outside, role plays allow students to use a much wider set of language use. There is dynamic movement as the role play progresses with students who lack self confidence or have lower proficiency levels. Topics for role play should be taken from students' current interest and anticipated experiences. This will contribute to increase the students' self confidence as a speaker and his motivation to participate more.

4.2. Problem Solving:

Barker and Gaut define problem solving as follows:

> "A problem- solving group is a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making decision based on their findings". (2002:160).

The Review of the Literature

The label has been used to group together a range of activities which require the learners to find solutions to problems of different kinds. In problem solving, students are involved in pooling information to solve a problem through oral expression and negotiation of meaning. Most of the problem solving tasks require pair or group work throughout where the learners themselves make suggestions, give reasons, accept, modify or reject suggestions and reasons given by others.

Problem solving can be of two kinds: short-term task and long-term task or project. The former can be done in course of one class session while the latter is more time consuming that may take many sessions and longer. On one hand, in short-term tasks, students are given items and are asked to classify them into categories for instance: the students are given a list of 15-20 items, such as occupations (photograph, doctor, teacher, driver…) and are asked to locate them under heading according to different features such as, physical/ mental work, indoors/ outdoors, with people/ alone etc… It can be done in one class session of 20-30 minutes. On the other hand, long term-task or project is topic-centered and results in the production of a piece of written oral report or both. For example, the students are asked to prepare a presentation about a given topic.

In some way, these activities provide a framework for language use in a range of communicative function that are likely to occur. Learners also develop greater skills for managing the interaction. For example: signaling disagreement or interrupting without offense.

4.3. Discussions

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

whole lesson (in case of advanced learners who have a good command of foreign language). It is an activity for developing oral expression through exchange of ideas, opinions, arguments, and points of view. We can say that this activity is students- directed and teacher-guided discussion (Hill and Ruptic 1949; in Byrne, 1976).

Discussions have many advantages Some benefits for second language learners include: increased comprehension levels, opportunities to improve listening skills and develop spoken language proficiency. Increased participation of quiet and shy students and more time for teacher observation of students learning. In order to gain a successful discussion the teacher has to respect the following:

-Provide the students with a variety of sources of input for example: newspapers, video recording, or simply text so that they can have something to say and the language with which to say it.

-Use small groups instead of large groups or whole class discussion as, large groups can make participation difficult.

-Allow students to participate in their own way. Do not expect all of them to contribute to the discussion, some students may feel more uncomfortable to talk about certain topics.

Through well- prepared discussions, the teachers' role is not to force his/her opinions on the students but rather to encourage them to express theirs; if the teacher gives his/her opinion, it should only serve to stimulate further ideas for the students, not to inhibit them. Secondly, the teacher should appear more interested in the ideas at least in the beginning. Sometimes, of course, the teacher may have to help students to get their message across, or make their meaning clear. Also the teacher has to keep the channels of communication open

not of course by doing all the talking himself/herself, but by stimulating students' talk through questions which serve as stimuli for discussion as long as they generate controversial opinions amongst the students.

II. Speaking skill

Second language learners make a number of errors and mistakes while speaking in the target language (English). The mastery of the target language requires some experience and practice. Luoma says that: "*speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to be developed*". (2004:1). The skill of speaking is quite different from writing in its typical grammatical, lexical and discourse patterns. Moreover, some of the processing skills needed in writing and reading differ from the skills needed in speaking. Also, second language speaking differs from first language speaking in terms of the lack of grammar, vocabulary and knowledge of learners. That is to say the process of building utterances accurately and retrieving words does not yet become automatic in second language speaking.

1. Definition of Speaking

Learning a second language involves its use in different situations. In general, speaking refers to the capacity of speech, expression, or exchange of thoughts by using language. Chaney and Tamara declare that: "*speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts*". (1998:13). In fact, 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.

The Review of the Literature

1.1. The Importance of Speaking

EFL/SL learners give more importance to the speaking skill in their learning because if they master this skill they will be considered as if they have mastered all of the other language skills. In addition, the principle question which is often given to EFL learners is "do you speak English?" but not "do you write English?" We understand that most of people take speaking and knowing a language as synonyms. Celce- Murcia argues that for most people "*the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication*". (2001:103).

The importance of speaking is more revealed with the integration of the other language skills. For example, speaking can help learners to enhance their vocabulary and grammar and then developing their writing skill. Also with this ability, learners can express their feelings, opinions or thoughts.

1.2. Aspects of Speaking:

Fluency and accuracy are the main focus of both teachers and students. They are seen as complementary in accomplishing a given task.

1.1.1 Accuracy

Nowadays, second language teachers focus on the term accuracy in their teaching process because learners seek to be fluent and they forget about being accurate. Speakers should pay attention to correctness of language form because it is very important for the speaking proficiency. To define accuracy Skehan says that accuracy is referring "*to how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language*" (1996: 23 as cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005:139). So, EFL learners should pay attention to the grammatical structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

The Review of the Literature

1.2.1. Fluency

The main objective of both teachers and learners in teaching the productive skill of speaking is fluency. Hudges (2002) defines fluency as the ability to express oneself in a comprehensible, reasonable and accurate way without too much hesitation. Otherwise the communication will break down because the listener will lose his/her interest. To help the learners be fluent, the teachers should train learners to use their personal language freely and automatically to express their own ideas, opinions, and feelings. Hedge Tricia adds that:

> The term fluency relates to the production and it is normally reserved for speech. It is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate showiness or undue hesitation (2000:54).

Here, we can say that fluency is the ability to respond in a coherent way through linking the words and phrases effectively, pronounce the sounds clearly, using stress and intonation.

Many of second language speakers think of fluency as the ability to speak fast; that is, why they start speaking rapidly without pauses. Thornbury (2005) argues that speed is an important factor in fluency and pausing too, because speakers need to take breath.

Native speakers also need to pause from time to time in order to let the interlocutor catch what they say. However, making frequent pauses is an indication that the speaker has obstacles in speaking. In such cases Thornbury suggests what is called "tricks" or production strategies, that is to say, the ability to fill the pauses. The most common pause fillers are "uh" and "um", vagueness expressions like "short of" and "I mean". Another device for filling the pauses is the repetition of one word when there is a pause.

The Review of the Literature

2. Classroom Interaction

The communicative process involves interaction between at least two people who share a list of signs and semiotic rules. The concept of interaction is defined as: *"reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions. Interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another"*. (Wagner, 1997:8). Therefore, interaction does not occur only from one side, there must be mutual influence through giving and receiving messages in order to achieve communication.

The concept of interaction has a significant importance in the classroom too; it is an essential part in learning and teaching processes. Allwright and Baily (1991) hold that interaction is something people can do together that is to say, collectively.

2.1. Types of Classroom Interaction:

Brown defines interaction as: *"the heart of communication: it is what communication is all about"*. (2000:165). This means that communication and interaction are interconnected, communicating messages and negotiating meaning are the results of interaction among people.

In order to understand the impact of classroom interaction in improving the speaking skill, one should understand its main types? That is, teacher-learner interaction and learner-learner interaction.

2.1.1 Teacher-Learner Interaction:

This type of interaction happens between the teacher and one learner or many other learners, that is to say, the teacher takes a part in such interaction. The teacher negotiates with his/her students the content of the course, asks questions, gives directions, criticizes or justifies student talk responses. On the other hand, the students will benefit from the experience of their teachers on how to interact in the manner that is most effective.

The Review of the Literature

During teacher-learner interaction, the students seek to demonstrate their speaking and listening in front of their teachers that is why the latter should consider his/her way of interacting which is very crucial in learning and teaching. According to Harmer (2005) teachers should focus on three things when they talk with their students. Firstly, they must pay attention to the kind of the language the students are able to understand; that is to say the teachers should provide an output that is comprehensible for the level of all the students. Secondly, the teachers must think about what they will say to their students, hence the teacher speech is a source for learners. Finally, teachers also have to identify the ways in which they will speak such as the voice, tone, and intonation.

