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*Investigating Teachers' Guidance towards Learners
Encountering Speaking Difficulties: The Case of Fourth-Year
Classes of Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou*

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To,

My beloved parents who always dreamed of seeing me graduated. Thank you for your limitless encouragement, great support and prayers.

My sister

All my family

All my friends and classmates.

Gaya

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

IT: Incidental Teaching

L1: First Language

Q: Question

Hp: Hypothesis

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

OCF: Oral Corrective Feedback

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Abstract

The present study sheds light on the teachers' guidance with the learners encountering speaking difficulties. The case study is fourth-year learners at Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou. The work aims at investigating whether the teachers provide their learners opportunities to interact in the classroom or not. It also seeks at exploring the speaking obstacles encountered by EFL learners during classroom interaction and the teaching techniques used by the teachers to overcome these difficulties. Furthermore, the research determines how teachers provide their oral constructive feedback toward their learners' responses. This study has been conducted under the light of Ted Glynn's theory of 'Responsive Social Contexts of Learning (1985). Moreover, the research work is based on the Mixed Methods Research since the results obtained from the learner's questionnaire are analysed using the Microsoft Excel Program. However, the outcomes gathered from the teachers' interviews are analysed using Qualitative Content Analysis. On the basis of the findings of the research study, it is concluded that most of the learners are given opportunities to interact during English classes. In addition, the learners encounter many difficulties while speaking. Thus, the teachers design collaborative activities adopted as techniques to guide their learners to overcome their difficulties. Furthermore, the teachers provide oral corrective feedback towards their learners' responses

Key terms: Teachers' Guidance. Speaking Difficulties. Classroom Interaction. Teachers' Oral Corrective Feedback.

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General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Learning is a process through which learners obtain information, knowledge and acquire languages. Learning a foreign language requires the acquisition of sufficient understandings about the target language. Indeed, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are fundamental elements in the learning process so as to communicate effectively. Some of the learners acquire the foreign language easily; however, others do not. They may encounter a number of difficulties while learning the language skills. Thus, teachers are required to offer sufficient guidance in order to overcome the difficulties their learners face.

Richards (2008) has argued that most of the learners focus more on developing the speaking skill rather than other skills while learning English as a second language. That is to say, the speaking skill has been given much importance because it allows the learners to achieve their communicative purposes in real life situations. In addition, many researchers have proven that the more learners practise the language, the more they communicate effectively. This is a reason why it is important for teachers to guide their learners by creating interactive classrooms and implementing authentic speaking activities to practise the target language. Ellis (1999) considers interaction as an essential element for developing foreign languages.

Many works have been conducted on the topic of teachers' guidance from different perspectives. The focus in the work done at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou was on the **teaching techniques to integrate shy students in classroom interaction** presented by HAMMOUR and OULD OUALI. The results of the study show that most of the students are shy during classroom interaction. In addition, the most effective techniques used by the teachers are cooperative activities. These techniques

help the students express their ideas and thoughts during class discussions. Another study conducted at the department of English at MMUTO focuses on **developing the speaking skill through classroom interaction** presented by MENAD and MELLAK. On the basis of the results, the study shows that learners' speaking skill would develop as long as they are given opportunities for interaction during speaking classes. However, none of these studies have conducted the topic of teachers' guidance at Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou. The present work sheds light on the techniques teachers use to guide their fourth-year middle school learners encountering speaking difficulties.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The topic of teachers' guidance has been widely explored, especially in the field of language teaching and learning. The main focus of the research is put on the teaching techniques used by the teachers to guide their learners encountering speaking difficulties. The objectives in this investigation are to determine whether learners are given opportunities to interact during English classes or not. The study also explores the obstacles faced by the learners while practising the speaking skill. In addition, the work also aims at investigating whether the teachers provide their learners oral corrective feedback towards their learners' responses or not.

This study is significant in the English Language Teaching classes because it explores the techniques adopted by middle school teachers to guide their learners in classroom interaction. Moreover, the research determines the speaking difficulties encountered by most middle school learners.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Q1: Do teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School give opportunities to their learners to interact?

Q2: Do fourth-year learners of Amyoud Smail Middle School encounter speaking difficulties when they speak English? If yes, what are they?

Q3: What teaching techniques do teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School use to guide their learners to overcome their speaking difficulties?

Q4: Do teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School provide their learners oral corrective feedback towards their learners' responses?

In order to answer the questions mentioned, we suggest the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Most of Amyoud Smail Middle School learners are given opportunities to speak in the classroom.

Hypothesis 2. Learners of Amyoud Smail Middle School encounter different speaking difficulties.

Hypothesis 3. Teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School use suitable techniques to guide their learners to overcome their speaking obstacles.

Hypothesis 4. Teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School provide their learners oral corrective feedback towards their learners' responses.

Research Techniques and Methodology

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, an important data collection instrument “Classroom Observation” has been changed into a questionnaire. Sixty (60) questionnaires are administered to fourth year middle school learners to investigate the speaking difficulties. Moreover, A semi-structured interview containing eleven (11) questions has been conducted with three middle school teachers organised in a meeting. We have asked open-ended questions to make an in-depth exploration of the research topic, informing us about the techniques they implement to involve their learners in classroom interaction. The data collected from the questionnaires are well-organised using the Microsoft Excel Program, whereas, the gathered data from interviews are presented using the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). In order to reach the aim of the study, we have relied on “Responsive Social Contexts of Learning” theory, proposed by the professor Glynn between 1985 and 1987. It includes four features as being context of learners’ initiations, shared authentic activities, reciprocity and mutual influence, and appropriate and contingent feedback. These characteristics are explained in the next chapter.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is designed following the traditional simple model of writing. It is composed of the General Introduction, four chapters and the General Conclusion. First, the general introduction presents the topic of investigation in general and states the problem by establishing a niche. Second, the first chapter is the Review of the Literature. It consists of three sections. The first section is about teachers’ guidance, the second section discusses the speaking skill. The chapter ends up with the theoretical framework which is the theory of Responsive Social Contexts of Learning. The second chapter is the Research Design and Methodology. It identifies the data collection instruments and the procedures of the data analysis. In addition, the results obtained from the previous chapters are presented in a

chapter called The Presentation of the Findings. The last chapter contains the Discussion of the Results. Lastly, the dissertation ends up with a General Conclusion which summarises the whole work. It also indicates limitation of the study and suggestions for further research.

Review of Literature

Introduction

The present chapter accounts for the major works associated with teachers' guidance and seeks to investigate opinions and different views advanced about it within the field of education. It is composed of three sections. The first section aims at reviewing significant literature on teachers' guidance in English classes. It also reviews some definitions of guidance, types of guidance and teachers' guidance. The second section provides definitions of the speaking skill, aspects of speaking, activities to teach the speaking skill and the speaking difficulties encountered by EFL learners. The last section deals with the theoretical framework of our research study which is Glynn's theory of Responsive Social Contexts of Learning.

I. Teachers' Guidance

1. Definition of Guidance

Guidance is one of the complex terms that have been provided several definitions throughout the years. Mapfumo (2001) defines guidance as a help given to someone to enable that person to decide where they want to go and how, and what they want to do and how. The cited definition explains the term guidance as an assistance given to individuals in order to make appropriate decisions and show the way to achieve specific purposes. However, researchers do limit guidance to one definition. According to Bhatnagar and Gupta (1999), guidance is a process of helping the individuals to find solutions to their own problems and accept as their own. Jones (1970) explains guidance as a help given by one person to another in making choices, adjustments and in solving problems. From the cited definitions, it is noticeable that the term guidance can be explained as a process of helping

individuals to accomplish their life goals by overcoming their difficulties and enable them to determine their abilities.

2. Types of Guidance

2.1. Vocational Guidance

This type of guidance is given to students in selecting and preparing for an appropriate vocation. It is concerned with helping individuals to choose and decide in planning their future career. In addition, vocational guidance helps individuals to find out their abilities, capacities, and what they are best fitted for in life. Super (1988: 357) defines vocational guidance as *“the process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself and of his role in the world of work, to test this concept against reality and to convert it into a reality with satisfaction to himself and benefit to society.”* Analysing the definition, one can notice that vocational guidance plays a significant role in students’ lives. It is also a process of guiding individuals or students to develop their potentials, be satisfied about themselves and serve the society.

2.2. Personal Guidance

Personal guidance is defined by Barakatali (2019:83) as *“that type of guidance given to an individual or a person to overcome his problems of personality adjustments”*. The definition explains that personal guidance is concerned with the development and the adjustments of individuals by covering all the problems.

2.3. Educational Guidance

In the field of education, teachers' guidance is a branch of educational guidance because it is concerned with helping pupils. Thus, the present work focuses more on this category of guidance. Educational guidance refers to that guidance that a learner needs during their school life. It helps them to solve problems that they face in schools. Every aspect of school education is strongly associated with educational guidance. In addition, it includes the role of teachers in guiding their learners while encountering difficulties. According to Mallum (2000) educational guidance is a face-to-face interaction between the counsellor and students with the sole aim of helping such students to develop effective needed skills for the manipulation of academic potentialities. To be clearer and more precise, the definitions cited above reveal that educational guidance is continuous efforts made by teachers to offer guidance and assistance for pupils to achieve satisfactory progress and better levels in education.

