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**Exploring Reasons behind EFL Students'
Unwillingness to Communicate in the Classroom**

Case study: 3rd Year Students of English at Bejaia University

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics at the University of Bejaia**

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Abstract

English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' willingness to communicate in the foreign language (FL) is indispensable in attaining their language learning objectives. Willingness to communicate (WTC) is a concept which assimilates linguistic, communicative, and psychological variables to explain foreign or second language (FL/SL) communication. Nonetheless, most teachers nowadays complain about students' unwillingness to speak English in FL classroom sessions. Students may show a good performance in skills such as reading, listening, and writing, but when it comes to speaking, they become passive or unwilling to speak in the classroom because of psychological, linguistic or maybe other affective barriers. Thus, the current study aims to explore the factors that detriment students' WTC in the classroom following an exploratory design. The population of this research consists of third year LMD students at the department of English, University of Bejaia. The sample of the study is composed of fifty students and five teachers enrolled in the same department. To attain our study aims and to find answers to the research questions, we relied on a quantitative method to collect data, and a mixed method comprising both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the collected data. The data was gathered through two instruments: a questionnaire directed to students in addition to another one distributed to teachers. The results obtained from the data analysis revealed that the major hindering factors that block students from classroom communication are shyness, stress, fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary in addition to lack of language proficiency, anxiety and lack of motivation. Overall, the results of the study answered our research questions and the objectives behind this investigation are fulfilled. Lastly, helpful techniques and strategies are suggested on how third year students' willingness to communicate in the classroom can be boosted.

Keywords: Affective Barriers, Classroom Communication, EFL Learners, Foreign Language, Students' Unwillingness to Speak.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	I
Dedications.....	II
Abstract.....	III
List of Tables.....	VIII
List of Abbreviations.....	XI
Definition of Key Concepts.....	XII
General Introduction.....	1
1. Statement of the Problem.....	3
2. Research Questions.....	3
3. Aims of the Study.....	3
4. Population and Sample of the Study.....	4
5. Significance of the Study.....	4
6. Organization of the Thesis.....	4
 Chapter One: The Theoretical Background 	
Introduction.....	6
1.1. Section One: Learning English as an FL.....	7
1.1.1. Language.....	7
1.1.2. Foreign Language Learning.....	7
1.2. Section Two: Speaking Skill.....	8
1.2.1. Definition of Speaking.....	8
1.2.2. Importance of Speaking.....	9
1.2.3. Characteristics of Speaking.....	10
1.2.3.1. Fluency.....	10
1.2.3.2. Accuracy.....	11
1.2.3.2.1. Grammar.....	12

1.2.3.2.2. Vocabulary	13
1.2.3.2.3. Pronunciation	14
1.3. Section Three: Classroom Interaction	14
1.3.1. The Nature of the Classroom.....	14
1.3.2. Classroom Interaction and Language Learning	15
1.3.3. Aspects of Classroom Interaction.....	16
1.3.3.1. Teacher Talk.....	16
1.3.3.2. Student Talk.....	16
1.4. Section Four: Learners' Strategies for Communication	17
1.4.1. Achievement Strategies	18
1.4.1.1. Guessing Strategies	18
1.4.1.2. Paraphrase Strategies	19
1.4.1.3. Co-operative Strategies	19
1.4.2. Reduction Strategies.....	19
1.4.2.1. Avoidance Strategies	19
1.5. Section Five: Factors Negatively Affecting Students' Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom	20
1.5.1. Psychological Factors Negatively Affecting Students' Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom.....	20
1.5.1.1. Lack of Motivation.....	20
1.5.1.2. Anxiety	21
1.5.1.3. Lack of Self-esteem	22
1.5.2. Linguistic Barriers Negatively Affecting Students' Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom	22

1.5.2.1. Lack of Vocabulary.....	22
1.5.2.2. Lack of Language Proficiency.....	23
1.6. Section Six: A Selection of Previous Related Studies.....	23
Conclusion	25

Chapter Two: Research Methods, Analysis, and Discussion of the Results

Introduction.....	26
2.1. Section One: Methods & Design.....	26
2.1.1. Methods and Study Design.....	26
2.1.2. Population and Sample of the Study.....	27
2.1.3. Instruments of the Study.....	28
2.1.3.1. Students' Questionnaire	28
2.1.3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire	29
2.1.4. Data Analysis Procedure	29
2.2. Section Two: Data Analysis & Interpretation of the Results	30
2.2.1. Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire Results.....	30
2.2.2. Analysis and Interpretation of the Teachers' Questionnaire Results	40
2.3. Section Three: Discussion of the Major Results, Limitations of the Study, Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications, and Suggestions for Further Research	51
2.3.1. Discussion of the Major Results	51
2.3.2. Limitations of the Study	52
2.3.3. Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications.....	53

2.3.3.1. Recommendations to Teachers.....	53
2.3.3.2. Recommendations to Students.....	54
2.3.4. Suggestions for Further Research.....	54
General Conclusion	56
References.....	58

Appendices

Appendix 01: Students' Questionnaire

Appendix 02: Teachers' Questionnaire

Résumé

List of Tables

Table 01: Participants' Gender.....	30
Table 02: Participants' Age.....	30
Table 03: Participants' Perception of their English Language Level.....	31
Table 04: Participants' Choice to Study English.....	31
Table 05: Students' Viewpoints regarding Speaking Skill.....	32
Table 06: Students' Preferences between Speaking and Writing in English.....	32
Table 07: Teachers' Asking for Students' Speaking in the Classroom	33
Table 08: Students' Use of English outside the Classroom	33
Table 09: Students' Reaction (Feeling) when Asked to Answer Questions	34
Table 10: Students' Feeling of Shyness in the Classroom	34
Table 11: Students' Unwillingness to Communicate in the Classroom.....	35
Table 12: Some Causes of the Students' Reticence to Communicate in the Classroom.....	36
Table 13: The Psychological Barriers Preventing Students from Classroom Communication	37
Table 14: Students' Preferences concerning Classroom Work	38
Table 15: Students' Judgements (Opinions) on Classroom Atmosphere	38
Table 16: Teachers' Gender.....	41
Table 17: Teachers' Degree(s) Held	41
Table 18: Teachers' Work Experience	42
Table 19: Teachers' Views on the Students' Participation Level in the Classroom.....	42
Table 20: Barriers that Prevent Learners from Participating according to Teachers	43
Table 21: Teachers' Judgements on the Effect of Barriers on Learners' Oral Performance	44

Table 22: Teachers' Responses Regarding the Difference between Students' Written and Oral Performance Level.....	44
Table 23: Students' Difficulties when Speaking Basing on Some Teachers' Views.....	46
Table 24: Teachers' Reaction to Students' Reticence to Communicate in the Classroom.....	46
Table 25: The Way Students' Prefer to Work during Classroom Sessions according to Teachers	47

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms

CSs: Communication Strategies

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

F: Frequency

FL: Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

IRF: Initiation-Response-Feedback

LMD: License/Master/Doctorate

SL: Second Language

SLL: Second Language Learning

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TL: Target Language

WTC: Willingness to Communicate

%: Percentage

Definition of Key Concepts

Affective Factors: a group of factors that play a great role in the EFL learning process, they include various aspects like attitude, feelings and emotions, mood..., the most common affective factors are self-confidence, motivation, anxiety...(Ni, 2012).

EFL: is an abbreviation that stands for “English as a Foreign Language”. It is the practice of learning and teaching English by non-native speakers living in a non-native-speaking setting. (Cobuild Advanced English Dictionary, 2018)

Speaking: is defined as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information” (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

Unwillingness to Communicate: is “a chronic tendency to avoid and/or devalue oral communication” (Burgoon, 1976).