2.1.2 Learner-Learner Interaction:

Scrivener (2005) asserts that the learners interact more with their teachers than among them. Yet, he suggests some points in order to increase learners' interaction with one another that are: establishing a relaxed atmosphere inside the class, giving time to students to express themselves, and designing pair work and group work that promote interaction among learners.

Johnson (1995) supports that if learner-learner interaction is well structured and managed, then it can be an important factor of cognitive development, educational achievement of students and emerging social competencies. It can also develop the learners' capacities through collaborative works. So learners will establish social relationship through this kind of interaction, where the sense of learning community is promoted and isolation is reduced in the classroom.

Naegela Paula adds also that: "*talking students with their peers about the content of the course is a powerful way for them to reinforce what they have learned*". (2002:128). The teachers then must encourage such type of interaction between learners because it is the fastest and the best way, it makes learners active rather than passive participants.

The Review of the Literature

Conclusion

This chapter deals with the review of literature in which we have shed light on group work and the speaking skill. Many educators and researchers should use group work activities as a powerful educational approach in improving the learners' speaking skill, and if group work technique is used effectively this may help the students become comfortable, independent, confident, and responsible. They will express themselves freely since they will overcome their inhibition and express their opinions easily in front of their classmates.

In the next chapter, we are going to deal with the research design and methodology where we will explain the procedures of data collection and data analysis.

The Review of the Literature

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction:

This chapter is about the findings of our study. It presents the results obtained from the questionnaire we have administered to the students and the interview we have conducted with the teachers.

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the use of group work in the oral expression module with the first year BMD students and whether it promotes their speaking skill. The findings are presented by percentage and displayed in diagrams. This part is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the presentation of the findings of the questionnaire and the second section of this chapter is devoted to the results obtained from the teachers' interview.

Presentation of the Findings

1. **The Teachers' Questionnaire**

Section one: Information on the Students' Profile

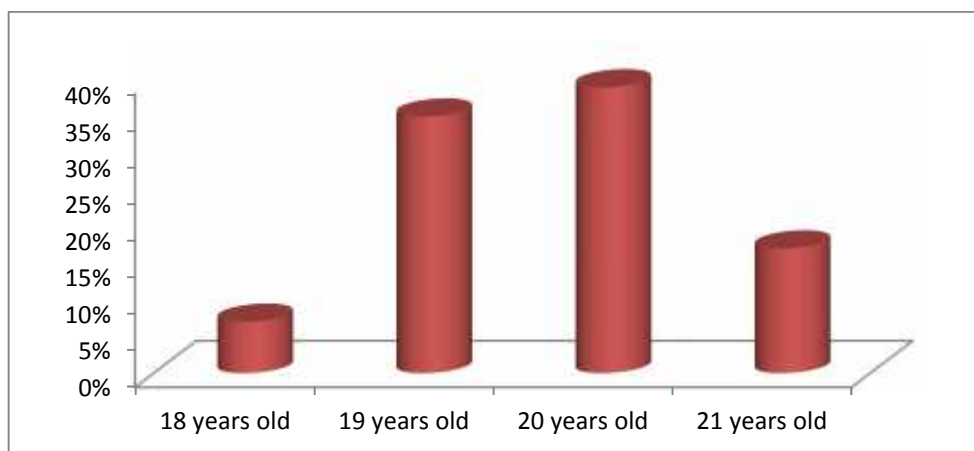**Question one:** How old are you?

Diagram (01): students' Age

Presentation of the Findings

The first question is about the first year students' ages. The students' ages vary between 18 and 21 years old. We have only two girls (7.14%) who are 18 years old. Ten representing (35.71%) are 19 years old, eleven students (39.28%) are 20 years old, and five students (17.85%) are 21 years old.

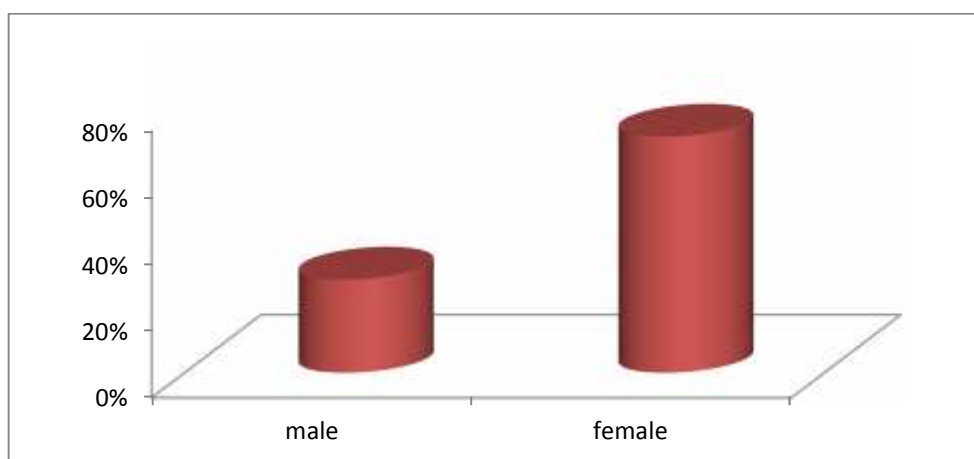**Question two:** What is your gender?

Diagram (02): Students' Gender

The majority of the students, which is (71.42%), are females and only eight students representing (28.57%) are males.

Section two: the students' perception of the speaking skill

Question three: How do you find speaking in English?

a). Very easy   b). Easy   c). Very difficult   d). Difficult

Presentation of the Findings
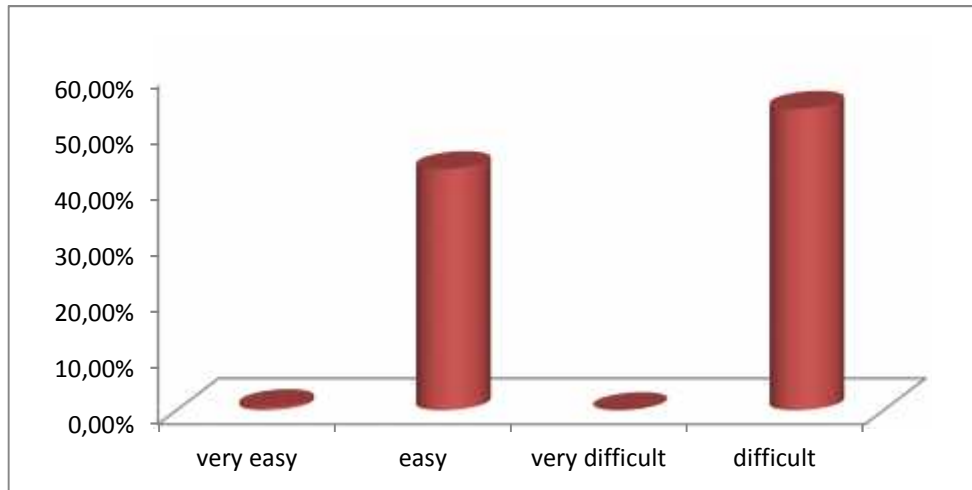
Diagram (03): Easiness/Difficulty of Speaking in English

Through this question, we intended to know how the students find speaking in English. Only one participant representing (0.35%) find speaking in English very easy. Twelve students making up (42.85%) find it easy. Whereas the majority of the respondents fifty students about (53.57%) find speaking in English difficult.

Question four: How often do you participate in the oral activities?

a). Always   b). Sometimes   c). Rarely   d). Never

Justify your answer.