2.3.1. Teachers' Guidance

It is commonly recognized that teacher plays vital roles in the educational system since the main objective of the teachers is to form competent learners who should be able to use their abilities to solve their life problems relying on what they have learned at school. This is by enhancing positive interaction among learners and helping them to develop their skills. Veda and Martinson (2003) suggest that the teacher plays a significant role in providing opportunities to develop a further understanding of children and youth, to enhance positive interaction with students and to help develop skills to create an effective classroom. In this respect, Brooks and Brooks (1993) summarize a large segment of the literature on descriptions of constructivist teachers. They conceive of a constructivist teacher as someone

who encourages and accepts student autonomy and initiative, to engage in dialogue with the teacher and with one another by asking them questions and seeks elaboration of students' initial responses.

Additionally, constructivist teachers encourage students to engage in dialogues with them and with others. In fact, the teacher is a guide and a facilitator. Meaning that the teacher provides the learners with authentic materials and activities to achieve learners' objectives. Furthermore, the teacher provides constructive feedback to help the learners complete their tasks. Hamada (2015) claims that the teacher is also a provider of authentic materials and activities. Those authentic materials need to be oriented towards doing rather than only knowing such as job interviews, or safety measures towards a pandemic etc.... Additionally, teachers are also required to provide constructive feedback on how well learners are doing towards the completion of tasks. However, the present work discusses the topic of teachers' guidance by integrating learners in classroom interaction.

3.1. Integrating EFL Learners in Classroom Interaction

3.1.1. Definitions of Classroom Interaction

Interaction is a very significant word in English language learning. Wagner (1994: 08) defines interaction as *“reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions. Interaction occurs when these objects and events influence one another.* Thus, interaction occurs from two sides through a mutual exchange via sending and receiving information in order to achieve communicative purposes. Rivers (1987: 4-5) argues:

...Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even 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 ...

The cited definition explains that language learning and knowledge can be increased when students interact and practise the language in real life communication.

3.1.2 Types of Classroom Interaction

Thurmond and Wambach (2004) state that when learners are engaged either with the course content, other learners, the instructor or the technological medium used in the course, they are interacting in the classroom (Thurmond and Wambach, 2004 cited in Mahbubur, 2014). From this point, classroom interaction has four types: learner-course content interaction, learner-learner interaction, learner-teacher interaction and learner-technology interaction. Van Lier (1996) proposes that a classroom interaction contains two major types which present different opportunities for negotiation. In addition, the present study focuses on learner-learner(s) interaction and learner-teacher(s) interaction.

- **Learner-Learner(s) Interaction**

Learner-learner interaction can occur either in group work or in peer work. Lynch (1996), argues that practice is the most beneficial when carried out in collaboration with small groups or peers rather than with the teacher or in a whole-class setting. Harmer (1998) adds that pair work and group work give learners opportunities to express themselves freely without the help of the instructor at each time. Everything is centred on the learner. Furthermore, working in groups or in peers contributes to the reduction of anxiety and inhibition. It also leads to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

- **Teacher-Learner(s) Interaction**

When the teachers interact with their students, they influence the learning and the teaching processes. Harmer (1998:40) claims: *“The way in which the teacher interacts with*

his students is considered as an important skill which enhances the learning and the teaching processes". Tuan & Nhu (2010:02) assert: "in the classroom the teacher often asks question to learners and learners answer the questions and vice versa; or the teacher participates in learning activities. These forms are called teacher learner interaction." Moreover, Harmer (1998) points out that teachers while speaking to their students use body language to reinforce their interaction. Body language has become a part of language techniques used by the teacher during the teaching process especially with the students who have lower levels.

3.2. Aspects of Classroom Interaction

Without negotiation of meaning and teachers' constructive "feedback", there would not be an effective learning. These two aspects are very essential in classroom interaction.

3.2.1. Negotiation of Meaning

Richards and Schmidt (2002) define negotiation of meaning as a process which occurs when speakers seek to prevent misunderstanding. That means that negotiation of meaning is required to avoid misunderstanding with others. When learners negotiate meaning with others, they are given opportunities to exchange messages so that the target language is enhanced and improved. Long (1996: 50) argues: "interaction gives learners opportunities to exchange data with their interlocuters". Learners generally ask for clarifications for better understanding of information to facilitate and ensure the development of the second language acquisition.

3.2.2. Teachers' Feedback

Mackey (2007: 14-15) defines feedback as: "the reactive information that learners receive regarding the linguistic and communicative success or failure of their utterances."

This definition clarifies the term feedback as a reaction received by the learners on what they have produced. When learners receive feedback from others, they pay attention to the form of errors and adjust it. Mackey (2007: 30) asserts: *“through interaction that involves feedback, the attention(s) of the learners are paid to the form of errors and are pushed to create modification”*. In addition, Bower and Kawagushi (2011) categorise teachers’ corrective feedback into two types which can either be oral feedback or written feedback. However, the present study is concerned with the teachers’ oral corrective feedback in classroom interaction. This type of feedback can either be implicit corrective feedback in which the teacher pushes the learners to modify and adjust their utterances indirectly, or explicit corrective feedback that helps the learners correct their errors in a clear and direct manner by themselves.

II. Speaking Skill

1. Definition of Speaking

Speaking is one of the most important skills used to produce verbal utterances to convey meaning. Ur (1996: 120) states: *“Speaking is the productive aural/oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning.”* However, the use of non-verbal language is noticeably considered as a part of speaking. Ur (1996) adds that of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important skill. Thus, any foreign language learners ought to improve the speaking skill during their learning process. Furthermore, speaking is a means for expressing meanings in order to interact with others. Cameron (2001: 40) affirms: *“Speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them”*.

The speaking skill permits us to do many things and it is a reason of learning English as a Foreign Language. Lindsay and Knight (2006: 58) mention the importance of speaking:

We speak for many reasons- to be sociable, because we want something, because we want other people to do something, to do something for someone else, to respond to someone else, to express our feelings or opinion about something, to exchange information, to refer to an action or event in the past, present, or future, the possibility of something happening, and so on.

This means that speaking is a process of sending and receiving messages using verbal language and expression; however, the use of non-verbal symbols is also considered as a part of speaking.

2. Aspects of Speaking

2.1. Accuracy

Accuracy refers to speaking using correct grammar and vocabulary. In other words, it is *“the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences”* (Richard and Schmidt, 2002:204). Accuracy has been defined by Skehan (1996) as referring *“to how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language.”* Cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005: 139). To be clearer, accuracy is to speak the language slowly and use grammatically correct sentences.

2.2. Fluency

Thronbury (2008: 93) states that *“Fluency is a skill. It is the ability to process the language speedily and easily”*. The definition explains the term fluency as speaking the language quickly and easily, but also it is to speak the language using a good pronunciation and suitable intonation without hesitation. Hedge (2000:261) claims: *“Fluency is responding coherently within the turns of the conversation, linking words and phrases, using intelligible*

pronunciation and appropriate intonation, and doing all of this without undue hesitation". EFL learners assume that fluency is needed to speak quickly without pauses. Moreover, Thornbury (2005) does not neglect the idea that speed is an important factor in fluency, but he also does not neglect pauses because speakers need to take breath. Native speakers also need pauses to let the listeners get the idea.

3. Tasks to Teach the Speaking Skill

Harmer (2001) introduces some authentic speaking activities that are taught in speaking sessions such as role plays, discussion and information-gap activities.

3.1. Role Play

Learners often feel comfortable when working in groups and get opportunities in choosing their roles in conversations and dialogues. This technique engages the pupils in their real-life communication and encourages learners to practise and develop their communicative skill. This kind of task creates a good ambiance and it is an enjoyable task that encourages interaction in the classroom.

3.2. Discussion Activities

In a language classroom, discussion is the most common activity for teaching speaking. It allows students or learners to exchange their ideas and give their opinions and arguments about a specific topic. Byrne (1986: 67) states that *"by discussion is meant by any exchange of ideas and opinions either a basis, with you (teacher) the mediator and to some extent as the participator or within the context of group with the student talking among them"*. The aim of this discussion then is to develop students' or learners' speaking skill and

to share also opinions and debate points of view. It is an effective activity since it focuses on what students say.

3.3. Information Gap-activities

Information gap is a communicative activity which aims to exchange information between teacher and learner or learner and learner. In this type of activity one learner can have more information, whereas, the other does not. According to Davies (2000: 43): *“this is when one speaker knows information the other speaker does not”*.

3.4. Audio-Visual Aids

Rather (2004) defines visual aids as those instructional devices which are used in the classroom to encourage learning and make it easier and motivating. The material like models, charts, film strip, projectors, radio, television, maps etc called instructional aids. Learners are interested in learning the language through pictures, songs, videos, and films. They help learners to memorise expressions which will be used in their future. Teaching speaking using audio-visual aids provides a great opportunity to students to speak and develop accuracy and fluency.

4. Speaking Difficulties Encountered by EFL Learners

Ur (1996) identifies four main obstacles that students face when speaking a foreign language in the classroom.

4.1. Inhibition

Inhibition is caused by issues such as fear of making mistakes and shyness when a student wants to participate in the classroom. In this respect, Ur (1996: 111) states:

“Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Worried about, making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.” That is to say, most of the learners are frequently worried and feel stressed of being criticized and discriminated by their classmates.

4.2. Nothing to Say

It has been noticed that students have no desire to express their thoughts and give their views about a specific topic. Most of them prefer to keep silent or say “I have no idea” this is owing to being demotivated in expressing themselves and sharing their thoughts. Rivers (1968) explains that the teacher may ask his students to talk about an uncongenial topic or about an unknown subject. Thus, they have nothing to say whether in the native language or foreign one.