General Introduction

Language is one of the most crucial means of communication. Thanks to language, people are able to communicate and express their ideas easily. The English language has become a language highly used for international communication, it is the native language of a huge number of people all around the world and an FL for others. Today, more than a quarter of the world's population speak English, Graddol (2006) supposed that by the year 2040, there will be about three billion English users all around the globe. In many countries around the world, English is first taught in primary schools. However, in many other countries like Algeria, learners find themselves unable to use the English language fluently since they start learning it only from middle school where all the focus is given to grammar and vocabulary instead of making learners practise the English language for communicative purposes.

Among all the four skills; reading, writing, speaking, and listening, speaking skill is often regarded as the most complex part either in the teaching or in the learning process (Hinkel, 2005). Speaking is highly esteemed in linguistics and applied linguistics, it is the basic form of language and the source of its change as Bygate (1987) said "...it [speaking] is also a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning". Thus, learners of English, particularly where it is an FL, will have to use the language orally in different situations. Moreover, Richards (2008) added that "... learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency".

It is undeniable that classroom interaction plays a significant role in language learning success (Tatar, 2005). As participation and involvement are vital for foreign language learning (FLL), the more learners produce utterances, the better their spoken language becomes and vice versa. When students answer teachers' or classmates' questions, give comments and ask questions, they are dynamically engaged in the comprehensible input discussion and the comprehensible output construction, which are crucial to language acquisition. Learners who are highly involved in classroom communication, show higher persistence rates and higher satisfaction (Tsui, 1996). Furthermore, Jackson (2002) stressed the importance of students' participation, he argued that interaction provides the setting where learners can shape and build identities as classroom members. Moreover, various studies and

researches have shown that effective learning depends on the students' engagement in different classroom activities (Tsui, 1996).

In spite of the arising expectations for oral classroom participation SLL/FLL contexts, research on EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom has attracted the attention of language educators and theorists and indicated that getting involved in classroom discussions is problematic for many students. This phenomenon is known as "a chronic tendency to avoid and/or devalue oral communication" (Burgoon, 1976, p.60). Getting students to interact in the classroom can often be very easy. However, sometimes it is hard to get learners engaged. SL/FL students, particularly Algerian ones, seem to be passive and unwilling to communicate in FL classrooms. Learners mostly do not answer their teachers' questions voluntarily or even ask questions, and when doing so, they struggle; they always feel stressed, anxious, and not confident.

Teachers also realize the fact that learners do not answer unless they are asked to do so. It is not surprising that students often have the answer, but prefer not to respond; they are reticent to communicate in the classroom and usually choose not to speak in the target language (TL).

To that end, this made it urgent to investigate this issue to better comprehend the reasons behind students' reticence to communicate in the EFL classroom, as well as to provide solutions that would help EFL students overcome this issue and achieve better in their FLL process.

1. Statement of the problem

The prime objective of any English language teacher is carrying a classroom discussion in English, making learners able to use the TL in a competent way, and offering them the opportunity to integrate easily in any oral communication. In Algeria, English is taught for seven years in general education where learners spend their time studying English by focusing on vocabulary and grammar drills rather than practicing orally. Improving speaking as an oral productive skill, which demands students to use the language in everyday life situations, is completely neglected. Therefore, learners have less chances to practise what they have already acquired inside the classroom in situations outside the class. The students, then, tend to finish their studies in high school with no ability to fence in any oral discussion; learners find themselves incapable to express their ideas and thoughts accurately. Thus, the present study aims to explore the different factors that may negatively affect the students' WTC in the classroom, it also attempts to provide helpful solutions, techniques, and pieces of advice as to how students could get over their classroom communication difficulties and be active in their learning process through the help of the teachers' views. Finally, we are interested to find out about how to boost students' willingness to actively perform in the classroom.

2. Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the factors that may negatively affect EFL students' willingness to communicate in the classroom?
2. How could EFL teachers help their students overcome classroom communication difficulties and be active in the classroom?
3. How can students' willingness to communicate in the classroom be boosted?

3. Aims of the study

The current study aims at finding out the reasons behind EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom, in addition, we aim to provide solutions that might help these students overcome their classroom communication difficulties. Moreover, the study attempts to find out how students' willingness to participate in the classroom can be boosted.

4. Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the current study consists of 3rd year EFL students enrolled in the department of English at the University of Bejaia, during the academic year (2021/2022). A random sample of five groups out of fourteen is selected for our study; from each group ten students are randomly chosen, thus, ending up with a total of 50 participants, who constitute the sample of the present study including both males and females.

5. Significance of the Study

Language is a basic means of communication, thus it is extremely important for EFL learners to learn English in order to be able to communicate effectively. Unfortunately, many EFL learners fear oral expression sessions, classroom discussions and public speech in general. The present study aims to shed light on the different causes of students' unwillingness to communicate in EFL classes and raise learners' awareness about how much these factors may negatively influence their learning achievement. Moreover, the study is beneficial for EFL teachers to have more knowledge about the main reasons behind students' reluctance to participate in the classroom in order to find solutions to deal with this issue and help such students get over their communication difficulties inside the classroom. Furthermore, this study may help language instructors develop techniques and strategies to cope with EFL learners' reticence to communicate in an EFL class.

6. Organization of the Thesis

The current study starts with a general introduction to the topic under study. It contains the statement of the problem, research questions, aims of the study, population and sample in addition to the significance of the study. Moreover, two main parts are underlined in this research paper.

First, the theoretical part which consists of six sections dealing with foreign language learning, an overview of speaking skill, classroom interaction, in addition to the group of strategies learners use for communication. Moreover, some factors negatively affecting students' willingness to communicate in the classroom are highlighted. Finally, some previous related studies to our research topic are presented.

Second, the practical part is concerned with the research methods, analysis, and the discussion of the obtained results. This part is split into three sections. The first one

introduces in depth the methods and study design. The second one encompasses a deep analysis and interpretation of the results gathered from the two instruments we used in our investigation. The third section provides the discussion of the major results, limitations of the study, recommendations and pedagogical implications in addition to some suggestions for further research. Last but not least, the study ended with a general conclusion.

Chapter One: The Theoretical Background

Introduction

Today's world demands made the communication in an FL a crucial skill all people need to master. Globalization led to the appearance of diverse cultures which transformed societies into multilingual environments; this raises the importance of students' capacity to communicate across cultures.

In this context, learning EFL has globally become a great issue. Likewise, the main purpose of learning an FL in academic settings (schools, colleges, universities, etc) is to know how to use that language in an effective way. Students learn the TL through using it communicatively. Hence, students have to interact in the classroom in order to achieve success in the FLL. Therefore, the active participation of learners plays a significant role in the learning process; however, the majority of students resort to silence during the sessions that demand any kind of oral performance due to their negative attitudes towards participation and speaking, which sparks a reluctance to do so.

According to Yaseen (2018), there is a number of factors that may have a negative effect on students' WTC in the classroom, which can be divided into different categories such as affective factors like lack of motivation, anxiety, lack of self-confidence..., environmental factors as classroom atmosphere, class size...etc. These factors can cause serious problems for EFL learners, no matter how much English knowledge they have at their disposal. EFL learners still face many obstacles and difficulties in their learning process mostly at the level of the speaking skill.

This chapter provides the theoretical background related to students' communication in the classroom. It is divided into six sections. The first one concerns learning English as an FL. The second one is about speaking skill. The third one deals with classroom interaction. The fourth one is about learners' strategies for communication. The fifth one presents the factors negatively affecting students' WTC in the classroom. The last one provides previous studies related to the present study.