Diagram (04): Students' Participation in the Oral Activities

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Presentation of the Findings

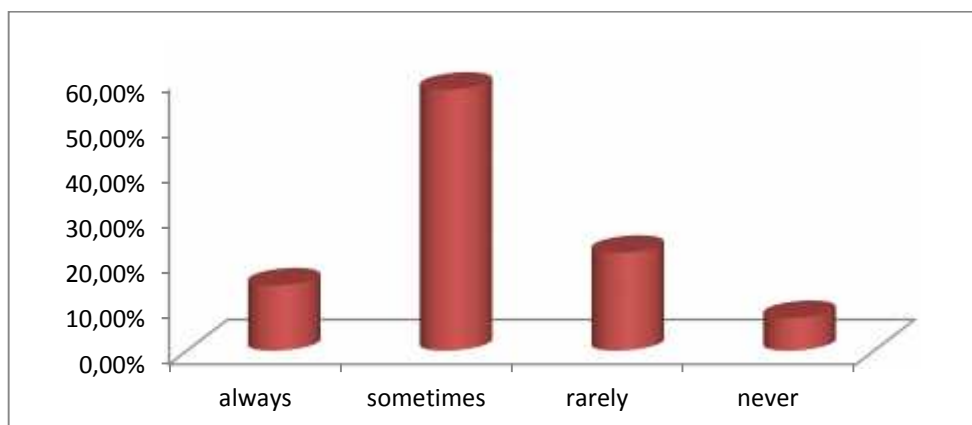The aim of this question is to know if the students participate in the classroom to accomplish the different classroom activities. The majority sixteen students (57.14%) argue that they sometimes participate in the oral activities. And four participants (14.28%) say that they always participate. However, six students (21.42%) say that they rarely participate and two students (7.14%) say that they never participate in the classroom activities.

Question five: Do you feel comfortable during the oral expression module?

a). Yes   b). No
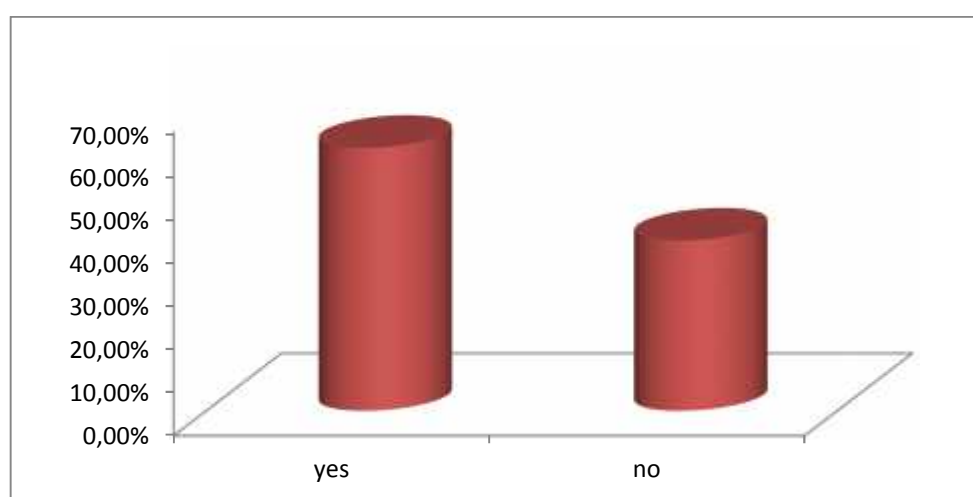
Diagram (05): Students' Feeling during the Oral Expression Module

As it is illustrated, the majority of the participants 17 representing (60.71%) indicate that they feel comfortable in the oral expression module, while the rest of the participants 11 making up (39.28%) reveal that they feel uncomfortable.

Question six: If uncomfortable, what makes you feel so?

a). The teacher   b). The students   c).The different speaking activities
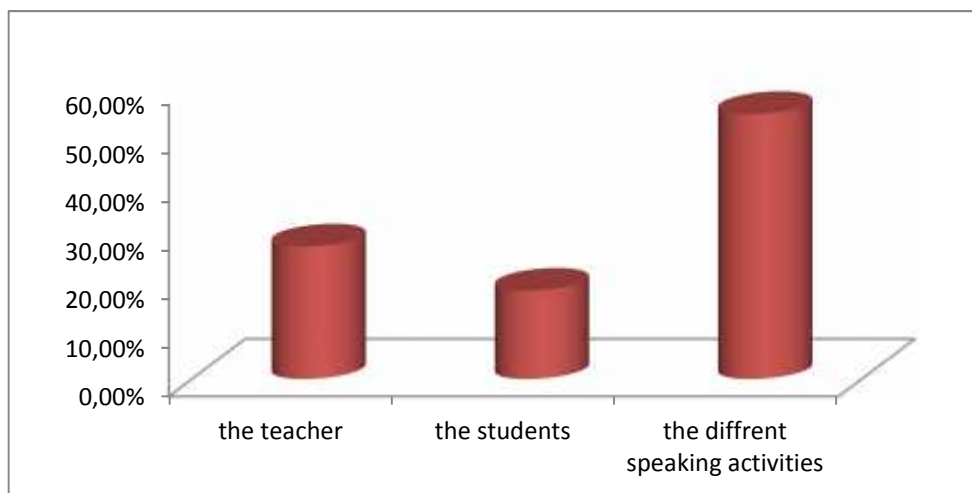
Diagram (06): The Reasons behind Students' Feeling Uncomfortable

The total number of the population has changed here. Eleven participants are the equivalent of (100%) state that they feel uncomfortable during the oral expression module. (54.54%) admit that they feel so because of the different speaking activities implemented by the teachers. However four participants making up (27.27%) confirm that the reason behind their feeling uncomfortable is their teachers. While three participants representing (18.18%) declare that their classmates is the reason behind their feeling.

Question seven: Do you think that in order to learn the English language you have to speak it?

a). Strongly agree   b). Agree   c). Strongly disagree   d). Disagree
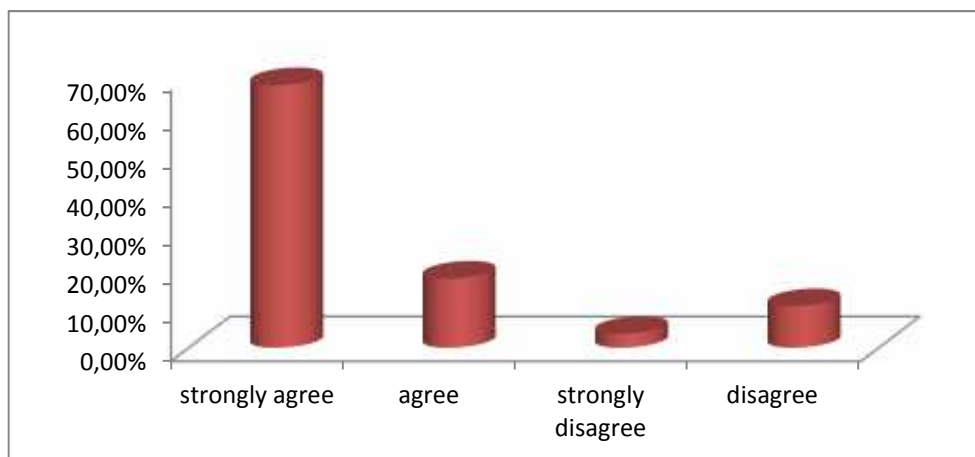
Diagram (07): The Importance of Speaking in Learning English

The majority of the students, nineteen about (67.85%) strongly agree that anyone who wants to learn the English language he has to speak it. Others just agree (17.85%). However three participants making up (10.71%) say that they disagree and one participant (3.57%) says that he strongly disagree.