4.3. Low Participation

Burchfield & Sappington (1999: 290) define participation as *“the number of unsolicited responses volunteered.”* Thus, participation can be defined as the act of getting involved in an activity or event voluntarily. Low participation is about the amount of each student’s time of talking. Some students tend to be dominant while the others are uncertain of what they will say, so they keep silent.

4.4. Mother-Tongue Interference

Learners tend to use their mother tongue because they feel more at ease. According to Baker and Westrup (2003: 12) *“barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language.”* In this view, learners who use terms and expressions borrowed from their mother tongue,

encounter difficulties to use the target language correctly. It is a result of lacking target language vocabulary.

III. Theoretical Framework

1. Ted Glynn's Theory of Responsive Social Learning Contexts

Ted Glynn (1985) came with the theory of social learning "Responsive Social Contexts of Learning" in his inaugural lecture at the University of Otago, entitled Contexts of Independent Learning. Glynn's theory develops the works of socio-cultural theorists among them, Vygotsky's Social Constructivism theory (1978). Glynn (1985:5-6) affirms:

It is within responsive social contexts that individuals acquire not only specific skills but also generic knowledge about how to learn... we need to discover and analyse those characteristics of responsive, social environments which support and promote independent learning.

In order to support and promote the objectives of independent learning, it is necessary to explore and analyse the four characteristics of responsive social contexts of learning proposed by Glynn (1985).

1.1. Learner Initiations

Promoting initiations by the learner is basically the first characteristic of a responsive learning context. Learners taking control of their learning should be able to initiate interactions with others. For example, a classroom teacher asks a learner to draw a tree. Then, asks questions about the drawing retaining control of interaction. The teacher is more responsive when setting up the classroom with series of authentic materials or activities, and expects the learner initiates interaction. The cited example introduces a procedure known as Incidental Teaching (IT). It is a teaching technique whereby the learner increasingly develops the language by initiating interaction. Hart and Risley (1980) define Incidental

Teaching as a teaching technique used to get elaborated language by waiting for someone to initiate conversation about the topic and then responding in ways that ask for more language from an individual. Furthermore, Hart and Risley (1980) have developed (IT) in which a teacher takes advantage of naturally occurring “incidents” or situations to provide opportunities for the learners towards their learning.

1.2. Shared Authentic Activities

Shared authentic activities is categorized as a second characteristic of a responsive learning context. The concept of shared activity is basically important within responsive social learning contexts. This context provides the learner opportunities to practise and be engaged in a shared task with more skilled performers. That is, both less-skilled and more skilled learners are integrated in similar activities so that positive relationship is established. This type of context qualifies as a “primary developmental context” in which children learn both intellectual and social skills (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, a teacher teaching and practising a second language at school is also acquiring skills, especially, developing the speaking skill. In addition, by integrating the less-skilled and the more-skilled participants in a shared activity, the teacher provides an effective model of skilled performance. However, the teacher also avoids being engaged in controlling learners’ behaviours. To sum up, by sharing these activities, both less-skilled and more-skilled participants are given opportunities to work together, exchange knowledge, information and attaining the goal of involving learners in classroom interaction.

1.3. Reciprocity and Mutual Influence

Reciprocal and mutual influence is typically the third characteristic of a responsive learning context. Each participant engaged in a shared activity would rather stand to gain

knowledge and information, but also influences and changes the behaviour of each other. To illustrate, at schools, less-skilled and more-skilled learners are engaged in shared activities in which each party influences and modifies the behaviour of the other one in order to maintain positive relationship. Meanwhile, they are involved in an effective classroom interaction.

1.4. Appropriate and Contingent Feedback

The fourth characteristic of a responsive learning context refers to the amount and type of feedback the teacher provides for the learners' initiations. A feedback is a powerful way to address the learners needs whereby the learners monitor, control their own learning and facilitate the acquisition of the skills. Ur (1996) define feedback as information that is provided to the learners about their performance of a learning task, usually with the objectives of improving this performance. Additionally, it is important for teachers to provide corrective responses or positive feedback which should be used to praise learners for performing properly and appropriately (Rydhal,2005). It is worth pointing out that the reinforcement for task completion rather activity is beneficial in which the learners get involved in effective classroom interaction.

Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory

Ted Glynn's Theory of Social Contexts of Learning (1985) develops the perspective of Vygotsky's 'Social Constructivism' theory (1978). It emphasizes the fact that learners construct their own understanding. Additionally, social constructivists argue that the world we experience and the individual we find ourselves to be the first and for most the product of social process (Cromby and Nightingale,1999). This explains that knowledge is constructed by experiencing things and interaction in social environments. One of the most

eminent social constructivists, Vygotsky (1978) argues that knowledge is constructed through collaborative and interactive processes between learners in social environments.

Drawing on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, Vygotsky proposed the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978:90) affirms:

An essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalised, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievements.

It is obvious that the ZPD is the area where learning activities should be focused between what the learners can achieve independently and what they can achieve with teachers' guidance. This can be explained differently that learning occurs primarily through social interaction with others. to illustrate, interaction with teachers or with learners.

Conclusion

This chapter allows us to review the literature relevant to teachers' guidance and speaking difficulties encountered by EFL learners. It is divided into three sections. The first one is about teachers' guidance. It contains some definitions of guidance, types of guidance and teachers' guidance. The second section provides definitions of the speaking skill, aspects of speaking, activities to teach the speaking skill and the speaking difficulties encountered by EFL learners. Furthermore, the third section deals with an appropriate theory related to our topic of investigation which is Responsive Social Contexts for Learning, proposed by Glynn in 1985 to achieve the objectives of the research work.

**Research Design
And Methodology**

Introduction

This present chapter covers the methodological section and the research instruments of the present study. It describes the techniques and the procedures of data collection followed by the procedures of data analysis in order to explore the techniques used by the teachers of English of Amyoud Smail Middle School to guide their learners encountering speaking difficulties. The chapter is divided into two sections, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures. The first section deals with instruments to gather data. Because of Covid-19 pandemic, all schools were closed from 12th March to 23rd August 2020. Questionnaires have been administered to sixty (60) fourth-year middle school pupils. We have been given fifteen (15) minutes to hand out the questionnaires and explain the key terms. Besides, interviews with three middle school teachers have been conducted during revisions of the Brevet examination. The second section presents the data analysis methods used in order to generate valid and reliable results.

1. Context and Participants of the Study

Our research work is carried out at Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou. The target population is fourth-year middle school pupils and their teachers during the academic year 2019/2020. The present research aims at investigating the techniques implemented by teachers in the classroom to guide their pupils encountering difficulties to speak English. In this respect, sixty (60) questionnaires have been administered to fourth-year middle school pupils during revisions and preparations for their brevet examination. In addition, three (03) interviews have been conducted with teachers of English of Amyoud Smail Middle School in order to share information about the ways they use to guide and help their learners during the speaking sessions.

2. Procedures of Data Collection

2.1. Learners' Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a useful tool to gather data. Besides, it is a technique used to ask questions about someone's opinions and ideas on a specific topic. The questionnaire contains a series of written questions and it is applied to obtain participants' responses towards certain issues. According to Wilson and MC Lean (1994) the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collection survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher. Cohen et al. (2007) adds that the questionnaire comprises two kinds of questions: closed and open-ended questions. In the former, the participants are asked to select the answer from the list that the researcher provides them with, but in the latter, they are asked to answer in their own words.

This questionnaire contains eleven (11) questions and it is divided into three (03) sections. It attempts to investigate the pupils' views about their difficulties while speaking during English classes. It also determines the techniques used by their teachers to overcome their difficulties and improve their speaking skill.

2.1.1. Piloting the Questionnaire

Piloting the questionnaire is to pre-test the questionnaire with a small number of participants before being administered to all informants. In addition, piloting helps the researcher identify unclear questions and determine whether the questions are understandable by the students. Doody and Doody (2015) state that piloting is often used to test the techniques, methods, questionnaires and interviews. It shows how they function together in a particular context. Thus, the students' questionnaire has been piloted to check

if the questions are answerable and understandable. The questionnaire has been piloted with five (5) participants before being administered to the whole sample.

2.2. Teachers' Interview

Interview is a powerful instrument used to collect data. It is mainly used as a technique to ask questions about someone's opinions, ideas and thoughts on a specific topic.

Pamela (2006: 157) states: "*An interview represents a meeting or dialogue between people where personal and social interaction occur*". The definition explains that an interview is a meeting in which the interviewee cooperates with the interviewer by replying to series of questions about a specific topic.

In our research study, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with three (03) teachers of English of Amyoud Smail Middle School. The interviews have been conducted between the 25th and 27th of August 2020 to explore the techniques implemented by the teachers to guide their learners by note taking and the use of a mobile phone to record the interviewees. The interview contains open ended questions about their ways of guiding their pupils who encounter the speaking difficulties and the activities they select for their learners to improve their speaking skill. Using interviews as a data collection instrument allow us to obtain a profound study and a deep exploration of issues, and collect data about both teachers and learners, but only for smaller groups. Richards (2001) asserts that interviews allow for a more in-depth exploration of issues than is possible with a questionnaire, though they take longer time to administer and are only for a smaller population.

3. Data Analysis Procedures

In our research study, we have used the mixed-method research. The strong reason behind selecting this technique is the fact that our study findings are quantitative and qualitative.