1.1. Section One: Learning English as an FL

1.1. 1. Language

Language plays a significant role in human beings' lives, it is considered as an important tool they use to communicate with others, express themselves, their ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions, interact with friends, foreigners, family members, create social relationships and so on.

Pinker (1994) said that: "Language is so tightly woven into human experience that it is scarcely possible to imagine life without it. Chances are that if you find two or more people together anywhere on earth, they will soon be exchanging words. When there is no one to talk with, people talk to themselves, to their dogs even to their plants" (p.17). Likewise, Lindsay and Knight (2006) added: "Language is a tool we use to communicate with other people" (p.27). In other words, language is a means of communication people use in order to interact with others in different settings and various situations.

1.1.2. Foreign Language Learning

Many people in today's world are learning foreign languages like English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese,...and many others, for various reasons; some learn an FL for study aims, some learn an FL to take part and create relations with people from different cultures, while others are learning an FL to improve their own cultural identity. On the other hand, we can find those who are learning an FL either for intranational or international communication intentions.

Nowadays, FLL is nearly seen as a normal everyday activity. According to Crystal (2003), about 90 percent of the African countries populations use more than one language (as cited in Johnson, 2008, p.6).

Krashen (1982), an applied linguist who's greatly interested in FL acquisition, argues that acquisition and learning are two separate ways for the mastery of an FL. He defines acquisition as a 'natural', subconscious task so called the activity of 'picking up' a language. Indeed, Krashen (1982) states that the minimum requirement for acquisition to happen is "participation in natural communication situations" (as cited in Johnson, 2008, p.80). Learning, yet, is a conscious activity which occurs in the language classroom.

Brown (2000) argued that SLL is an extended and complicated process. He asserted that: "Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first

language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Total commitment, total involvement, a total physical, intellectual, and emotional response are necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language” (p.01).

By the end of the twentieth century, English has become a language widely used for communication by people with different first and even second languages, that is, a true *Lingua Franca*. English is turned into an international language for communication, and has become a second or third language for many people.

Graddol supposed that by the year 2040, the number of English speakers will be about three billion. He doubtfully sees that “more than 40% of the global population would ever become functional users of English” (ibid: 2006:107).

1.2. Section Two: Speaking Skill

1.2.1. Definition of Speaking

Speaking is one of the productive skills every EFL learner should master in addition to the other language skills. It is a tool used to generate expressions, to express emotions and points of view, to share thoughts and ideas, as well as to create social relationships with people all around the world. A person who knows a language is basically called a speaker of that language, as though speaking involves all the other types of knowledge, and several, if not most learners of an FL are mainly learning to speak. Vacheck (as cited in Hughes, 2002) reported that speaking is generally considered as the first form of language on which writing basically depends.

Speaking is defined by Ladouse (1991) as the capability of persons to express themselves in any context they are involved in, or the process of reporting events in accurate words, or to express a range of thoughts and ideas in a fluent way. Moreover, Wilson (1983) describes speaking as a developing tool, of the relationship between the interlocutors who are involved in a given conversation. Similarly, Suwandi (2009) added that speaking “is a form of oral correspondence between the speaker and the hearer in transforming ideas for reaching the goal of communication” (p.8).

Speaking is the oral production of any language. It is the utterance of units of sounds to express meaningful statements using some body’s organs as the vocal cords, the lungs, the teeth and the lips to convey messages. Therefore, speaking is a skill used by humans in order to interact with one another for the sake of expressing their opinions and intentions. As

Lindsay and Knight (2006) stated, "Speaking is a productive skill. It involves putting a message together, communicating the message, and interacting with other people" (p.57).

Although lot of researches have been done to make the mastery of the speaking skill an easy task for learners, the majority of EFL students still struggle to master it and still consider this latter as the hardest skill. As cited by Lindsay and Knight (2006), "... This is a complex task and learners need a lot of practice to develop this skill" (p.57). In the same vein, Hinkel (2005) added that speaking is "The most complex and difficult skill to master" (p.485).

1.2.2. Importance of Speaking

Human beings automatically speak before moving to reading and writing; they spend their time performing orally with language more than writing. Because of the powerful status of English which is currently regarded as a universal language used by people for communication, the necessity to master speaking in English language has been greatly increased even though speaking English is a hard task where language users should be aware of the important elements of the language such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension as well. Thus, learners should have sufficient oral performance ability so that they could interact with other people in an efficient and easy way. In this regard, Gammidge (2004) noted that, "Speaking is a highly challenging yet essential skill for most learners to acquire. Learners need to speak with confidence to carry out the most basic social transactions" (p.07).

In EFL classes, speaking skill is the mostly used productive skill. It is an aspect that offers many opportunities for EFL learners to participate in the classroom and communicate with their teachers and classmates. That is to say, during classroom sessions, students provide information about a particular topic, express and share their ideas and thoughts through speaking.

The importance of speaking is reflected by its combination with the other skills of the language. Speaking helps students progress in grammar and vocabulary skills, which in turn improve their writing skill; students this way can express and demonstrate the different language functions.

Speaking the English language well can also get learners informed about the latest development in areas such as technology, science and health. Competent speakers of English will be well placed to help their nation's political, economic and social growth. Hence, as Baker and Westrup (2003) cited, by speaking English accurately, students will have estimable

skills that can make a positive difference in their lives and contribute to their communities and countries.

1.2.3. Characteristics of Speaking

Generally, a person who can use and speak the English language competently is both a fluent and accurate user of this latter. Fluent speakers usually express their ideas and thoughts in an appropriate and suitable way without hesitation. They mostly do not worry about committing errors. Additionally, accurate users of the English language have a sufficient knowledge about the main features of the speaking skill; they apply grammar rules in an accurate manner, they pronounce words the way they should be articulated and also have a good knowledge of vocabulary. Interestingly, according to Harmer (2001) accuracy and fluency are two important aspects of speaking skill; they are the objective that learners seek to attain in English language learning since the mastery of this productive skill is based on how much accurate and fluent English language users are in their talk.

1.2.3.1. Fluency

Fluency is the principal feature of oral performance and the basic objective that teachers intend to achieve in speaking skill teaching. Hughes (2002) reported that fluency is the student's ability to produce the language in an adequate, understandable, and correct manner without much scrupling so as not to break down the interaction and make listeners lose interest. Hedge (2000) also pointed out 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 slowness, or undue hesitation" (p.54). It is in line with the definition suggested by Lindsay & Knight (2006) which implies that fluency is "Producing spoken language without unnecessary pauses, false starts, or repetition" (p.165).

Many people who speak English as an FL believe that being a fluent speaker means speaking quickly and without pauses. For fluent speakers, speed of speech is more necessary and important, but pauses are also required. As argued by Thornbury (2005) that it is mostly that all speakers stop to breathe, even native speakers. That is, you do not need to speak quickly and constantly in order to be considered fluent in a given language; pauses are needed once in a while for a clearer speech.

According to Schmidt (1992), fluent language use includes real-time language processing. That is, when learners engage in meaning-centered performance, they demonstrate

fluency and do speak quickly and easily without hindering the conversation. He also claimed that fluency in language use does not demand the learner a lot of attention and effort.

In the same context, fluency is defined in the Oxford advanced learner's dictionary as "The quality of being able to speak and write a language, especially a foreign language easily and well" (p. 596).

1.2.3.2. Accuracy

Accuracy in speaking is the ultimate goal that all EFL teachers shall focus on while teaching. Accordingly, teachers as well as students should give more attention to the correctness and integrity of the various language forms such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures, in other words, it is very important for EFL students to have a sufficient knowledge about language and become aware of its different aspects.