Section three: Students' Perception of Group Work

Question eight: Have you ever heard about the group work technique?

a). Yes   b). No
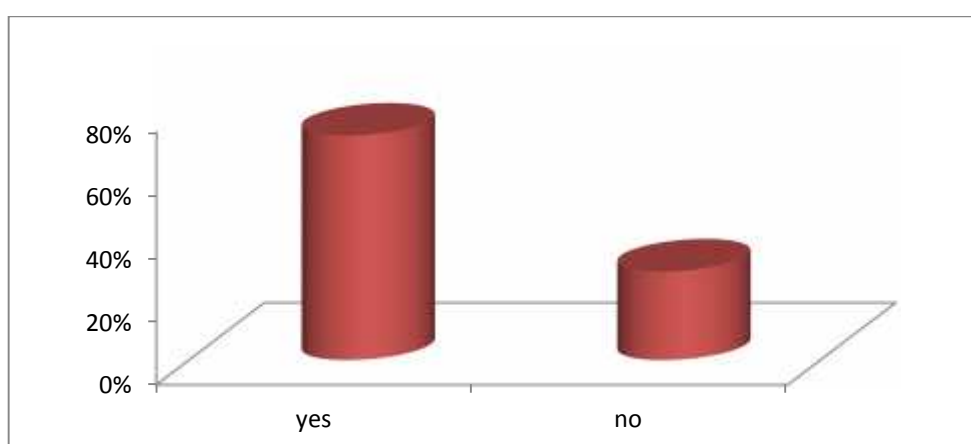
Diagram (08): Students' familiarity with Group Work

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Twenty students making up (71.42%) claim that they have heard about the group work technique while eight students representing (28.57%) have not heard about this technique.

Question nine: In the oral expression session do you prefer:

a).Individual work   b). Pair work   c). Group work

Justify why.
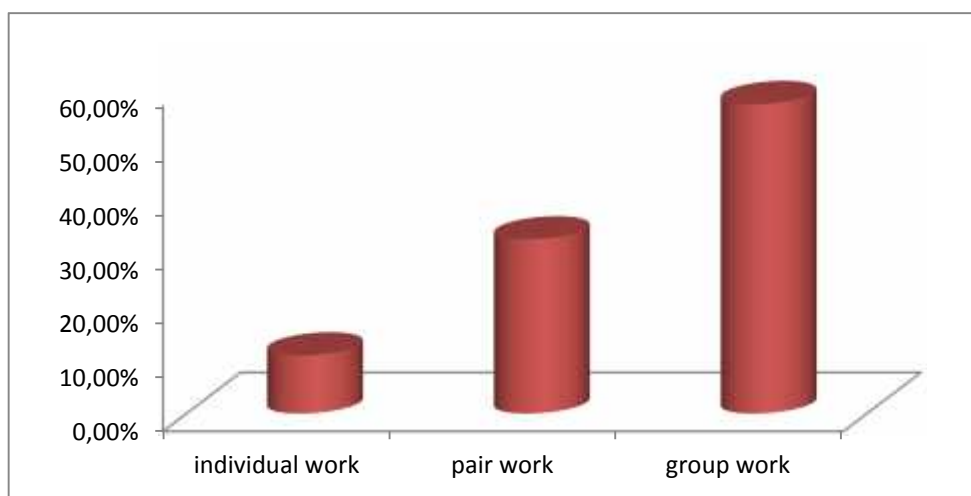
Diagram (09): Students' Preferable Technique in Oral Courses

The majority of the students about (57.14%) desire to work in groups while nine subjects (32.14%) say that they prefer pair work whereas only three students prefer working individually (i.e.: 10.71%).

Question ten: Which activities do you enjoy the best?

a). Role play   b). Problem solving   c). Discussions
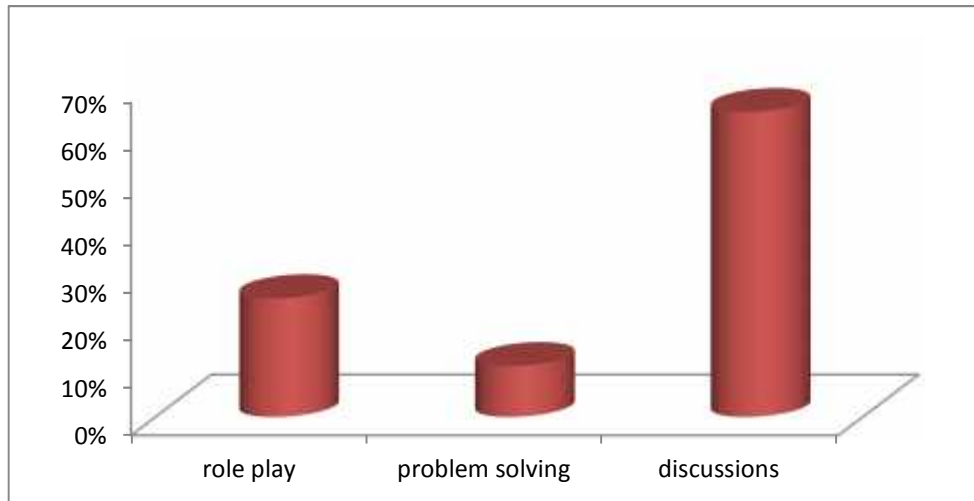
Diagram (10): Students' Favorite Activities

Discussions come at the first place with approximately (64.28%) followed by role play that comes at the second place with about (25%). And only (10.71%) indicate that problem solving is the most enjoyable activity.

Question eleven: Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?

a). Yes   b). No
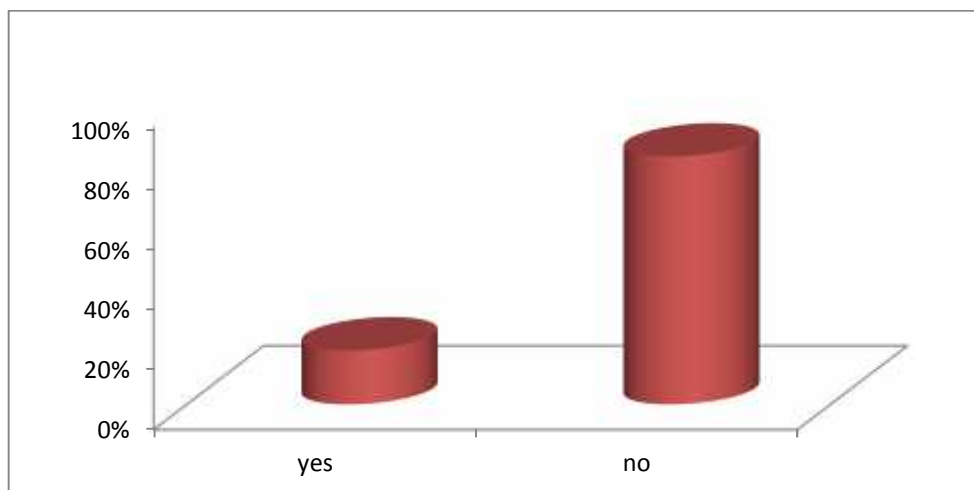
Diagram (11): Difficulties Encountered in Group Work Classes

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Twenty three participants making up (82.17%) claim that they don't find it difficult to work with their classmates in groups. While five students (17.87%) state that they find it difficult to work in groups.