3.1. The Quantitative Method

The quantitative method is a method used to present numerical data. Besides, in order to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire, we have relied on the Microsoft Excel Program. The Excel Program is concerned with statistical analysis and representation of the quantitative data. In this software program, the results are presented in tables, pie charts and histograms.

3.2. The Qualitative Method

The qualitative method is used in order to present non-numerical data. It attempts to describe the findings and the results obtained from the interview. We have opted to use the Qualitative Content Analysis method (QCA) for the analysis of the open-ended questions. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) define QCA as *“a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”*. This means that QCA is a method of describing, analysing and interpreting the results and the outcomes obtained from the open-ended questions.

Conclusion

To conclude, this section sheds light on the research design of our topic of investigation through the presentation of the data collection instruments followed by the

procedures of the data analysis. The data collection instruments contain an interview for middle school teachers and a questionnaire for their pupils. The objective of these instruments is to explore students' speaking difficulties and the strategies used by the teachers to guide them. Then, the collected data are analysed using the Microsoft Excel Program which is a commonly useful technique used in social sciences for the analysis of quantitative data. On the other hand, QCA is adopted to analyse and interpret the open-ended questions used in the interview. Finally, the following chapter presents the findings obtained in the current research.

Presentation of the findings

Introduction

The present chapter accounts the presentation of the results and the findings obtained from the questionnaire that had been administered to fourth year middle school pupils and interview conducted with fourth year teachers of English at Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou. The results are presented in form of tables, diagrams and pie charts. The chapter is divided into two sections, the first one is about the presentation of the results obtained from the pupils' questionnaire and the second section contains the presentation of the findings of the teachers' interview.

I. Presentation of the Questionnaires' Results

I.1. Presentation of the Pupils' Questionnaire

The first data collection tool used in our research is the questionnaire. It has been conducted with sixty (60) fourth-year middle school learners. This questionnaire helps us to bring more details to answer our research hypotheses and research questions.

Section one: General question

Question 1: Do you like studying English as a school subject? Justify your answer

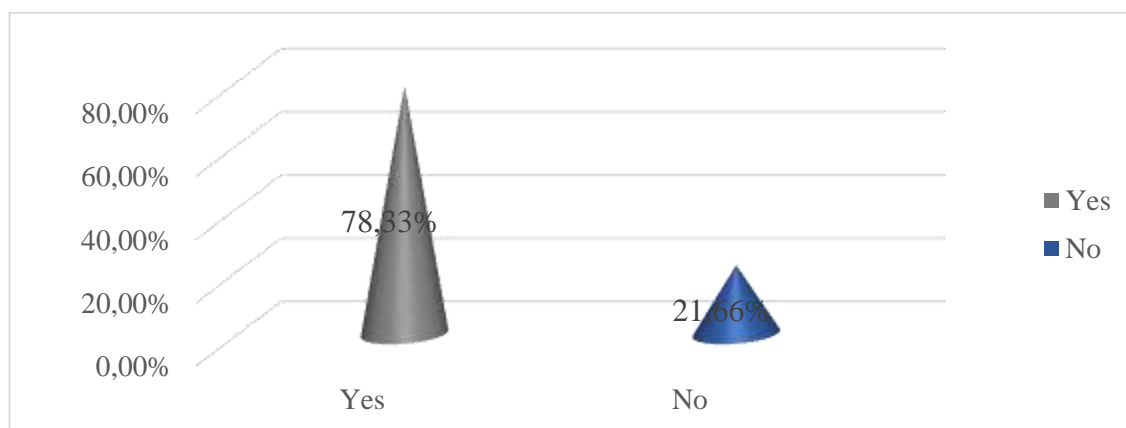


Diagram 1: Pupils' Attitudes towards Studying English as a School Subject

The results obtained from the diagram above show that a large number of participants (78,33%) like studying English at school since they are motivated by their teachers. However, few of them (21,66%) have answered by no. It means that only the minority does not like studying English because they think that English is difficult to learn.

Section two: The Speaking Skill

Question 2: Do you enjoy speaking sessions? justify your answer.

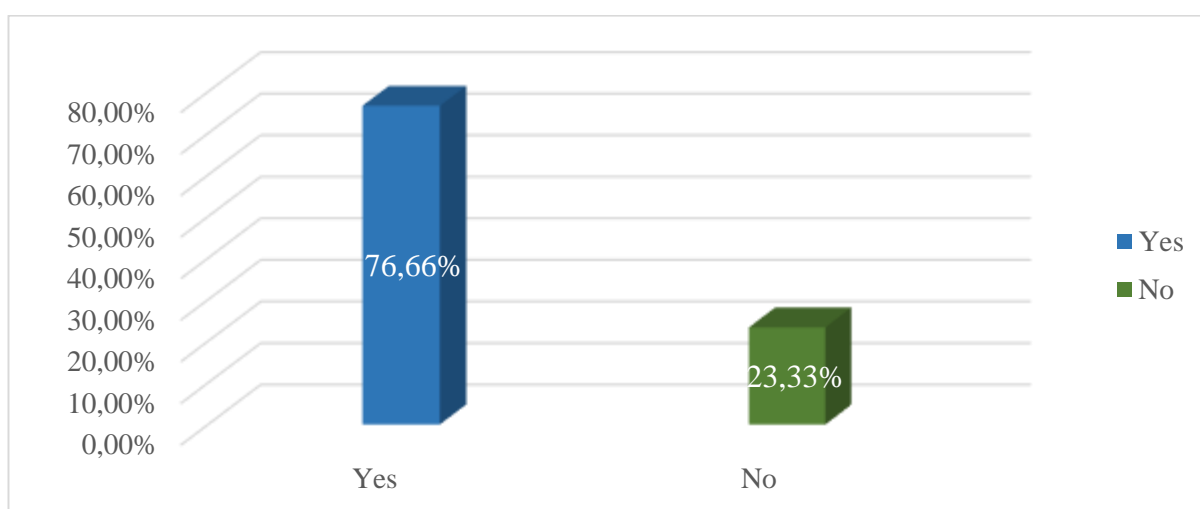


Diagram 2: Learners' Attitudes towards Speaking Sessions

From the gathered data, we notice that only the minority of pupils (23,33%) do not enjoy speaking sessions since they encounter a number of difficulties when they speak; whereas, the majority of the pupils (76,66%) like speaking sessions since opportunities are given to improve their speaking skill through expressing themselves freely.

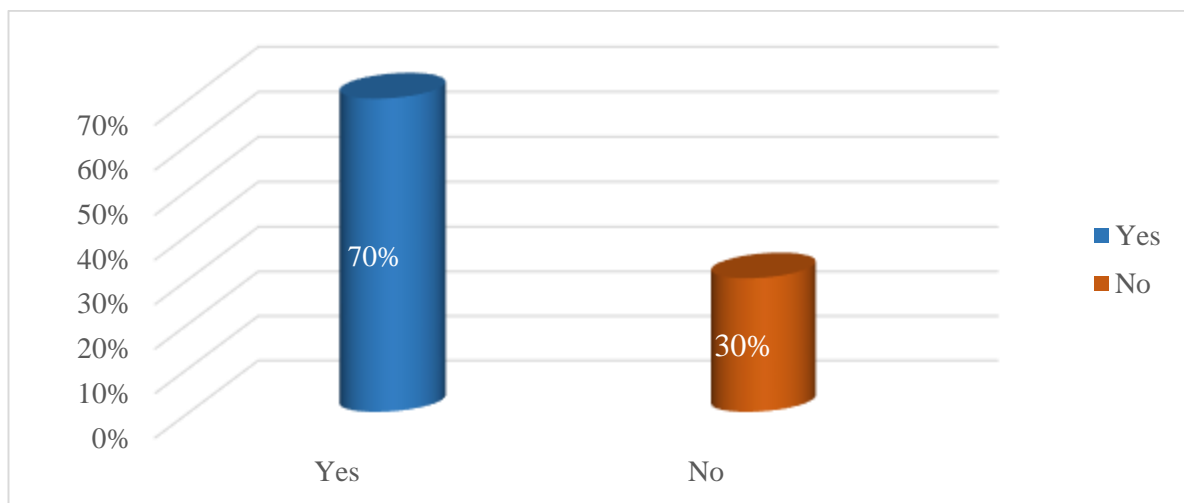
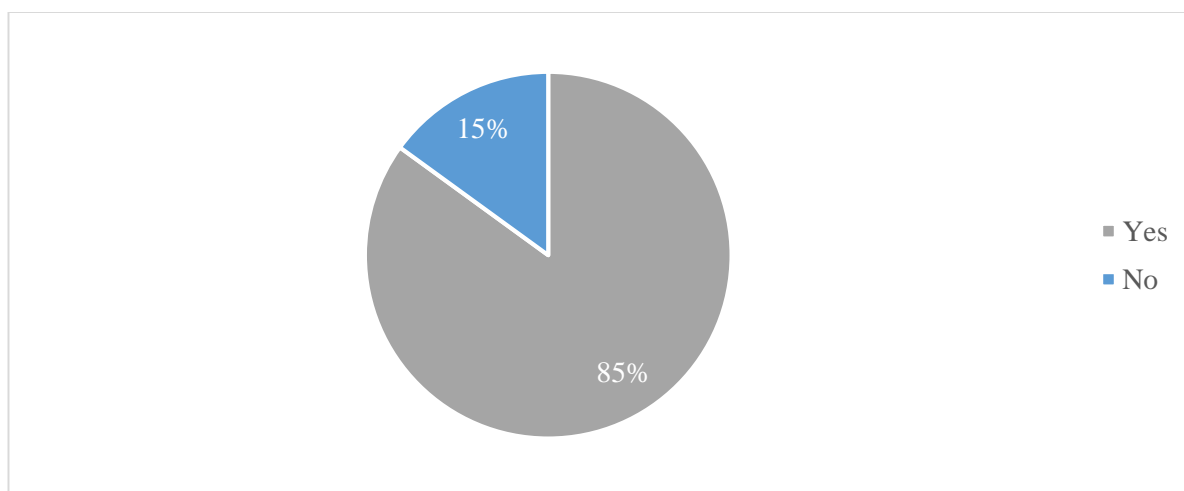
Question 3: Are you able to express yourself during class discussion?**Diagram 3: Pupils' Abilities Towards Speaking English during Classroom****Discussions**

Diagram 3 represents the pupils' abilities to express themselves in English during classroom discussions. Thus, a large number of participants (70%) have answered by yes. However, a minority of pupils (30%) have answered that they cannot express themselves in English. They use their mother-tongue instead because they do not acquire enough vocabulary.