Lindsay & Knight (2006) stated that accuracy is "The production of language which does not contain errors" (p.163), and Yuan & Ellis (2003) assumed that accuracy concerns "The extent to which the language produced conforms to target language norms" (p.2), that is, accuracy refers to how much EFL learners use and apply grammar rules, vocabulary and pronunciation correctly.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, accuracy is defined as the capability of doing something in a skillful way without making errors; the state of being correct or exact.

On the basis of Thornbury's view (2005), learners' correct use of grammatical structures demands length and complexity of discourse and clauses that are well structured. Accuracy in vocabulary means choosing the right word in the right context; learners often use the same words or expressions in different contexts, but do not mean similar things. So, English language learners should improve their vocabulary in order to use utterances in the right way.

Learners often focus on being fluent in the FL and neglect the importance of being accurate. However, learners should pay attention to the completeness and the correctness of language form when performing orally. Brown (2000) agreed on the idea that though fluency may be the objective that any FL class seeks to achieve, accuracy should be reached to some degree by permitting EFL learners to put emphasis on learning grammar rules, vocabulary, and pronunciation in order to generate accurate and understandable language.

1.2.3.2.1. Grammar

Grammar undoubtedly has a very essential role in any language structures' learning. Nevertheless, EFL learners may frequently commit errors while speaking even though they seem to be competent at grammar in writing.

Spoken language grammar differs from that of written language in many ways. Grammar used in speaking is often less complex than that of writing. Here are some examples of traits that are often found in spoken language but rarely appear in written form of language according to Carter (2004):

-Heads: Speakers use these to initiate the clauses in order to give the hearer an idea of the subject.

-Tails: These come at the last part of the clause to help the speaker strengthen what s/he is saying by referencing earlier pronouns.

-Ellipsis: The talker excludes the subject and the verb because she or he can suppose that the hearer knows what has been referred to.

-Boundary markers: phrases or words like well then, anyway, okay are used to mark the line between one topic and the following in a given conversation. (Williamson, 1995)

There are too many other grammatical characteristics that appear to be unique to spoken language, such as: model expressions, vague language, chaining of clauses, etc.

Interestingly, Thornbury (2005) posited that speaking is a spontaneous and immediate act, thus, the speaker does not plan and select the various grammatical parts or structures s/he is going to use. He listed some of the following various spoken grammar features:

- Clause is the basic unit of construction.
- Clauses are usually added (co-ordination).
- Head + body + tail construction.
- Direct speech favoured.
- Vagueness tolerated.
- A lot of ellipsis.
- Many question tags.
- Performance effects, including: hesitation, repeats, false starts, incompleteness, syntactic blend.

1.2.3.2.2. Vocabulary

According to Lindsay and Knight (2006) vocabulary is “All the words in a particular language” (p.169). Moreover, in the Oxford learner’s advanced dictionary, it is defined as “a list of words with their meanings especially in a book for learning a foreign language” (p.1722). In other words, vocabulary refers to the amount of lexis existing in a given language.

Thornbury (2005) claimed that the proportion of expressions and words used in speaking that express the attitude of the speaker towards what is said, is relatively high. These contain the way of expressing certainty and doubt, like maybe and probably, and ways of stressing the veracity of what has been said, like actually and really. Speakers also use many words and expressions that express negative or positive comments. Speakers are able to state what they like or what they dislike, they also can express solidarity among each other.

According to Thornbury (2005), spoken language is characterized by the high use of deictic language, that is to say, expressions and words that indicate time, place, and participants in a distant or immediate context. Chunks construct a large amount of spoken language, they can be defined as a collection of words which are used together with high frequency. Some of the most common types of chunks are phrasal verbs, collocations, idioms, social formulas, sentence frames, discourse markers, etc.

Hamad (2013) reported that vocabulary learning is one of the FLL essential concerns, he added that students’ competence in both theory and practice is required in vocabulary learning. Hamad (2013) further argued that vocabulary is an important element in the EFL students’ oral performance. Thus, the key of a successful, real, and effective communication is the learning of an adequate and appropriate vocabulary; it is a crucial component EFL learners should take into consideration in order to succeed in their FLL process and achieve language proficiency.

Importantly, Adam (2016) stated that EFL learners’ communication is greatly affected when they suffer from lack of vocabulary. In other words, FL learners who lack vocabulary knowledge face difficulties when trying to communicate and engage in an oral interaction.

Accordingly, vocabulary is regarded as one of the fundamental features of oral performance, and it is concerned as an essential tool that EFL learners need to develop for an effective communication.

1.2.3.2.3. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of the verbal communication aspects which allows an effective and attractive communication; it plays a crucial role in any language sound system. Pronunciation is defined as “The way in which a language or a particular word or sound is pronounced” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2010, p.1217).

Thornbury (2005) asserted that “the lowest level of knowledge a speaker draws on is that of pronunciation” (p.24); a reason why EFL learners should be aware of the various aspects of the English pronunciation so that they can improve their speaking performance and provide understandable utterances.

Moreover, pronouncing words in the right way is the key to successful communication. When words and expressions are well articulated by the speaker, the hearer will easily understand, decode the message, and get the intended meaning. In contrast, the mispronunciation of utterances and the bad articulation of phonemes, sounds, or units will lead to misunderstandings. In this regard, Wang (2014) reported that “mispronouncing a single sound causes the listener’s misunderstanding and various uses of stresses as well as intonations result in totally different meanings” (p.111). That is to say, when the speaker does not utter words or sounds in the way they should be pronounced, the meaning will change and the hearer will not comprehend the intended meaning.

1.3. Section Three: Classroom Interaction

1.3.1. The Nature of the Classroom

According to Tsui (1995), the classroom has been defined as a gathering of two or more people within a given time period, one of them usually takes the role of a lecturer while others take the role of learners, for language learning. Gaies (1980) described the classroom as a ‘crucible’ where elements interact. These elements are the teacher in addition to the students.

The classroom is one of the main places for social communication in different academic settings. It is a place where learners learn and prepare themselves for the use of the English language outside the classroom.

The classroom can be considered as a place where students generate analyzable and systematic information, or demonstrate learning strategies. It can be regarded as a location where teachers make instructional choices, manifest instructional beliefs or strategies, provide feedback, deliver lessons and assess learning progress. From a second language acquisition

view, the classroom can be seen as a setting where the learner's internal cognitive processes are studied and possibly investigated.

1.3.2. Classroom Interaction and Language Learning

In SL/FL classrooms, the language used in the classroom and the one used for communication are very important since language is both a subject and a medium of learning. When students consider the teacher's guidance and explanations, express their opinions, respond to questions, and carry out activities and tasks, they are not just acquiring the language, but also using the language they have learned. When the TL is rarely used outside the classroom and learners' exposure to the TL is primarily in the classroom, the type of input and interaction provided is highly important.

On one hand, English language teaching (ELT) classroom interaction is a straightforward phenomenon; it includes everything people say and do in ELT settings. On the other hand, according to Jenks and Seedhouse (2015), it is considered as a 'delivery point' where various language aspects are taught and acquired, where teaching methods, materials, syllabus or assessments are delivered, and where cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication occur.

According to Jenks and Seedhouse (2015), ELT classroom interaction is considered as "a location where affect, identity, motivation interact with group dynamics; a place where educational theory and practice interact, or where interaction and pedagogy combine" (p.17). They added: "classroom interaction is important because interaction is the sinequanon of classroom pedagogy. Interaction is the process whereby lessons are 'accomplished' " (p.15). In other words, classroom interaction is an indispensable element of classroom where the teaching and learning processes occur. It is a place where various elements come in contact in order to achieve a successful learning.