Question twelve: Which of the following problems do you usually face when working in groups?

a). Fear of making mistakes   b). Imposing point of view

c). Noise   d). I find it difficult to express my ideas to the group members.
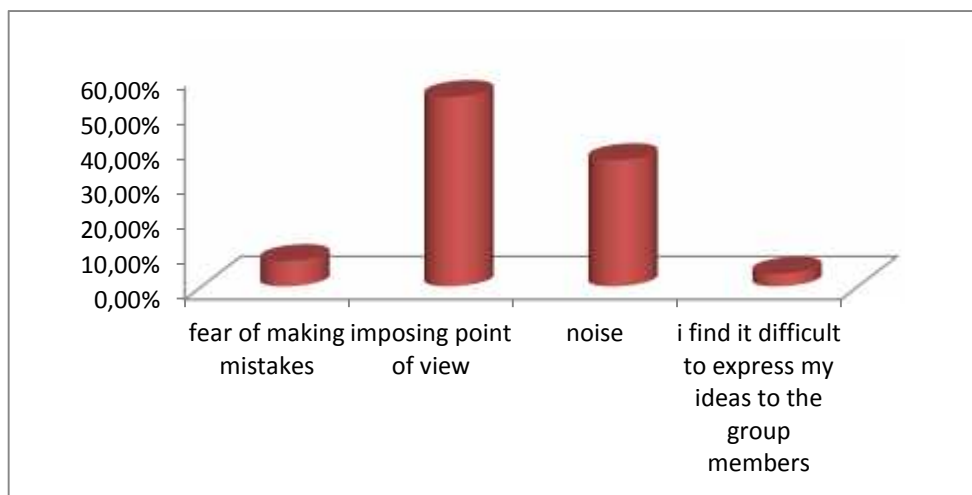
Diagram (12): Students' Problems when Working in Groups

The aim of this question is to figure out the difficulties that the students face while working in groups. Imposing point of view and groups' noise are considered as the most important problems that the students suffer from when working in groups, fifteen participants representing (53.57%) for imposing point of view and ten participants representing (35.71%) for group members' noise. Also, (7.14%) say that they are afraid of making mistakes, and

only one student (3.57%) finds that it is difficult to express his ideas directly to his teammates.

Question thirteen: When working in groups how do you feel?

a). Very motivated   b). Motivated

c). slightly motivated   d). Not at all motivated
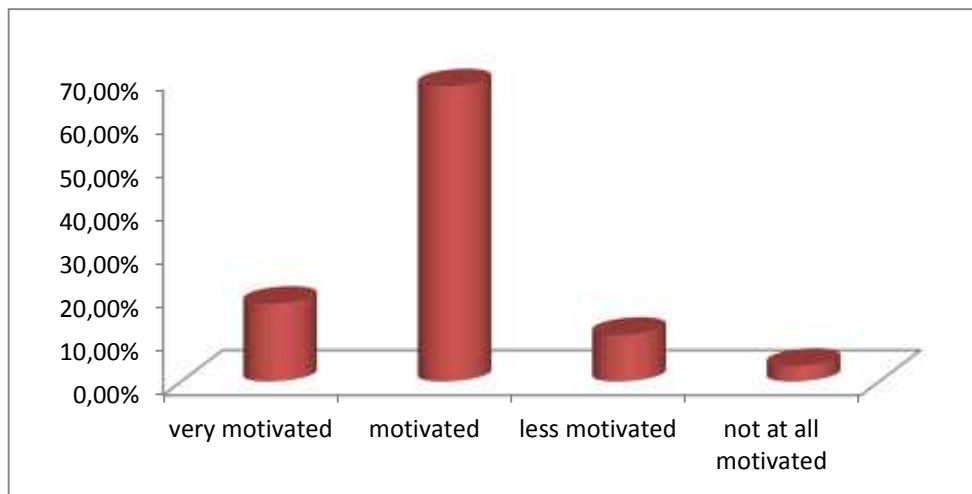
Diagram (13): Students' Motivation when Working in Groups

The results obtained denote that nineteen students (67.85%) state that they are motivated when they work in groups. And five students (17.85%) say that they feel very motivated. However, three respondents state that they feel less motivated (10.71%), and one participant says that he does not feel motivated at all (3.57%).

Question fourteen: Do you feel that group work activities help you to:

a). Ask and respond to more questions   b). Learn and listen to different opinions

c). Evaluate your peers' performance   d). Feel more comfortable to speak

Presentation of the Findings
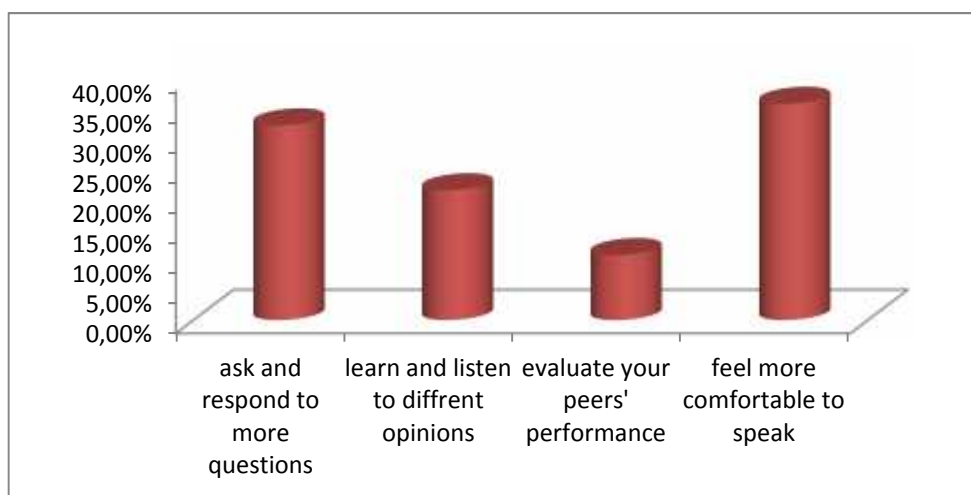
Diagram (14): Group Work Benefits

The aim of this question is to know what group work activities help the learners do. Ten students making up (35.71%) find that group work activities make them feel more comfortable to speak. While nine students representing (32.14%) find that group work activities help them ask and respond to more questions. And six participants (21.42%) say that they help them to learn and listen to different opinions, and only three students making up (10.71%) say that they help them to evaluate their peers' performance.

Question fifteen: Do you think that group work helps you to improve your speaking skill?

a). Yes   b). No

Justify your answer.

Presentation of the Findings
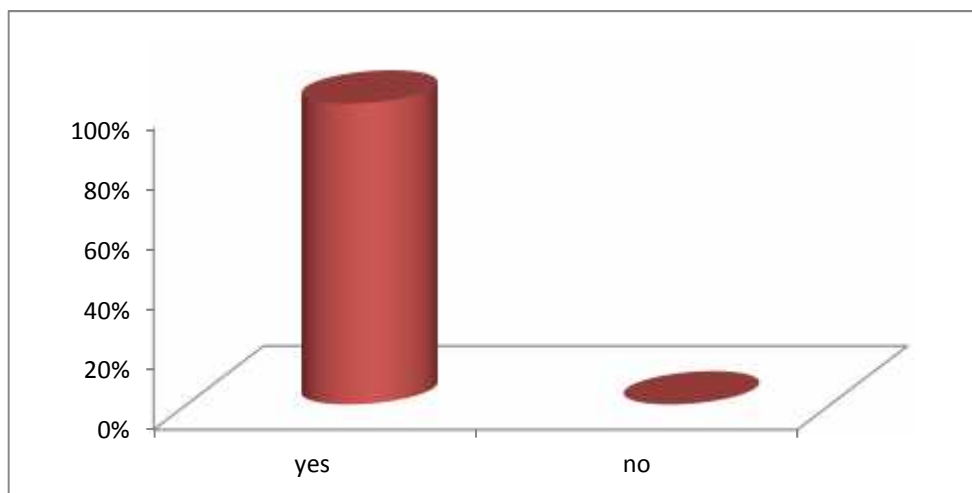
Diagram (15): Students' Evaluation of Group Work in improving their Speaking Skill

The aim of this question is to know whether group work helps the students to improve their speaking skill. The whole sample (100%) has positive beliefs about the fact that group work helps them improve their speaking skill.

2. The Teachers' Interview:

The second data collection tool used in our research is the interview which we have conducted with eight (08) teachers of the oral expression module. The interview helps us to bring more details to answer our research hypotheses and our research questions. The following are the detailed results of the interview.

Question one: How long have you been teaching the oral expression module in the English department?

This question is asked to know how many years the eight teachers have been teaching the oral expression module in the English department. All of them say that they have been teaching the oral expression module for three years except one for five years.

Presentation of the Findings

Question two: How do you describe you students' level of oral performance in English?

The aim of this question is to know how is the students' performance in English during the oral expression module. The teachers say that the level is between average and below average.

Question three: Do your students participate in the oral expression session? If no say why?