Question 4: Do you interact with your teacher in the classroom?**Diagram 4: Learners' Interaction with their Teachers**

The results displayed from this question reveal that a large number of participants (85%) interact with their teachers inside the classroom, whereas, (15%) affirm that there is no interaction with their teacher, they keep silent during classes.

Question 5: How often does your teacher give you the opportunities to speak in the classroom?

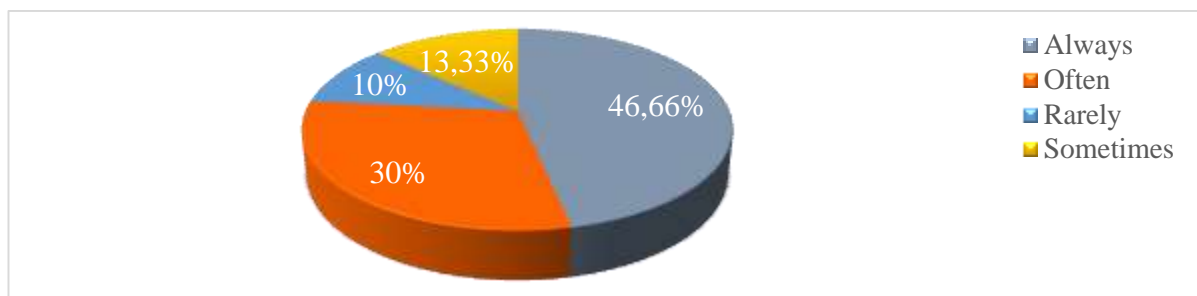


Diagram 5: Pupils' Opportunities towards Speaking English in the Classroom

It is shown in the pie chart above that most pupils (46,66%) affirm that their teacher always provides them opportunities to speak. Thirty percent (30%) claim that they are often given opportunities to speak while ten percent (13,33%) say that they sometimes express themselves. However, a small number of informants (10%) state that they are rarely given opportunities to speak in the classroom.

Question 6: What difficulties do you encounter when you speak English?

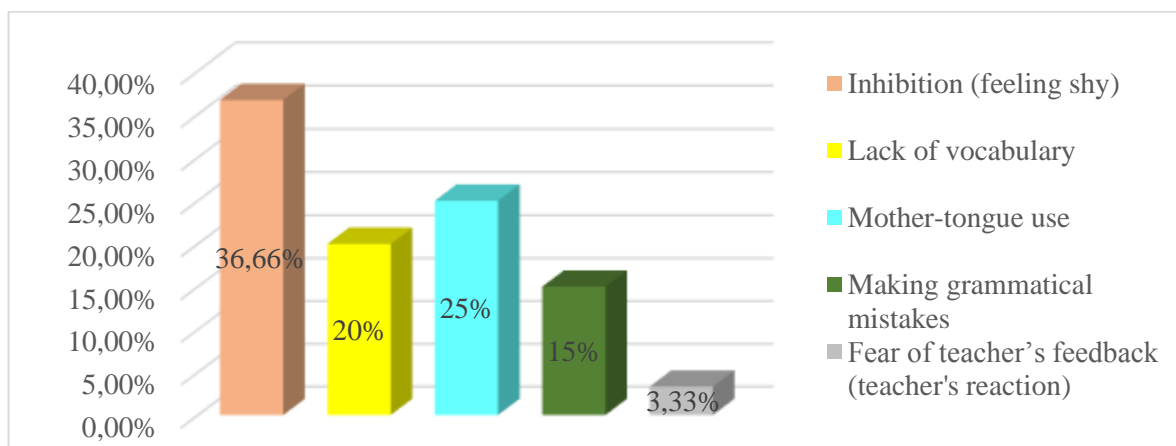


Diagram 6: Pupils' Difficulties when Speaking English

From the diagram above, we notice that the speaking difficulties are varied. A large number among the respondents (36,66%) have answered that they feel shy and fear of making mistakes while speaking during classes. (25%) of them affirm that they use mother-tongue because they lack vocabulary. Only a small number of participants (3,33%) assert that they fear their teachers' feedback while they speak.

Section three: Teachers' Guidance during Classroom Interaction

Question 7: Working in groups or in pairs during class discussions increases the speaking skill. Do you believe that the statement is true or false? Justify your answer.

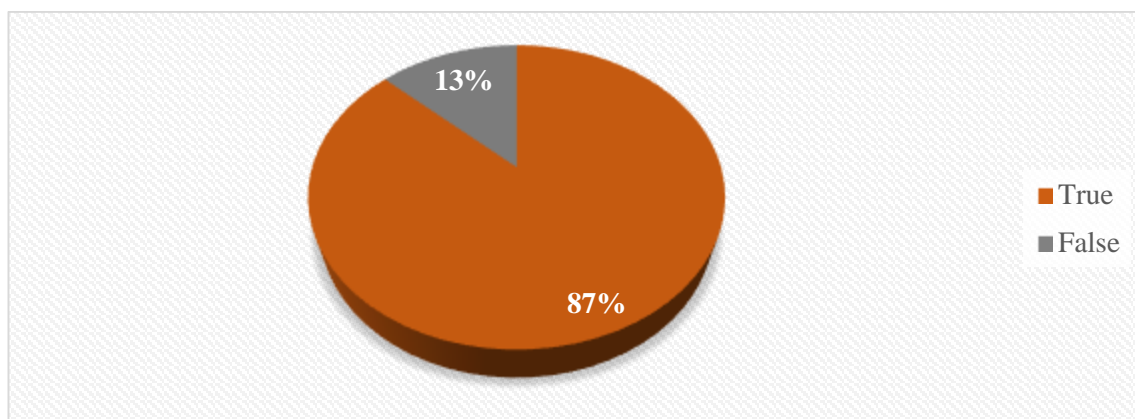


Diagram 7: Learners' Views on Working in Collaboration during Classroom Interaction

The aim of the question is to explore the learners' views on ways of developing the speaking skill through working in collaboration during classroom interaction. As shown in the pie chart a large number of learners (87%) have answered by 'True'. They believe that working in collaboration increases the speaking skill. However, only (13%) of them answered by 'False' since they do not enjoy to work in groups.

Question 8: Do you prefer working in groups during class discussions? Why?

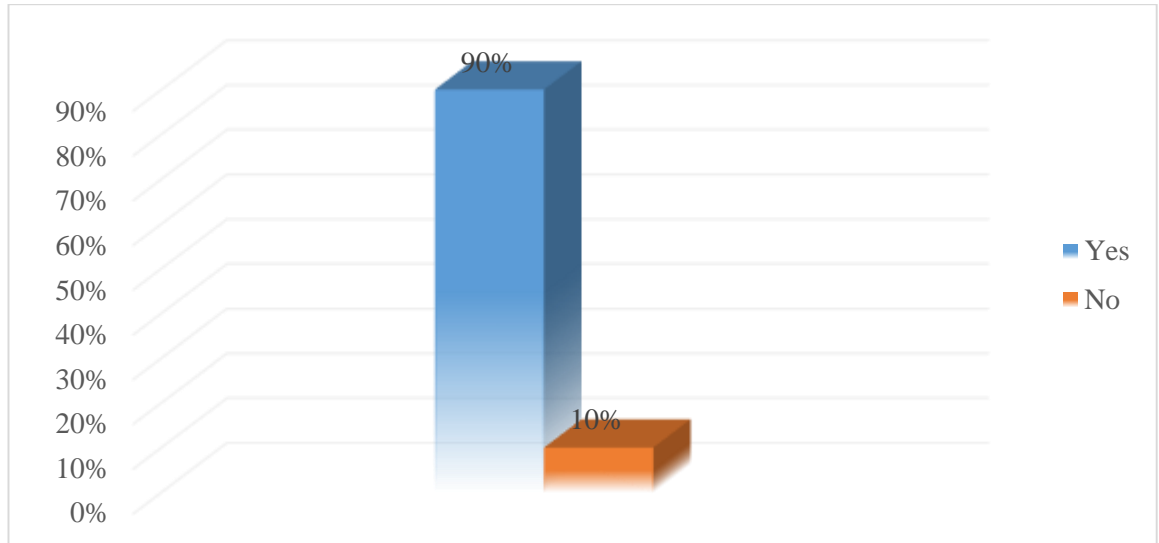


Diagram 8: Learners Preferences toward Collaborative Works during Classroom Interaction

The aim of the question is to explore whether the learners prefer working in collaboration or not. On the basis of the results, the majority of learners (90%) have answered that they enjoy practising group work activities since they share knowledge and interact freely. This helps them to increase opportunities to speak. Only the minority of them (10%) affirm that they like individual work.