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) are the first to describe the classroom interaction features in terms of the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) pattern. The teacher initiates the talk, usually in the form of a question, the learner responds, and then the teacher provides feedback.

1.3.3. Aspects of Classroom Interaction

The classroom is not only a setting where teachers perform regular activities, but a place where different elements interact. These elements are the teacher and students, including their experiences, social and educational backgrounds, knowledge and expectations. The following provides a description of the teacher talk and student talk:

1.3.3.1. Teacher Talk

Talk is one of the main ways for teachers to provide learners with information, it is also one of the main tools to control learners' behaviour (Allwright & Bailey, 1991).

Teacher talk is defined in the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics as, "that variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching" (p.588).

Some early classroom interaction research focused on teacher-student conversation volume and suggested that teachers talk more than students; teacher's talk occupies the largest share of the conversation. Hence, teacher talk is a crucial part of classroom interaction, as supported by Nunan (1991) who asserted that "teacher talk is of crucial importance, not only for the organization of the classroom but also for the process of acquisition" (p.189). He added "it is not surprising that in all sorts of classrooms, not only those devoted to the teaching and learning of languages, it is the teacher who does by far the most talking" (p.189).

In most ESL/EFL classrooms, a great portion of classroom interaction results from the teacher asking questions; about 70% of classroom interaction involves teachers asking questions, assigning students to answer questions, students answering questions, and teachers providing feedback on students' responses. Teachers talk the most in the classroom, they set the topic of the conversation, and ask most of the requests and questions.

1.3.3.2. Student Talk

Student talk plays a vital role in any classroom as it makes an important part of what takes place in the classroom. Students' engagement in classroom participation is an important form of involvement. Nonetheless, it is difficult for most teachers to get students involved in classroom communication and push them to answer their questions, ask questions, propose ideas and construct comments.

Research on classroom interaction demonstrates that, on average, less than 30% of students talk in teacher-led classrooms. The issue of students' engagement is high in EFL classrooms. Not only it is difficult to make students ask questions and answer voluntarily, but even when they are asked to answer a teacher's question, it is difficult for them to answer.

As Allwright and Bailey (1991) pointed out, "the success of this constant interaction in the classroom cannot be taken for granted, unfortunately, and it cannot be guaranteed just by exhaustive planning" (p.18). Because classroom interaction is a cooperative work among teachers and students, each one of them has to participate as much as the other, this helps to determine the interaction's outcome and direction. They moreover pointed out, "interaction, in class or anywhere, has to be managed as it goes along, no matter how much thought had gone into it beforehand... it has to be managed by everyone taking part, not just by the teacher, because interaction is obviously not something you just do to people, but something people do together, collectively" (p.19). Thus, both the teacher and the students have to collaborate and work all together towards achieving a successful classroom interaction.

1.4. Section Four: Learners' Strategies for Communication

Classroom research on language teaching and learning has lately focused on the efforts learners take to learn the FL. These efforts are commonly referred to as learning strategies. "Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (Oxford, R. L. 1990, p.8).

Importantly with regards to communication strategies (CSs), different researchers as Cohen and Macaro (2007) considered CSs as a behaviour used by learners in order to solve problems in FL situations. They mentioned that "learners had a tendency to use CSs to compensate for their lack of appropriate TL knowledge when expressing or decoding meaning of their intended utterances" (p.208). That is, CSs are strategies used by language speakers for the sake of conveying their intended meaning when expressing their thoughts due to their linguistic knowledge gaps.

According to Longman dictionary (2010), a CS is "a way used to express a meaning in a second or foreign language, by a learner who has a limited command of the language. In trying to communicate, a learner may have to make up for a lack of knowledge of grammar or

vocabulary” (p.98). In other words, CSs refer to the different ways EFL learners use in order to convey their intended meaning in the TL because of their low TL mastery.

Learners’ strategies for communication are classified by Bygate (1987, p.42-47) into two main categories. First, achievement strategies which consist of three sub-categories: guessing strategies, paraphrase strategies and co-operative strategies. Second, reduction strategies which include avoidance strategies.

1.4.1. Achievement Strategies

Achievement strategies are a significant method learners use to strengthen their language. Speakers who choose this option deliver their thoughts easily and in a clear way. According to Bygate (1987), in these strategies, learners aim to resolve their expression problems; they try to compensate for their language knowledge gap by inventing a substitute. That is, learners attempt to find a way to convey and transmit their message without changing or losing it.

1.4.1.1. Guessing Strategies

These strategies type is very common in oral expression. In these strategies, the speaker uses his/her knowledge of language morphology to find words that he/she does not know or is uncertain of; he/she wishes he/she could utter a word or expression that the listener would understand and recognize.

According to Bygate (1987, p.44), the following are the different kinds of guessing strategies learners might use

a.Foreignizing: the speaker uses a word from his/her mother tongue language and pronounces it as if it is a word from the FL.

b.Borrowing: the learner adopts words from his/her mother tongue and uses them without any modification hoping that the interlocutor will get the meaning.

c.Literal translation: in this kind of guessing strategies, learners translate words from their mother tongue language literally in order to facilitate the oral communication.

d.Coining: the speaker can invent a TL word wishing that the listener will understand the intended meaning.

1.4.1.2. Paraphrase Strategies

In these strategies, the learner looks for an alternative from the TL vocabulary for the word or expression s/he needs.

The speaker can perform this by:

-Substitution strategy: the speaker searches for a synonym or a word which has a broader meaning to replace the intended word.

-Circumlocution strategy: in this strategy, the learner uses several words to express the meaning s/he wants to transmit. That is, the learner is compensating the lack of information with a broader word.

1.4.1.3. Co-operative Strategies

These strategies are employed when the learner asks for help. For example, s/he can ask the interlocutor for translations of words from his/her native language, by imitation, or by physically pointing out what s/he is referring to.

1.4.2. Reduction Strategies

Students adopt these strategies by asking speakers to reduce their communicative goals. When learners see themselves unable to compensate using achievement strategies, they opt for reduction strategies so as to get rid of the obstacles they face during their oral performance. In these strategies type, learners substitute their chosen words by other ones or make their expressions shorter so as to speak easily and proficiently.

1.4.2.1. Avoidance Strategies

English language learners often use such strategies by changing their words in order to avoid trouble. Speakers may wish to avoid pronouncing specific sound sequences; for instance 'th' in English, or some complex structures or conditional sentences in English or words of which they are not sure of the gender. Additionally, learners may want to avoid expressing their thoughts because of lack of vocabulary. In such cases, learners tend to avoid speaking by either dropping the message they want to transmit, find other things to talk about, or simply keep silent.

1.5. Section Five: Factors Negatively Affecting Students' Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom

Many EFL students feel unwilling to speak in the classroom, they often try to avoid any kind of oral interaction either with peers or teachers. This is known as students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom.

Various variables are related to SL/FL acquisition and may negatively influence students' speaking skill, including psychological and linguistic factors.

1.5.1. Psychological Factors Negatively Affecting Students' Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom

According to Mazouzi (2013) the following are among the psychological factors that may negatively affect EFL students' willingness to communicate in the classroom:

1.5.1.1. Lack of Motivation

Motivation is a catch-all term used for measuring the success or failure of almost any complicated task. Being motivated is the key to succeed in any given activity, EFL learners may simply attain success due to motivation. (Brown, 2000, p.160)

Different definitions of motivation were suggested by many researchers. Maslow (1970) saw motivation as a concept in which the extreme achievement of objectives is only possible by passing through a serie of needs. Maslow viewed that motivation relies in the fulfillment of physical needs (food, water, air), and of security, community, identity, and self-confidence, what finally leads to self-actualization (as cited in Brown, 2000, p.161).