This question seeks to know whether the students participate during the oral expression module, and it also seeks at identifying the causes that prevent them to express their ideas. The teachers say that say that some students frequently participate during the oral expression module. Concerning the ones who do not participate in the oral activities, the teachers advance the following reasons: the students maybe shy or are not interested in the classroom activities or because of the overcrowded classrooms.

Question four: Do you encourage your learners to work in groups? How?

We asked the fourth question in order to know if the teachers group their students in their classes or they do not do it. The findings show that all of them introduce group work activities in their classes. The teachers explain that most of the time they invite them to work in groups to discuss a given topic or to perform a role.

Question five: According to you, can the group work technique improve the learners' speaking skill? How?

All the interviewees agree that group work can improve the learners' speaking skill. They explain that working in groups is very important in the promotion of the learning abilities since they are between friends and they behave naturally where they use English to

express their ideas. They add that group work supply the classroom with real life situations in which a student faces the unpredictable. Finally, it puts them in a situation where they have to explain and make things clear orally and also it allows them to practice the target language.

Question six: What are the group activities that you use with your students to enhance their speaking skill?

According to the findings, the teachers use discussions in free topics, role plays to make the learner ready to face real life situations. And short speeches.

Question seven: Do your students enjoy working in groups? Explain?

All the participants say that their students enjoy working in groups. They explain that students feel more at ease while interacting with their classmates instead of working individually. They also claim that working in groups allow the students to eliminate their shyness and create situations in which they can perform their language.

Question eight: Do your students find difficulties while working in groups? If there are any , what are they?

The aim of this question is to know about the difficulties that the students face while working in groups. The participants say that some students feel uncomfortable while working in groups because more proficient students can dominate the class. They explain that there are always some students who work more seriously than the others.

Question nine: In your opinion, what are the other strategies that serve as a model to enhance the learners' speaking skill?

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The aim of this last question is to find out the other strategies that may promote the students' speaking skill. The participants say that individual work and oral presentations are other strategies on which they rely to improve the students' speaking skill because it is more authentic and personal. No one relies on the other and no one blames the other in case of failure. In addition, using native speakers recordings, videos and music and providing them with lyrics may help also. Moreover, visual aids and recording their speech are also strategies that the teachers think they help to promote their learners' speaking skill.

Conclusion:

This chapter presented the results obtained from the questionnaires answered by twenty eight (28) BMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou, and interviews conducted with eight (08) teachers of the oral presentation module at the same department. According to the results, we deduce that the group work technique is used by the teachers of oral expression session. And then group work may be an efficient technique to promote the learners' speaking skill. These findings are going to be discussed in details in the following chapter.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction:

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the findings of our case study which have been obtained from administrating the questionnaire to the students and conducting the interview with the teachers of the oral expression module. The discussion adopts the QCA for the interpretation and explanation of our outcomes. This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part is about the discussion of the results of the students' questionnaire, and the second part, discusses the results reached from the teachers' interviews.

I.   Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire

1. Information on the Students' Profiles

The results of the questionnaire regarding the learners' profiles have revealed that the students' ages vary between 18 years old and 21 years old. We have two girls who are 18 years old and this may mean that they have started earlier their primary education than others.

This reflects the young sample we have dealt with and its readiness to be adapted to the new suggested technique which is group work.

The results about the learners' gender have revealed that female students outnumber males. In fact, we have recorded about (28.57%) male subjects out of the total of one hundred, whereas the rest is of male sex that is (71.42%) (See diagram 01). Thus, girls are more interested in the study of FLs and they are more expected to be interested in collaboration than boys in relation to the population that is investigated.

2. The Students' Perception of the Speaking Skill

The results displayed in diagram (03) show that the majority of the participants (53.57%) affirm that they find speaking in English difficult. In contrast, (42.85%) of the sample

Discussion of the Findings

population find speaking in English easy. So, the students who find speaking in English easy do not necessarily represent good speakers of English. However, the students who find that speaking in English difficult scarcely participate and speak in the classroom and they should follow some techniques like working in groups. Chaney and Tamara emphasize that speaking refers to "*the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts*" (1998:13). Thus, learners should comprehend what speaking means in order to asses their proficiency.

By the fourth question of the questionnaire, we have wanted to know the students' frequency of using the language and their participation to speak. Teachers in general claim that only motivated students who take the initiative to participate even when they are not asked to do so. The majority of the participants say that they sometimes participate in the classroom because they believe that they do not need to participate frequently, but whenever necessary they have to participate for many reasons. For instance: to correct mistakes, to assess their level in English, and to develop self-confidence and overcome anxiety.

Concerning the ones who have said that they always participate. They argue that they are highly motivated. With regard to the ones who say that they rarely participate and the ones who say that they never participate, they have advanced different reasons. Thus, according to the outcomes, one participant for instance says that it is because of "*anxiety and fear of making mistakes*". Another respondent argues that it's because of "*lack of motivation* and *self-confidence*". One more student says that it's because "*he feels shy and afraid in front of their teachers and friends*". This implies that students face difficulties when working in the classroom, so teachers should be aware of these difficulties and try to find a way to diminish them by creating a good atmosphere where the learners feel at ease to express themselves freely.

Discussion of the Findings

Concerning the students' feeling during the oral expression module, it appears that the majority of the participants feel comfortable during the oral expression module, they consider themselves as talkative or are able to speak and participate in the oral class (see diagram 05).

However, there are students who have admitted that they feel uncomfortable; the vast majority of the students confirm that they feel so because of the different speaking activities. This may mean that the same activities are always repeated and the lack in the variety of activities doesn't provide interaction in the class. (27.27%) have said that the reason behind their feeling of discomfort is their teachers because they are talkative teachers that is to say they spend the majority of the time in explaining the lesson and also some of the students consider the teacher as the main source of input. Students are all the time silent maybe because of the nature of the topic (maybe the teacher does not present interesting subjects). Only two participants have announced that they feel uncomfortable because of their classmates. This means that they feel shy in front of them. To end, English learners must be aware of the fact that they need to speak the language in order to learn it. Thus, they have to express their ideas and opinions and overcome their barriers.

Accordingly, the questionnaire demonstrates positive results about the students' agreement with the fact that in order to learn a language they have to speak it (see diagram 07). This is a confirmation that the students are aware about the importance of speaking. This result is likely to prove Celce and Murcia's assertion: "*the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication*". (2001:103*).* That is, language learning is not just knowing all the grammatical forms and structures but practicing and using it.

Discussion of the Findings

3. The Students' Perception of Group Work

The results of the third section have revealed important facts that can be developed as follows.

a-The Students' Familiarity with Group Work

The questionnaire has revealed very positive results concerning students' familiarity with group work. The big majority has revealed that they have heard about group work technique. From these results it is clear that some of the respondents are more likely to have a positive belief toward group work technique and this surely will impact their learning outcomes. Whereas some of them haven't heard about group work technique maybe because their teachers don't apply it in the classroom.

b-The Techniques Used Inside Classes

Concerning the students' preferable techniques during the oral expression module, the results have shown that the vast majority of the participants prefer group work (see diagram 09). The learners have justified their choices as follows:

First and foremost, the participants claim that group work gives them opportunities to share and exchange ideas and when they interact they discover new experiences. They feel more comfortable to speak when they work together. Moreover, group work helps them to communicate very well and motivates them to work very hard. Also, group work activities make introvert students to get rid of their shyness and physical barriers. Doff (1991) finds that "*learners feel secure and within the group where they create a part of a whole. There is a real chance that leaners who would never say anything in a whole class activity participate partially during the group work*". (141). Finally, the participants assert that group work

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Discussion of the Findings

permits them to use the target language freely with one another and they claim that by the use of this technique, they acquire new vocabulary from one another.