Question 9: Which of these activities do you enjoy getting more involved in speaking sessions?

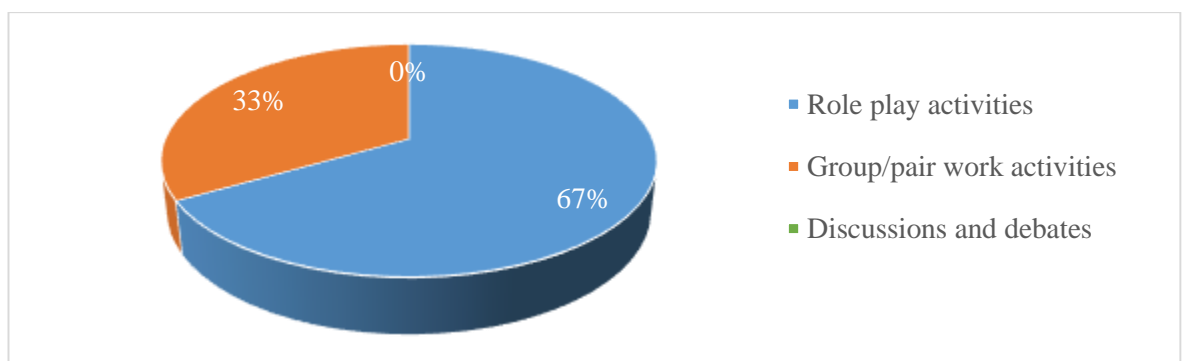


Diagram 9: Pupils' Attitudes toward Authentic Speaking Activities

The aim of this question is to determine the authentic activities which learners enjoy to use during classroom discussions. The results obtained show that a large number of informants (66,66%) prefer practising role play activities. Furthermore, they believe that such activities provide them with opportunities to improve their communicative skill. (33,33%) of them claim that working in pairs or groups train them to speak fluently. However, discussions and debates are not concerned with in the middle school.

Question 10: Participation and interaction during classroom instruction is beneficial since it enhances your self-confidence and develops the proficiency in using English language. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
Strongly agree	38	63,33%
Agree	22	36,66%
Disagree	00	0%
Strongly disagree	00	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 1: Learners' Attitudes toward the Benefits of Participation and Interaction during Classroom Interaction

The table above demonstrates that most of the participants (63,33%) strongly agree with the statement. They strongly believe that participation and interaction during classes develop the proficiency in using the English language and enhance self-confidence. Only (33,66%) of the learners agree with the statement and no one has selected the option "disagree".

Question 11: When you and your classmates make errors during classroom interaction, how does your teacher react?

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
Teacher waits until you finish speaking	43	71,66%
Teacher uses body language	11	18,33%
Teacher rephrases (acts) immediately	06	10%
Teacher neither interrupts, nor corrects the errors	0	0
Total	60	100%

Table 2: Teachers' Corrective Feedback during Classroom Interaction

As shown in the table above, more than (71,66%) of learners affirm that the teachers wait until the learners finish speaking. (18,33%) of them state that the teachers use the body language to correct their learners while they speak. However, a small number of participants (10%) claim that the teachers react immediately while their learners find difficulties or make errors. Thus, the teachers' corrective feedback is considered by the learners as a very important factor to overcome the speaking difficulties and avoid making mistakes.

II. Presentation of the Interviews' Results

II.1 Presentation of the Teachers' Interview Results

This interview is directed to fourth year middle school teachers. They have answered eleven (11) questions about the teaching techniques they use to guide their learners encountering speaking difficulties.

Question 1: How long have you been teaching English at this school?

The question aims to investigate whether the teachers are experienced or not. The first participant answers that she has been teaching English for four years. The second respondent replies: *“I have been teaching English for twenty-eight years”*. The third teacher says: *“I have been teaching English for twenty years”*.

Question 2: Do you provide your learners sufficient opportunities to speak during oral sessions? If yes, explain how.

All the interviewed teachers answer by “yes”, they provide their learners opportunities to speak. The first informant explains that due to the insufficient time devoted to speaking activities, she designs group work activities to involve most of her learners in classroom participation. The second respondent justifies her answer by saying: *“I ask series of questions to make my learners speak maintaining the control of classroom interaction”*. The third teacher claims that she pays more attention to make the silent learners speak during classes.

Question 3: Lightbown and Spada (1990:443) suggest: *“Accuracy, fluency and overall communicative skills are probably best developed through instruction that is primarily meaning-based but, in which guidance is provided through timely form-focus activities and correction in context”*. **Do you agree? Why?**

The three informants agree with Lightbown and Spada’s quote. However, the explanations vary from one teacher to another. The first teacher claims: *“when I provide my learners a set of activities to practise. Then I offer them guidance by providing them my corrective feedback toward their performance. I notice that the learners start confidently correct their errors by themselves”*. The second respondent affirms that the learners need to

practise the language to speak fluently. This can be by guiding the learners through providing suitable authentic tasks to practise and correct them. The last teacher assumes that learning occurs through the dynamic roles of both teachers and learners. This can be with teachers' guidance through providing the learners activities followed by correction because the teachers' intervention to correct learners' errors is very important in improving both learners' competence and performance.

Question 4: Do you ask your pupils to initiate (start) a conversation with you? Explain how.

The three participants affirm that they ask their learners to initiate a conversation. However, the explanations differ from one another. The first teacher says: *"Most of the time, I ask questions and the learners answer. I encourage them to speak even though they make mistakes"*. The second informant explains that she asks series of questions to make their learners initiate the conversation. The third teacher asserts through the presentation of an interesting idea or a topic, she asks the learners to comment, show interests and give opinions to encourage them more to speak.

Question 5: What difficulties do your pupils encounter while learning the speaking skill?

All the teachers confirm that inhibition and mother-tongue use are the most frequent difficulties while learning the speaking skill. They say that most of their learners use their mother-tongue and most of the time they feel shy while speaking. However, the second informant adds: *"learners sometimes do not speak because they have nothing to say"*.

Question 6: Working in collaboration with learners leads to the overcoming of the speaking difficulties. What do you think about the statement?

All the respondents confirm that working in collaboration with learners leads to overcome the speaking difficulties. The first teacher believes that when she exchanges ideas, thoughts and knowledge, the learners will be able to avoid making a lot of errors. Thus, they correct their errors by themselves. The second respondent says: *“In my opinion, working in collaboration increases opportunities to create a motivational and comfortable atmosphere where the learners feel free to interact and exchange information. This contributes to overcome the difficulties while speaking”*. The last teacher says that she always supports and promotes the techniques of working in collaboration during her classes. She adds: *“when more-skilled and less-skilled learners share the activities, they exchange knowledge and develop the speaking skill”*.

Question 7: Do you think that improving the pupils’ speaking skill can be through interaction with the teacher? Justify your answer.

All the teachers confirm that improving the learners’ speaking skill can be through interaction with the teacher. However, they all argued that the speaking skill can also be improved differently. The first respondent says: *“Learners can also improve their speaking skill through interaction between the learners and their peers such as classmates and friends”*. The second informant claims that the speaking skill can also be increased through watching movies and listening to music. Additionally, the use of speech shadowing technique is helpful. It is mainly used to initiate and copy the ways the native speakers say things. The third teacher says that practicing the language in social environments improve the speaking skill.

Question 8: Do you take your pupils' interests and needs when designing speaking activities? If yes, explain how?

The answers obtained from the question show that all the teachers take their learners' needs into consideration before designing speaking activities. The first informant says: *"before I design a task, I take my learners' weaknesses into account to reach the objective of the activity"*. The second respondent claims that she selects suitable activities that interest their learners such as funny tasks in which the learners will not get bored and demotivated. The third participant explains that she considers their learners' needs as a fundamental building block for successful behaviour, teaching and learning. Therefore, she adds: *"I choose suitable tasks so as the learners feel motivated to work on achieving the objectives of the tasks"*.

Question 9: Which authentic activities do you design to involve your learners in oral sessions?

The results obtained from this question show that all the informants design the same authentic speaking activities. They say that role play activities, group work activities, information gap activities and discussions are the most useful and interesting tasks guide and involve all learners in oral sessions.

Question 10: Do you provide your pupils with corrective feedback when performing a speaking task? If yes, how?

The three informants answered by "yes". They claim that they provide the learners with corrective feedback when performing speaking tasks. The first teacher says: *"Learners always need corrective feedback to overcome their errors. However, I do not interrupt them,*

I wait until they finish speaking". However, the two other respondents state that they provide their corrective feedbacks once the learners finish speaking, using body language.

Question 11: What is the importance of speaking in the learning process?

The first teacher argues that speaking is a productive skill through which the learners express their thoughts and feelings by saying what they need in real life situation. The second informant adds: "*learners learn a language to communicate and the basis of communication is speaking*". The third respondent claims that speaking plays a dominant role in communication, it allows the learners to reach the desired goal in real life situations.