Motivation can be global, situational, or task-oriented. Learning an FL demands somehow all these three levels of motivation. Motivation is usually determined according to the learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motives. The ones who learn for their own needs and objectives are intrinsically motivated. Whereas those who learn just to get an external reward are extrinsically motivated (Brown, 2000, p.162). Motivation in all types; intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental, is a very essential element for FL students, that is, a predictor of either failure or success (Harmer, 2001).

According to Longman Dictionary (2010), "motivation refers to a combination of the learner's attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language" (p.377).

Learners who are highly motivated are likely to gain knowledge of the TL, succeed in their learning process, and get good grades. However, learners who lack motivation are unlikely to succeed in their FLL. Lack of motivation is a serious psychological problem that detracts many EFL students and prevents them from performing well in the classroom. Thus, it is necessary for teachers to build students' motivation and encourage them to learn.

1.5.1.2. Anxiety

Language anxiety is highly connected with FLL and use. In this concern, Horwitz et.al. (1986) defined language anxiety as a complicated combination of self-perception, emotions, beliefs and behaviours associated with language learning in the classroom. In other words, language anxiety mirrors learners' psychological state within language learning contexts. Yet, language anxiety can negatively affect students and stands as a barrier to their learning as Arnold (1999) proved "anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process. It is associated with negative feelings such as uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension and tension" (p.8).

EFL learners who show oral performance anxiety do not feel comfortable when they are asked to speak using the FL. Therefore, they forechoose to stay silent because they consider talking in front of their classmates as a threat rather than an opportunity to develop their communication competences. In this regard, Arnold (1999) stated that "when anxiety is present in the classroom, there is a down-spiralling effect and thus contributes to poor performance, this in turn creates more anxiety and even worse performance" (p.9).

Anxiety is a phenomenon that can be found in all educational settings. However, this is different in the process of learning an SL/FL; learners have to really master the language they are acquiring and perform well simultaneously. This is very struggling since learners are obliged to perform in a language they do not master or are not competent in. As a result, students will feel unable to perform and express themselves appropriately. This will negatively affect learners' self-confidence and self-perception. Teachers sometimes insist on making students provide responses that are correct in both content and form. By doing so, teachers can be embarrassing the learner without realizing that, hence, making them anxious.

1.5.1.3. Lack of Self-esteem

Self-esteem is among the various factors that can influence learning an SL/FL in general and oral performance in particular. Self-esteem is likely the most affective aspect of humans' behaviour. It can be assumed that without some degree of self-esteem and belief in one's capabilities and one's knowledge, no successful affective or cognitive process can be carried out.

A simple definition of self-esteem was provided by Coopersmith (1967) who considers self-esteem as "a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that individuals hold towards themselves" (p.4). Similarly, Arnold (1999) asserted that "self-esteem is a self-judgment of worth or value based on feelings of efficacy, a sense of interacting effectively with one's own environment" (p.62).

Self-esteem is an affective factor in FLL. Therefore, low self-esteem constitutes different issues for SL/FL learners such as reticence to take part in classroom discussions and unfortunately even poor performance. Low self-esteem is a one of the serious psychological factors that hinder EFL students' communication in the classroom and stand as an obstacle in front of their success to improve their speaking abilities.

1.5.2. Linguistic Factors Negatively Affecting Students' Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom

According to Hamouda (2012), Baktash and Chalak (2015), students are reluctant to speak in the oral English language classroom because of many reasons such as low English proficiency. Esmail et. al. (2015), on the other hand, argued that lack of vocabulary is one of the linguistic problems most students encounter while communicating in English.

1.5.2.1. Lack of Vocabulary

In the field of SLL/FLL, vocabulary is considered to be one of the important elements that EFL learners need to have sufficient knowledge about; without it, learners will not be able to communicate effectively neither reach oral proficiency. However, many EFL students often find themselves incapable to transfer their ideas and thoughts into utterances because they struggle to find the suitable vocabulary items; this mirrors their limited vocabulary repertoire. Therefore, insufficient vocabulary amount restricts EFL students from participating in oral classroom activities and makes them incapable to express themselves and share their

ideas comfortably. This was supported by Khan et. al. (2018), who asserted that “Learning any foreign language is fundamentally associated with vocabulary knowledge, the shortage of vocabulary items obstructs the process of second language learning” (p.408).

1.5.2.2. Lack of Language Proficiency

Language proficiency is defined in the Longman Dictionary (2010) as “the degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak, or understand language” (p.321). That is to say, language proficiency refers to how well an individual can produce and understand the TL.

The degree of SL/FL proficiency has a notable effect on the EFL students’ WTC, low language proficiency affects their speaking skill which in turn impacts their willingness to take part in classroom discussions in a negative way. When EFL learners consider themselves incompetent in learning an FL and have a low English language proficiency, they will probably avoid oral communication in the classroom.

For a successful performance in the TL and for a better achievement of language proficiency, EFL learners need to be aware of the different aspects related to SLL/FLL; students need to have a considerable knowledge about the language they are learning so that they could perform well in it.

1.6. Section Six: A Selection of Previous Related Studies

In this section, some relevant studies on the factors negatively affecting students’ speaking skill are reviewed.

Hamouda (2012) explored the causes of Saudi students’ reluctance to participate in the English language classroom at Qassim University of Saudi Arabia. 159 first year non-majors were selected as a sample for his study. To collect data, the researcher used a quantitative method consisting of a questionnaire. The research results revealed that the majority of students were reluctant to communicate, answer the teachers’ questions and remain silent in EFL speaking classroom sessions because of several reasons such as fear of speaking in front of others, lack of confidence and preparation, fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation and shyness.

In the Algerian context, Mazouzi (2013) analyzed some factors affecting learners’ oral performance at Menaâ’s middle schools of Biskra. To that end, the investigator selected a

sample of 28 pupils and 8 teachers at Nara middle school. She used questionnaires with both teachers and pupils and an interview with 5 pupils. The findings of this study showed that pupils' oral performance was affected by lack of motivation, anxiety and poor self-esteem.

In the same vein, Bourezzane (2015) examined the psychological factors that hinder students' participation in learner-centered EFL oral classroom activities at Biskra University. The participants of this study were 50 EFL first year students where she opted for a questionnaire as the main instrument of the study. The results obtained from the study demonstrated that the majority of learners face different psychological problems and fear of making mistakes is the major factor that detracts learners' oral performance.

Ariyanti (2016) conducted a research on the psychological factors affecting EFL students' speaking performance at Samarinda University, Indonesia. The sample of the study was 21 students. The researcher used an interview in addition to a direct observation as tools to gather data. The findings indicated that students tend to feel anxious when performing orally because they fear making mistakes due to lack of self-esteem, shyness, anxiety, and lack of motivation.

Yaseen (2018) carried out a research about the different factors that may negatively affect EFL students' speaking skill at Jordanian private schools. The investigator selected a sample consisting of 150 students in addition to six English teachers and six English language supervisors. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used to obtain data. The study's results revealed that EFL learners face many difficulties regarding the speaking skill such as lack of motivation, fear of criticism by peers, anxiety, lack of encouragement, and the intensive use of the mother-tongue in the classroom.

Alrasheedi (2020) investigated the factors influencing speaking performance of Saudi EFL learners at Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia. A group of 200 students including males and females was chosen as a sample for the investigation where the main tool for data gathering was a questionnaire. The final results of this study indicated that students' performance in speaking skill is affected by peer pressure, fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of exposure to the TL, paucity of necessary vocabulary and scarce opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom.