In contrast, there are students who enjoy working in pairs because they consider themselves to be more sociable, it develops social skills. They have said that peer work makes them feel free and they have the occasion to communicate with their peers very well, they also claim that they like to work with one person in order to avoid problems and conflicts, and they gain more time to perform their roles and it facilitates the solving of the task.

Contrary to group work and pair work, there are students who prefer to work individually because: first, individual work makes them feel comfortable. Second, they hate working under pressure and they count on themselves (they are self- confident). Third, they have a total responsibility of the whole work and they don't blame each other in case of failure. And finally they have said that they don't find someone who can express the same ideas as theirs.

To sum up, the large majority are at ease, relaxed and confident during working in groups. This may mean that pair work and group work create a warm atmosphere in the classroom and also they promote the learners' interaction. Harmer 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. (1998:245). That is, everything is centered on the learner. Pair work and group work are considered as two strategies which augment directly learners' talking time (ibid). These techniques allow learners to become more active inside the class and achieve better in the oral skill. These results confirm our first hypothesis that group work is used in the oral expression module.

Discussion of the Findings

a- Group Work Activities

In order to help the learners be good users of the English language, English language teachers should provide them with the appropriate activities that will fit their needs. There are many types of group work activities introduced by lecturers in promoting students' speaking skill. These activities usually involve pair work and small group work. The group work activities usually consist of discussions, role play, and problem solving activities.

Concerning the activities that the students enjoy to deal with in the classroom, the findings of the questionnaire demonstrate that the majority of the learners prefer discussions because the students become more confident and comfortable in delivering their thoughts since they are given wider opportunities to practice using the language. (25%) of the participants have answered role plays. One good reason why these students have chosen to do a role play is because each one of them can play their roles actively and be responsible for the group members and this goes hand in hand with Forrest's assertion that role play is an authentic activity because it involves language use in real interactive contexts. It provides an environment for using elements of real life conversation and communication. (1992:55). This means that this strategy emphasize the social nature of learning. Only (10.71%) have chosen problem solving activities, because they see that in this kind of activities they can use the vocabulary that they have acquired.

Accordingly, the activities used in the classroom provide the learners with real situation in which the English language is used. The activities increase their motivation as Ellis (1991) asserts that group work activities in learning foreign language is a significant feature for communication or interaction in classroom. (45).

Discussion of the Findings

To sum up, these activities increase speaking language opportunities and improve the quality of students' talk. Besides, it encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiation among students. That is to say, the use of group work activities improve learning outcomes. Because it fosters learner responsibility and independence, as well as creating interactional atmosphere in the classroom. Through interacting with the members of the group to solve a given task, the learners will practice more the language since they do not just listen to their teachers but rather speak, interpret and discuss academic issues together.

b- The Learners' Difficulties When Working in Groups:

From the results displayed in the previous section, it appears that the majority of the participants assert that they don't find difficulties when they work with their classmates in groups (see diagram 11). This entails that most students feel at ease when working with this technique. However, there are some students who find it difficult to work with their classmates in groups. This is due to various reasons. A quick glance at the results has revealed that imposing points of view and group's noise are the most important problems students suffer from when working in groups and this can be consistent with Harmer's assertion that some learners may consider themselves as leaders and then control all the other members of the same group, and in crowded classes, disturbance may take place. (1998: 88). That is to say the best students can dominate the class by imposing their points of view and also the noise generated by the group working together is difficult to bear, different ages and personalities lead of course to disagreement and misunderstanding and even to personal conflicts.

In addition, some participants assert that they don't like to work in groups because they are afraid of making mistakes and they find it difficult to express their ideas to the group members. These findings are in conformity with Prabhu's (1987) statement that learners may

Discussion of the Findings

feel a kind of embarrassment when making mistakes in the sight of their partners than in the sight of their teachers. (Cited in Ellis, 2005: 88).

To sum up, we may say that the students who like working with each other in groups think that it is the right technique for the communication of their ideas and opinions. The ones who find difficulties when working with others do not probably benefit from others.

4- The Students' Motivation When Working in Groups:

From the results displayed in the previous section, it appears that the majority of the participants assert that they feel motivated when they work in groups which means that they feel more confident and comfortable to speak in which they help each other in interactional classroom environment. The role of group work in enhancing students' motivation has proved to be a major one. And this is proved in Harmer's words:

> "there are more people to react with and against in a group and, there is a great possibility of discussion. There is a greater chance the at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises, and working in groups is potentially more relaxing than working in pairs". (1992:246).

In group work, students receive peer support and assistance and this will encourage them and subsequently they would be better motivated. Long and Porter (1985) also state that motivation can be increased via group work that is to say group work is a source of motivation because it helps them discover other people's ways of thinking and compare them to theirs and also this strategy is fun and it teaches them new skills. Moreover, group work offers greater opportunities for learners to use the target language with each other. (Long and Porter, 1985:163). So, we may say that group work is preferable to the learners since it permits them to discover new things and use the target language.

Discussion of the Findings

4. The Benefits of Group Work:

The findings of this work show that the students benefit from the use of group work. The majority of the respondents have certified that group work permits them to be comfortable in speaking It promotes interaction among them and negotiation of meaning and this finding goes hand in hand with what Christison's assertion that students' contributions to the whole group would make them feel they are more recognized by their peers, thus, would be more successful in their learning. (1990:150).

Moreover, some participants assure that group work helps them to ask and respond to more questions in interactional situations which means that students feel at ease to ask their teammates whenever they do not understand something instead of asking the teacher to re explain and this has been cited in Brown's words:

> Small groups provide opportunities for students' invitation, for face to face, give and take, practice negotiation of meaning, and for extended conversational exchanges, and for students' adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible. (Brown, 2001:178).

That is to say, the students exchange thoughts with one another and correct each others' mistakes before they expose them to the whole class members.

In addition, others affirm that group work technique helps them to learn and listen to different opinions which means that group work helps the students to be exposed to different ways of thinking and this confirms what Kramsch (1992)) say about group work technique. According to him, "speaking a language means more than referring to the world, it also means relating to one's interlocutor. It is through the interaction with this social group that the language is used and learned, and the group is given a social identity and a social reality"

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Actually, group work requires classroom speech and communication in which each student modifies and improves his/her language to be understood by their teammates and to get more information about one's another culture. (1992:178).

Finally, there are students who affirm that the group work technique helps them to evaluate their peers' performance which means that the students compare their work with their peers and they correct each others' mistakes. This goes hand in hand with what McGroarty (1989) says "*group work gives opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning*" (McGroarty, 1989, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001:195). That is to say, each student explains for the other what he/she does not understand and vise versa.

To sum up, group work has many benefits in different domains: sociological, psychological, and academic achievements socially in the sense that it helps students to work in teams by designing interactional classroom environment. Psychologically, in developing students' motivation and reducing anxiety. And the most important it helps students to develop their performance and achievement to reach academic tasks.

5. **Students' Evaluation of Group Work Technique in Improving their Speaking Skill:**

The questionnaire reveals very positive results concerning the use of the group work technique to improve the learners' speaking skill (see diagram 14). And this is the affirmation of Norland and Preuett's words who claim that: "*when students are interacting in groups, they are required to use authentic and fairly fluent communication skills, which prepare them for the actual communication skills they will need in real life*". (2006:23). In other words, students feel more comfortable when they work together in teams to perform a real life

Discussion of the Findings

situation thus, they will develop their self-confidence, and they will not face many difficulties in an uncontrolled environment.

In accordance with what is asserted above, the participants have justified their answers as follows: To start with, the students assert that the group work technique helps them to develop their speaking skill because it gives them the chance to communicate, to share, and to exchange ideas with each other and it gives them the trust to participate in the classroom, this results are similar to what Bernett et al (1991)advocates that; "*in group work activities, students need to develop skills in negotiating (clarifying, seeking clarification, checking for comprehension, probing for more information) as well as interaction skills in turn taking, listening, encouraging, helping, disagreeing*". (Bernett; roleheister- Bernett and Stevanh, 1991; cited in Arnold, ibid: 3). In other words, group work gives the students the opportunity to learn more effectively and that it is a significant tool for communication and interaction.