Conclusion

At the end, the presented chapter has interpreted and explained the different answers obtained from the teachers' interviews as well as the learners' questionnaires. It is persuasively noticeable that the answers vary from one informant to another. The final results of the learners' questionnaire are presented in form of tables, bar charts and pie charts, whereas, the findings displayed from the teachers' interviews have been presented in quotes or in reported quotations. The next chapter will discuss and analyse the findings gathered from the research instruments.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

The present chapter aims at discussing the findings of the research. The results are obtained from the learners' questionnaire administered to the fourth-year learners of Amyoud Smail Middle School. In addition to the learners' questionnaire, interviews with three teachers have also been conducted to collect data. Furthermore, the findings are interpreted and discussed together owing to the similarities that exist between the outcomes gathered from these two powerful research instruments. Besides, the results are interpreted according to Ted Glynn's Theory of Responsive Social Contexts of Learning (1985), and discussed in relation with the research questions and the advanced hypotheses cited in the General Introduction.

I. Discussion of the Learners' Questionnaires and Teachers' Interviews

A semi-structured interview has been conducted with three (3) teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School. It contains eleven (11) questions. This interview helps us to obtain detailed answers in relation to our research questions and hypotheses. In addition to the interview, questionnaires have also been administered to sixty (60) fourth-year middle school learners containing eleven (11) close-ended questions to support and confirm the advanced hypotheses cited in the General Introduction.

I.1. Learners' Opportunities to Speaking English in the Classroom

From the results displayed in the previous chapter, it is revealed that most of the learners are given opportunities to interact during classes. The results obtained from the second question of the teachers' interview reveal that the three teachers provide their learners opportunities to speak. They all assert that they design group work activities to create an

interactive classroom. Moreover, they ask a series of questions to make their learners speak and practise the language in the classroom. Scrivener (2005:146) argues: “*There is no point knowing a lot about language if you can’t use it*”. This means that it is not sufficient to acquire knowledge about the target language as long as the language is not regularly used and practised by the learners in the classroom. The teachers prefer designing group work activities to create motivational atmosphere and interactive classroom. In addition to the results obtained from the teachers’ interview, the findings obtained from the third question of the learners’ questionnaire demonstrate that most of the learners (85%) interact with their teachers while the minority (15%) prefer keeping silent (see diagram 5). It is possible that they have nothing to say or they might be shy to speak in front of the others. Additionally, the majority of the learners (46,66%) have confirmed that they are “always” given opportunities to speak during classes while (30%) claim that they “often” interact in English sessions. The rates clearly show that the frequency the learners’ interaction is very high. However, only the minority (10%) have said that they “rarely” speak. It is due to the large number of pupils in the classroom or it may also reveal that the time devoted to speaking activities is not sufficient to make all the learners speak.

For further investigation about opportunities given for the learners to initiate interaction in the classroom, the findings obtained from the fourth question of the teachers’ interview demonstrate that the three teachers maintain a total control of interaction. Two teachers have stated that they encourage their learners to initiate interaction by asking series of questions and the learners answer or vice versa. The teachers also propose some interesting topics to make their learners comment, ask questions and give their opinions.

In addition, the speaking skill has been given much importance in the learning process. In this regard, Ur (1996) claims that of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most vital element. This can be argued by the three middle school teachers while being interviewed. The outcomes gathered from question eleven (11) in the teachers' interview have confirmed that the speaking skill is of a great importance. To illustrate, the second teacher claims that the learners learn a language in order to communicate and the basis of communication is speaking. Besides, the third teacher argues: "*speaking plays a dominant role in communication. It allows the learners to reach their desired goal in real life situations*". In this regard, it is noticeably recognised that the teachers are aware of the importance of interaction in the learning process. According to Brown's quotation (1994:12): "*Interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication. It is what communication is all about*". speaking skill is extremely important since without its mastery, there would be no successful communication. This is why the teachers should provide their learners opportunities to interact and use the language in the classroom.

These results support and confirm the advanced hypothesis (Hp1) mentioned in the General Introduction that most of fourth-year learners of Amyoud Smail Middle School are given opportunities to interact during English classes.

I.2 The Speaking Difficulties Encountered by EFL Learners

While learning the speaking skill, the outcomes clearly show that the learners encounter many difficulties. These difficulties are noticeably seen in the use of mother-tongue, inhibition, low participation, lack of vocabulary and incorrect use of grammar rules in which most of learners limit their speech to produce short sentences. However, the results

obtained from the fifth question of the teachers' interview show that inhibition, mother-tongue use and nothing to say are the most frequent difficulties encountered by EFL learners while speaking. Thus, Richards (2008) asserts that speaking is a very complex skill to be developed by learners who encounter various speaking difficulties while practising it.

Along with the previous results, the findings obtained from the fifth question of the teachers' interview demonstrate that sufferance from inhibition and mother tongue use are the main reasons of the learners' failure in interaction. This has been confirmed by the three teachers. In addition to the outcomes gathered from the teachers' interview, the findings obtained from the sixth question of the learners' questionnaire that a large number of the learners (36,66%) confirm that they suffer from inhibition (see diagram 6). They feel worried when making errors and they may think that they are criticised and are discriminated by their classmates while speaking. These results have been stated by Ur (2000:11) who affirms: *"learners are often inhibited about trying to say something in a foreign language in the classroom, worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply are shy because of the attention their speech attracts"*. This may be explained that the learners often feel shy and afraid of their classmates' reactions or receiving negative feedback from their teachers. Therefore, inhibition is mainly regarded as an obstacle for learners during classroom interaction since they feel uncomfortable about speaking English in front of their classmates. Littlewood (1981:93) asserts: *"it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety"*. Additionally, some of the learners (25%) use their mother-tongue (see diagram 6). They did not acquire sufficient knowledge about the target language so, they prefer expressing themselves using their mother-tongue. Ur (1996) affirms that this phenomenon usually occurs when the EFL learners have the same mother-tongue (L1) and they often use it in EFL classes. Harmer (2001) states that there

exist different reasons for the use of mother-tongue in which learners use L1 as an alternative aid to cover their inabilities to use the target language since they lack vocabulary. Moreover, (20%) of the learners claim that the reason behind their failure in interaction is lacking vocabulary while (15%) have reported that making grammatical errors break down their communication. This reveals that they are not able to form correct grammatical sentences.

This section has determined the most frequent obstacles encountered by EFL learners while practising the speaking skill. The findings obtained from question six (6) of the learners' questionnaire confirm the results of the fifth question of the teachers' interview. Besides, these outcomes support and confirm the hypothesis (Hp2) cited in the General Introduction; the fourth-year learners of Amyoud Smail Middle School encounter many difficulties when they interact in English during classes.

I.3. The Teaching Techniques used to Overcome the Speaking Difficulties

As far as our investigation is concerned, we have asked both learners and teachers questions about the implementation of the teaching techniques that guides the learners in the classroom. These teaching techniques are effectively used to guide and involve the learners in classroom interaction. To begin, the findings obtained from question six (6) of the teachers' interview show that all the respondents support the use of the teaching technique which is working in collaboration. All the teachers argue that working in collaboration increases opportunities to create a motivational and comfortable atmosphere where the more-skilled and the less-skilled learners feel free to interact and exchange knowledge among them. Moreover, this technique has also been promoted because it leads to improve the speaking skill, meanwhile it overcomes the difficulties while speaking. According to Dillenbourg (1999), during collaborative activities, learners are expected to interact with

their mates, to be mutually engaged in conversations to coordinate their efforts to solve problems.

Besides, the results obtained from the questions eight (8) and nine (9) in teachers' interview demonstrate that the teachers take their pupils' interests and needs when designing speaking activities. To illustrate, the first informant claims: *"before I design a task, I take my learners' weaknesses into account to reach the objective of the activity"*. Unless the teachers are aware of their learners' levels, they will not be able to design effective activities to teach. Thus, all the teachers design both pair-work and groupwork activities to enhance communication and interaction inside the classroom. Harmer (1998) asserts that pair work and group work provide learners extreme opportunities to express themselves freely and develop their competence without the instructor's guidance at each time. This means that everything is centred on the learner. Richards and Lockhart (1996:152) agree with Harmer's view claiming 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.

They also design information gap activities which allow the learners to share ideas and exchange information among them during a classroom oral session. Davies (2000:43) claims: *"this is when one speaker knows information the other speaker does not"*. In addition, discussion activities have also been adopted as a technique to teach speaking. This kind of speaking tasks allows the learners to exchange their thoughts, give their opinions and arguments about topics. According to Byrne (1986:67): *"by discussion is meant by any exchange ideas and opinions either a basis, with you the mediator and to some extent as the participator or within the context of group with a student talking among them"*. All the interviewed teachers find such interactive activities as being extremely interesting to guide

their learners and facilitate their learning. Indeed, it has also been noticed that the authentic speaking activities designed by the teachers are enjoyed by the learners. The outcomes of this question have also been ensured by the results of question nine (9) in learners' questionnaire.

The results obtained from question nine (9) of the learners' questionnaire show that most of the learners (57%) enjoy getting involved in role play activities because they may believe that such activities are funny and effective (see diagram 9). King (2008:01) argues: *"funny activities inside the classroom are frequently more effective than lectures"*. Some of the learners (33%) affirm that working in pairs or in groups is enjoyable because such activities possibly help them to share knowledge between less skilled learners and more skilled learners and exchange their thoughts in a pleasant way. Therefore, working in collaboration promotes in the development of the speaking skill by creating interactive atmospheres which train the learners to speak fluently. This view has been noted by Tuan and Nhu (2010) that working in collaboration either in pairs or groups develops the language. However, the minority (10%) assert that they like debates and discussions because they feel free when expressing their thoughts and their opinions. These kinds of tasks are noticeably interesting and important in some ways since they maintain a total control of interaction which promotes a very positive and motivational atmosphere. Meanwhile, the learners gradually overcome the obstacles when interacting with others.