Conclusion

Willingness to engage in oral performances and speaking activities notably is very essential in the FL classroom. Unless learners have many opportunities to practise the TL, they will not be able to push their abilities forward. However, foreign language learners face many difficulties when performing orally and get overwhelmed due to various factors such as lack of motivation, lack of self-esteem, and anxiety. Thus, teachers should have a sufficient knowledge of their students' personalities, attitudes and perceptions regarding oral performance, and shed light on the various factors behind their learners' poor performance and reluctance during speaking tasks before even trying to use techniques and strategies to aid them get rid of foreign language anxiety, increase their oral performance and reinforce their motivation.

Importantly, FL learners' willingness and readiness to learn EFL is the key to an effective language learning.

To sum up, the current chapter provided an overview of FLL, the importance and characteristics of speaking skill in addition to the different strategies used by EFL learners while communicating in the classroom. We have also emphasized the elements of classroom interaction. Finally, we tried to shed light on some factors affecting students' WTC in the classroom.

Chapter Two: Research Methods, Analysis, and Discussion of the Results

Introduction

The current chapter represents the field work of our study which is designed to answer the study questions regarding reasons behind EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. It is composed of three sections; the first one comprises details about our study methods and design, population and sample, in addition to the quantitative instruments we used to answer our research questions and the procedure we followed to analyze the obtained data. The second section is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the findings gathered from both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire. Finally, the third section presents the discussion of the study major results which provides answers to the research questions. Moreover, limitations of the present research, recommendations and suggestions for further research are provided.

2.1. Section One: Methods & Study Design

2.1.1. Methods and Study Design:

The present study seeks to explore the reasons behind EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. Therefore, in our way to investigate the above mentioned issue, we relied on an exploratory design to gather information. Accordingly, to attain our aims we adopted a mixed methodology combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the obtained data; we suppose that a reliable and consistent analysis of data must be executed relying on both methods; quantitative and qualitative. Interestingly, the use of mixed approaches in combination makes the understanding of the study problems and complex phenomena better and easier than using either method alone (Creswell, 2007). That is, mixing the obtained results with one another provides a better understanding and enhances the validity of inferences.

Accordingly, the use of a questionnaire allows gathering both objective and detailed data from our study population, what permits us to obtain statistically significant results. Brown (2001) defines questionnaires as "Any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (p.6). In other words, a questionnaire is a tool that comprises a series of items where the respondent has the possibility either to write his own answers or choose among the provided options.

Moreover, the questionnaire is viewed as the most common instrument used by researchers for the collection of data regarding their topic of investigation. According to Dörnyei (2003), “The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readably processable” (p.1) which means that questionnaires can be employed successfully with different people in different situations aiming to investigate various topics.

2.1.2. Population and Sample of the Study

The target population of the current study is third year EFL students from the department of English at the University of Bejaia for the academic year 2021-2022. Due to the huge number of the students; who are 266 students, and because of time restriction, it was not possible for us to work with them all. Thus, we dealt with a study sample of 50 students only.

The participants were randomly chosen; a sample of five groups out of 14 was selected; from each group ten students, constituting a total of 50 students including 41 females (82%) and 9 males (18%) whose ages range from 19 to 23 years old.

The reasons behind our choice of the population rely, first, on the fact that third year EFL learners are in an advanced level of higher education which makes them capable to present their opinions concerning the research questions much easier than the students of the previous levels. Second, because of the fact that the factors we aim to explore may cause problems to the majority of students no matter in which level they are, as those factors may negatively influence their WTC in the classroom.

Moreover, this study consisted of five experienced EFL teachers from the department of English at Bejaia University. A questionnaire was directed to the participants for the sake of collecting as much data as possible to support our investigation with evidence about EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom.

The participants showed a high level of understanding of our study aims, and responsibility while answering the questions. They provided helpful information allowing us to better achieve the objectives of our study, which in turn will serve the educational process, students and teachers as well.

2.1.3. Instruments of the Study

The aim of the present study is to explore reasons behind students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. To achieve this aim, we used two instruments for the collection of data; two questionnaires (seeking both quantitative and qualitative data), one distributed to a sample of 50 third year EFL students and another to five teachers at the department of English at Bejaia University. The objective behind choosing the quantitative instruments in this investigation is to collect valid and reliable data from various sources in order to empower the authenticity of the findings.

2.1.3.1. Students' Questionnaire

The entire questionnaire in the actual study deals with the various factors negatively influencing third year EFL learners' WTC in the classroom. It starts with an introductory paragraph which indicates the questionnaire's aim, in addition to instructions on how to answer the given questions.

The designed questionnaire (see appendix 01) consists of three parts. The first part deals with the participants' general information including gender, age, and level of education, level in English language, and choice to study English. The second part is composed of four items regarding students' speaking skill. The third part includes nine items about students' communication in the classroom. Accordingly, the questionnaire goes deeply in gathering, in details, facts about students' unwillingness to communicate and participate in a language classroom.

The questions in the instrument are clearly set and relevant to the content of our field work, they are made up of two different types; closed questions in which students are requested to pick up their answers from the arranged options with the possibility of choosing one or more answers, in addition to open-ended questions where the respondents were required to provide explanations and suggestions. This way students will express their thoughts openly without any restriction, which allows us to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data.

2.1.3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

The current investigation employed the teachers' questionnaire as the second instrument for our data collection. This tool was selected since it permits us to flexibly explore the opinions and views of the participants and gives us the chance to obtain details about the phenomenon being studied as well as to support the first used tool which is the students' questionnaire.

The teachers' questionnaire is the second instrument we can use in order to achieve our study objectives which are identifying the factors causing students' reluctance to participate in the classroom and to gain deep insights into the different techniques, strategies, and activities that can be helpful for EFL learners in improving their communication skills and getting over their reticence to speak in the classroom.

The questionnaire was directed to five teachers teaching different levels and modules at the department of English at the University of Bejaia. However, because of Covid 19 sanitary crisis and due to respondents' wish, teachers responded to the questionnaire online.

The present questionnaire (see appendix 02) consists of two sections. The first section deals with the teachers' general information including gender, degree held and years of experience in English language teaching. Whereas, the second one contains both closed and open-ended item types which are devoted to shed light on the topic under study including the teachers' opinions of their students' speaking skill, the difficulties they face to communicate, in addition to the barriers that may prevent them from well performing in the classroom. Furthermore, the participants were given an opportunity to provide any helpful comments or additional information regarding the investigation being conducted.

2.1.4. Data Analysis Procedure

The data obtained from the two used instruments were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. To that end, for quantitative data, we used the Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS) to generate tables containing frequencies and percentages.

2.2. Section Two: Data Analysis & Interpretation of the Results

This section is regarded as the most essential part of this study, it aims to find answers to the research questions by reporting the different views and responses obtained from the respondents. The data analyzed yielded both descriptive and statistical findings. The different findings were attentively discussed and analyzed using mixed methods.

2.2.1. Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire Results

This part presents both quantitative and qualitative analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire's results. As stated before in section one, this quantitative tool includes three parts dealing with different sub-themes which will be analyzed respectively.

2.2.1.1. Part One: General Information

Item 01: Participants' Gender

Table 01: *Participants' Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9	18%
Female	41	82%
Total	50	100%

The above table shows the gender of the participants. It indicates that most of the participants are females; constituting 82% of the whole sample. However, males constitute the small minority representing only 18% of the whole participants.