Moreover, the students affirm that group work encourages them to speak within the group members so they can express their opinions freely practicing their oral proficiency. Thus, when there is interaction and discussion within the members, the students will improve their speaking ability i: e, they will be able to speak fluently with each other. Within the groups the students don't find difficulties to reveal their opinions to the group members and can show what they have learned without any fear and this goes hand in hand with Richards' et al (1996) assertion:

> "Through interacting with other students in pairs or groups, students can be given the opportunity to draw on their linguistic resources in a non threatening situation and use them to complete different kinds of talks. Indeed, it is through this kind of interaction that researchers believe that many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence are developed". (Richards and Lockhart, 1996:152).

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This means that working in groups pave the way for the learners to use the linguistic structures that they have already learned with their peers without any fear.

To sum up, this section has confirmed the hypotheses of our research that is group work it enhances the students' speaking skill.

5- Discussion of the Teachers' Interviews

The second data gathering tool we used is the interview with the teachers of the oral expression module. The interview has really helped us to bring more details and answer our research hypotheses and our research questions.

The answers are very significant to the fact that the teachers of the first year BMD students use the group work technique during the oral expression. They, use group work activities in their class in order to enhance the students' speaking skill. According to their experience as teachers of the oral module, they say that the students' levels of speaking are between average and below average. This may mean that the students do not have a good command of English because they have poor speaking habits or they are not motivated to speak the language. As a result, the teachers confirm that the students sometimes participate in the classroom. Concerning the students who do not participate, the teachers confirm that generally it is because of shyness or they are not interested in the classroom activities. Therefore, to increase the students' speaking skill, the teachers use the group work technique in order to make the learners who do not participate engage in solving a given task or a discussion of a given topic. They indicate that they permit their students to choose their partners to work with, and they permit them also to move from group to group in order to make them feel at ease and to lower anxiety.

Discussion of the Findings

By using the group work technique, the teachers confirm that their students have the chance to exchange ideas and opinions, get rid of shyness, develop their speaking as well as their social skills. Moreover, group work helps them to accept new ideas, learn from each other, listen to others' points of view, make a good relationship, be open minded, and learn how to evaluate each others' performance. In addition, the group work technique allows good students to support and motivate their peers to speak. It breaks the routine of individual learning and makes students learn new vocabulary, expressions and structures from interaction with others, it creates enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Teachers use group work activities in order to make their learners interact more in the target language. The most used activities are role plays, discussions and short speeches. They use these kind of activities on one hand, in order to permit the learners to uncover their thoughts and on the other hand to permit the teacher to know what the students have not understood. In fact, the learners enjoy working in groups but some of them find difficulties when working in groups such as noise, and sometimes competent students dominate the group.

At the end of the interview we have asked the teachers to give us other useful strategies that serve as a good model to enhance the learners' speaking skill. The strategies are as follows:

- ➢ Individual work.
- ➢ Oral presentation.
- ➢ Using the native speakers' recording, videos, music, and visual aids

This may pave the way for further researches to explore the other strategies that may enhance the speaking skill of the learners.

Discussion of the Findings

Conclusion:

The discussion of the gathered data from the questionnaire and the interview answers the research questions stated in the general introduction and confirm the hypotheses suggested. Indeed the teachers of the oral expression module use the group work technique with the first BMD students and we have found that group work improves the speaking skill of the learners. This means that there is a strong relationship between group work and the speaking skill.

Discussion of the Findings

General conclusion

This study has investigated the use of group work in the oral expression module. Case study first year BMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. Its main focus is the use of group work. The objectives of the study consist in investigating whether group work is used in the oral expression module with the first year BMD students and if it can help the learners to promote their speaking skill.

The study has attempted to shed light on the use of group work as a technique that encourages the learner centered process and its effectiveness to enhance the speaking skill. In the first chapter we have highlighted some of the theoretical issues related to group work as an important technique in learning and its basic elements, and benefits. Moreover, we have shed light on speaking as an important skill that needs to be developed.

For the sake of answering the advanced research questions and confirming or refuting the suggested hypotheses in the general introduction, a mixed method is adopted and used. Thus, qualitative and quantitative methods are joined together in order to analyze the data. The data are gathered from two research instruments. We have administered a questionnaire for the first year BMD students and we have conducted an interview with oral expression teachers. For the sake of analyzing the quantitative data, a statistical method is used. In addition to the statistical analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis is used for analyzing and explaining the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the interview.

The discussion of both the results of the questionnaire and the interview has provided answers to the research questions. They have showed that the teachers of the oral expression module use group work with the first year BMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. Teachers and learners have claimed that group work could help learners to promote their speaking skill. Our research has revealed that well

General conclusion

planned, organized, and effective group work may help students become more comfortable, independent, confident and responsible, since they overcome their shyness and anxiety and express their thoughts easily in front of their classmates. Less talkative students who feel inhibited and afraid of making mistakes will never develop their performance individually. Consequently, teachers need to provide more opportunities for students to collaborate with one another in interactional classroom situations, in which all students will have the chance to speak and participate in order to improve their oral production.

As a final point, the research findings have confirmed that the implementation of group work may comprise some negative aspects like students' noise in groups or students' conflicting ideas. Teachers and students should help one another to avoid such difficulties. This study is significant because we believe that the present application of group work technique to the field of language learning is very important for developing students' participation and communication in EFL classes because it creates interactional atmosphere where learners are expected to help one another, correct each others' mistakes, exchange ideas and information in a situation that everybody feels comfortable to speak and participate.

We hope that the results we have researched through this empirical investigation will open opportunities for further research in this area of study.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: the students' questionnaire

Dear students:

You are kindly invited to answer the present questionnaire that aims to figure out the use of group work in developing speaking skill at the English department at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. Your answers are very important for the validity of this research.

Section one: the students' profile

1. Age: ………………………….
2. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

Section two: the students' perception of the speaking skill

3. How do you find speaking in English?

☐ Very easy

☐ Easy

☐ Very difficult

☐ Difficult

4. How often do you participate in the oral activities?

☐ Always

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

Appendices

Please justify your

answer…………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Do you feel comfortable during the oral expression module?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. If uncomfortable, what makes you feel so?

☐ The teacher

☐ The students

☐ The different speaking activities

7. Do you think that in order to learn the English language you have to speak it?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

Section three: the students' perception of group work

8. Have you ever heard about group work?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. In the oral expression sessions, do you prefer?

☐ Individual work

☐ Pair work

☐ Group work

Appendices

Please justify your answer

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

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

10. Which activities do you enjoy the best?

☐ Role play

☐ Problem solving

☐ Discussions

11. Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. Which of the following problems do you usually face when working in groups?

☐ Fear of making mistakes

☐ Imposing point of view

☐ Noise

☐ I find it difficult to express my ideas to the group members

13. When working in groups how do you feel?

☐ Motivated

☐ Very motivated

☐ Less motivated

☐ Not at all motivated

14. Do you feel that group work helps you to:

☐ Ask and respond to more questions

☐ Learn to listen to different opinions

☐ Evaluate your peers' performance

☐ Feel more comfortable to speak

Appendices

15. Do you think that group work helps you improve your speaking skill?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please say why

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 2: teacher's interview:

Question one: how long have you been teaching the oral expression module in the English department?

Question two: how do you describe your students' level of oral performance in English?

Question three: do your students participate in the oral expression session, if no say why?

Question four: do you encourage your learners to work in groups? How?

Question five: according to you, can group work technique improve learners' speaking skill? How?

Question six: what are the activities that you use with your students to enhance their speaking skill?

Question seven: do your students enjoy working in groups? Explain?

Question eight: do your students find difficulties while working in groups ? If there is any what are they?

Appendices

Question nine: in your opinion, what are the other strategies that serve as a model to

enhance learners' speaking skill?