These results persuasively support and confirm the research hypothesis (Hp3) cited in the General Introduction. The teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School use suitable teaching techniques to guide their fourth-year learners in order to overcome their speaking difficulties.

I.4. Teachers' Corrective Feedback when Teaching Speaking

The tenth (10) question of the teachers' interview has dealt with the teachers' oral corrective feedback (OCF) to correct their learners' errors during oral sessions. The results displayed from this question reveal that all the teachers provide their learners with OCF when teaching speaking. This means that the teachers are aware of the significance of correcting their learners' errors. They declare the ways they correct their learners by claiming that they do not interrupt their learners while practising the speaking skill; they wait until they finish speaking. To illustrate, the first teacher says: *"learners always need corrective feedback to overcome their errors. However, I do not interrupt them, I wait until they finish speaking"*. Besides, the two other teachers have claimed that they usually correct their learners once they finish speaking, but they sometimes use the body language to reinforce their feedback and to be understood by the learners. This reveals that the teachers do not interrupt their learners while they speak because they are afraid that their learners could feel blocked and forget what they say. So, they wait until the learners finish speaking. In this regard, Mendez (2010 :248) asserts:

in metalinguistic feedback the instructor makes it clear that he/she doesn't use it directly and individually, that is, he/she takes notes of the errors' learners made during an activity and at the end of such a task, the instructor, addressing the whole class, explains the problem of the error and give examples.

Moreover, the same question has been asked for the learners in the questionnaire, but in a clear and simple way. The answers varied from one learner to another (see table 2). The outcomes show that a large number of fourth-year learners (90%) assert that the teachers correct their errors once they finish speaking. This can be clarified by (71,66%) of the learners who state that their teachers correct them once they finish speaking while (18,33%) add that their teachers also use gestures and facial expressions. The teachers use the body

language in order to convince their learners and reinforce their reactive responses while correcting their learners' errors. However, only (10%) of the learners have noticed that they are corrected immediately when they make errors. Some teachers prefer correcting their learners' errors immediately so that the learners might act on at the immediate moment. This can also be justified that the teachers are afraid to forget to correct their learners' errors. It is also possible that the teachers believe that the learners are encouraged to work more and to participate more when they are corrected immediately.

This section has explored that the teachers of Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou provide oral feedback to correct their learners' responses. Therefore, hypothesis (Hp2) cited in the General Introduction has been supported and confirmed.

Conclusion

The discussion of the findings gathered from the learners' questionnaire and the teachers' interview have answered the fundamental research questions and have confirmed the hypotheses cited in the General Introduction. Indeed, the outcomes obtained from the learners' questionnaire and the teachers' interview confirm that most of the fourth-year learners of Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou are given opportunities to initiate interaction during English classes. Besides, the results also show that many learners encounter various obstacles while practising the speaking skill. Thus, the teachers' guidance is revealed through the implementation of the suitable teaching techniques in which of them are collaborative activities to integrate their learners in classroom interaction. These authentic speaking activities are designed according to the learners needs and interests .In addition to these techniques, teachers' guidance is also revealed through teachers' oral corrective feedback that is of a great importance since it is mainly provided as the adjustment

of the learners' responses to overcome their errors and their speaking difficulties .Therefore, the findings demonstrate that teachers' guidance is needful and it is persuasively significant for learners facing obstacles while speaking .

General Conclusion

This study has explored teachers' guidance with fourth-year learners encountering speaking difficulties. The case study is fourth year learners of Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou. The research work has been intended to investigate the teaching techniques used by the teachers to guide their learners who encounter speaking difficulties during English classes. Besides, the study also aims at determining whether the learners are given opportunities to interact during English classes. It sheds light on the exploration of the speaking obstacles faced by the learners and the effectiveness of the teachers' oral corrective feedback towards learners' responses. Additionally, the cited objectives imply on Ted Glynn's Theory of Responsive Social Contexts of Learning (1985). The theory is basically formed on four fundamental features which are as follows: learners' initiations, shared authentic activities, reciprocity and mutual influence, and appropriate feedback.

For the sake of answering the advanced research questions and confirming or refuting the hypotheses cited in the General Introduction, a mixed method approach is adopted. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative methods are combined together to analyse the gathered data. In fact, the data have been obtained from two research tools. Sixty (60) questionnaires are administered for fourth-year learners and interviews have been conducted with three teachers. Furthermore, the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires are analysed using the Microsoft Excel Program. Additionally, Qualitative Content Analysis has also been adopted and used for the analysis and explanations of the qualitative data obtained from the teachers' interview. The outcomes of these two research instruments have noticeably provided corresponding answers to the research questions. These findings reveal that the teachers' guidance is of a great importance because of the effectiveness of the teaching techniques in involving the learners in classroom interaction. The techniques are shown through the use of collaborative activities which maximise opportunities for

interaction during classes. It is also recognised that most of the learners are given opportunities to interact because the more the learners interact, the more they overcome the speaking difficulties. In addition to the implementation of the techniques, the teachers' oral corrective feedback also promotes in overcoming the speaking difficulties. That is to say, the more learners receive their teachers' correctives responses, the more they become independent towards their learning.

The research findings obtained from both learners' questionnaire and teachers' interview offer some pedagogical propositions and implications for the teachers as well as suggestions for further research. To be clearer and precise, the work has explored how teachers' guidance is applied in a pedagogical setting which is Amyoud Smail Middle School of Tizi-Ouzou. Thus, teachers should always encourage the use of collaborative activities to integrate the learners in classroom interaction.

Our dissertation has dealt with an investigation of the teachers' guidance with fourth-year learners encountering speaking difficulties at Amyoud Smail Middle School. Yet, the case study is limited to the fourth-year level. However, further investigations can also be conducted with different levels (first level, second level and third level). For further research on the same topic, it can be conducted using another powerful research instrument which is 'classroom observation'. There would be very interesting to teachers creating motivational and interactive atmosphere during speaking sessions.

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Appendices

Learners' Questionnaire

The present study explores the learners' views towards their communication skill (speaking) in English. We would be grateful if you accept to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will be helpful and useful to reach the objectives of this research. Be sure that all your answers will be kept anonymous.

Section one: General question

Q1: Do you like studying English as a school subject? Justify your answer

Yes

No

.....

Section two: The Speaking Skill

Q2: Do you enjoy speaking sessions? Justify your answer

Yes

No

.....

.....

Q3: Are you able to express yourself during class discussion?

Yes

No

Q4: Do you interact with your teacher in the classroom?

Yes

No

Q5: How often does your teacher give you the opportunities to speak in the classroom?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Generally
- Sometimes
- Never

Q6: What difficulties do you encounter when you speak English? (you can choose more than one answer)

- Inhibition (fear of making mistakes)
- Fear of teachers' feedback
- Lack of vocabulary
- Making grammatical mistakes
- Incorrect pronunciation
- Other.....

Section three: Teachers' Guidance during Classroom Interaction

Q7: Working in groups or in pairs during class discussions increases the speaking skill. Do you believe that the statement is true or false? Justify your answer.

- True
- False

Q8: Do you prefer working in groups during oral sessions? Why?

- Yes
- No

Q9: Which of these activities do you enjoy getting more involved in speaking sessions?

- Role play (playing a specific role in a conversation or an interview)
- Group work (practicing tasks with other mates)
- Discussions (discussing and debating particular topics)
- Information gap activities (completing gaps with information)
- Story telling

-Other.....

Q10: Participation and interaction during classroom instruction is beneficial since it enhances your self-confidence and develops the proficiency in using English language. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

- I strongly agree
- I agree
- I slightly agree
- I disagree
- I strongly disagree

Q11: When you and your classmates make errors during classroom interaction, how does your teacher react?

The teacher waits until you finish speaking.

The teacher uses body language.

The teacher rephrasing (acts) immediately.

The teacher neither interrupts, nor corrects the errors

-Other.....

Thank you for your collaboration.

Teachers' Interview

This interview is a part of our research work. It aims at collecting data about learners' autonomy and teachers' guidance with learners encountering speaking difficulties. We would be grateful if you accept to do an interview with us. Be sure that all your answers will be treated anonymously.

Q1: How long have you been teaching English at this school?

Q2: Do you provide your learners sufficient opportunities to speak during oral sessions? If yes, explain how.

Q3: Lightbown and Spada (1990:443) suggest: *“Accuracy, fluency and overall communicative skills are probably best developed through instruction that is primarily meaning-based but, in which guidance is provided through timely form-focus activities and correction in context”*. Do you agree? Why?

Q4: Do you ask your pupils to initiate (start) a conversation with you? Explain how.

Q5: What difficulties do your pupils encounter while learning the speaking skill? (you can choose more than one answer)

Q6: Working in collaboration with learners leads to the overcoming of the speaking difficulties. What do you think about the statement?

Q7: Do you think that improving the pupils' speaking skill can be through interaction with the teacher? Justify your answer.

Q8: Do you take your pupils' interests and needs when designing speaking activities? If yes, explain how?

Q9: Which authentic activities do you design to involve your learners in oral sessions?

Q10: Do you provide your pupils with corrective feedback when performing a speaking task? If yes, how?

Q11: What is the importance of speaking in the learning process?

Thank you for your collaboration.