Item 02: Participants' Age

Table 02: *Participants' Age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
19-21	39	78%
22-23	11	22%
Total	50	100%

Table 02 demonstrates that our sample's age range varied between 19 to 23 years old. As shown in the table, the majority of the respondents aged between 19 to 21 years old making up 78% of the whole sample. Whereas, only 22% of the participants aged between 22

to 23 years old. Importantly, the table reveals that all third year students belong to the young generation.

Item 03: Participants' Perception of their English Language Level

Table 03: *Participants' Perception of their English Language Level*

Level in English	Frequency	Percentage
Good	32	64%
Average	18	36%
Bad	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 03 represents third year EFL students' perception of their English language level. The findings revealed 64% of the participants perceive their English language level to be good, while the remaining 36% of the respondents perceive their English language level as being average. None of the participants opted for the third option (*bad*). That is, most of the participants believe to acquire a considerably important level of English.

Item 04: English is:

Table 04: *Participants' Choice to Study English*

English is	Frequency	Percentage
One's choice	46	92%
Parents choice	1	2%
Administrative choice	3	6%
Total	50	100%

The above table demonstrates that English was the proper choice of a big number of students accounting for 92% of the whole sample, whereas only 6% of the participants indicated that English was an administrative orientation. Only one student (2%) indicated that choosing to study English was a decision taken by his/her parents. It is apparent from the above findings that studying English language was a wish of nearly all the participants.

2.2.1.2. Part two: Students' Speaking Skill

Item 01: Speaking skill is:

Table 05: *Students' Viewpoints regarding Speaking Skill*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Easy task	36	72%
Complex task	14	28%
Total	50	100%

Table 05 reports the results of the participants' perceptions towards speaking skill. It is clear from the table that nearly all of the students consider speaking as an easy task, constituting 72% of the total number of the respondents. Nevertheless, equal to 28% perceive speaking skill as a complex and a hard task. In the light of the above results, speaking skill seems to constitute a kind of difficulty to language learners.

Item 02: You prefer:

Table 06: *Students' Preferences between Speaking and Writing in English*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Speaking in English	29	58%
Writing in English	21	42%
Total	50	100%

Table 06 displays students' responses regarding what they prefer about the English language; speaking or writing. It is shown that most of the students prefer speaking in English making up 58 % of the whole sample. Whereas, the remaining 42% of the students indicated that they prefer writing in English. Thus, we deduce that speaking is the most preferable language skill by most of the students.

Item 03: How often does your teacher ask you to speak in front of your classmates?

Table 07: *Teachers' Asking for Students' Speaking in the Classroom*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Always	9	18%
Often	16	32%
Sometimes	23	46%
Rarely	2	4%
Never	0	0%
Total	50	100%

The above table demonstrates the extent to which teachers ask their students to speak in the classroom. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents reported that they are sometimes asked by their teacher to speak in front of their classmates constituting 46% of the total number of the participants. Moreover, equal to 32% indicated that they are often asked to speak in the classroom. Then, 18% of the students stated that they are always asked to speak. In the last position, only 4% of the respondents indicated that they are rarely asked to communicate in the classroom. Finally, none of the students indicated that they are never asked by their teachers to speak in the classroom, indicating that teachers do ask students to speak and take part in the classroom discussions.

Item 04: Do you speak English outside the classroom?

Table 08: *Students' Use of English outside the Classroom*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	68%
No	16	32%
Total	50	100%

Table 08 reports the findings about students' use of English outside the classroom; whether they use the TL outside the classrooms or they strict its use to academic settings only. The table shows that more than half of the participants use the English language to communicate outside the classroom making up 68% of the total number of the participants. Whereas, 32% of the students indicated that they do not use English outside the classroom. Thus, from the above findings, it is very obvious that a considerable number of students feel reluctant to use English with others outside the classroom.

2.2.1.3. Part Three: Students' Communication in the Classroom

Item 05: If you are suddenly asked by the teacher to answer questions in an English class, will you respond:

Table 09: *Students' Reaction (Feeling) when Asked to Answer Questions*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Anxiously	21	42%
Comfortably	29	58%
Total	50	100%

Table 09 demonstrates students' reaction when asked to respond the teacher's questions. Of the total number of the respondents, 58% responded that they feel comfortable and at ease when answering questions asked by the teacher in the classroom. Then, equal to 42% of the participants suggested that they feel anxious when they are requested to answer the teacher's questions. Therefore, in the light of these results, we can say that most of the students feel confident when answering the questions asked by their teacher, this maybe due to the fact that the students do understand the content already presented by the teacher, thus, they feel ready to respond to their teachers' questions.

Item 06: I feel shy to raise my hand in English class, even if I have got an answer

Table 10: *Students' Feeling of Shyness in the Classroom*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	16%
Agree	17	34%
Neutral	11	22%
Strongly disagree	6	12%
Disagree	8	16%
Total	50	100%

The above item aims to measure the subjects' shyness in the language classroom. Importantly, 34% of the respondents reported that they "agree" on the fact that they feel shy to participate in the classroom though they have the answer. Additionally, 22% of the participants ticked the option "neutral", hence, not showing any position in answering the question. Then, 16 % of the students stated that they "strongly agree" on the item showing

that even if they have the answer, they feel embarrassed when communicating during a classroom session. Similarly, 16% of the respondents selected the “*disagree*” option, meaning that they do not feel shy to raise their hands in class when having an answer to the question asked. Finally, equal to 12% of the participants asserted that they “*strongly disagree*” with the abovementioned statement, that is, they feel free and confident to take part in the classroom session and answer the teacher’s questions without being shy. In essence, according to the above table, we notice that half of the participants 50% do feel shy to raise their hands in the classroom and respond to the teachers’ requirements though they know the answer.

Item 07: Do you feel unwilling to communicate in the classroom?

Table 11: *Students’ Unwillingness to Communicate in the Classroom*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	88%
No	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Table 11 indicates the participants’ reticence to communicate in the classroom. As shown in the table, nearly all the participants stated that they feel unwilling to communicate in their language classroom constituting 88 % of the total number of the participants. In contrast, the few remaining ones accounting for 12% of the whole sample said that they do not feel unwilling to communicate in the classroom; which signifies that they do not feel reluctant to interact with either peers or teacher in the classroom. Therefore, according to the results and the statistical analysis obtained from the aforementioned item dealing with “learners’ unwillingness to communicate in the classroom”, it can be concluded that almost all the participants feel unwilling to communicate in the classroom, this may be because of several reasons that would be discussed next.

Item 08: You are unwilling because of:

Table 12: *Some Causes of Students' Reticence to Communicate in the Classroom*

		Responses	
		F	%
Factors causing Students' reticence to Communicate in the Classroom	Lack of preparation	6	10.5%
	Lack of language proficiency	10	17.5%
	Fear of negative evaluation	5	8.8%
	Fear of making mistakes	16	28.1%
	Lack of vocabulary	14	24.6%
	Having nothing to say	6	10.5%
	Not understanding what the teacher is saying in English	0	0%

As shown above, the twelfth table indicates the different factors that may cause students' reluctance to communicate in the classroom. In the first glance, we can notice that "*Fear of making mistakes*" recorded the highest frequency (16 occurrences) accounting for 28.1% of all the factors suggested. The second highest chosen factor is "*Lack of vocabulary*" which registered 14 cases accounting for 24.6 % of all the factors. The third frequently chosen factor is "*Lack of language proficiency*" which recorded 10 cases accounting for 17.5% of all the factors. In the fourth position, "*Lack of preparation*" and "*Having nothing to say*" recorded the same number of occurrences (6 cases) accounting for 10.5% of all the factors. The last chosen factor by the students is "*Fear of negative evaluation*" which registered only 5 occurrences accounting for 8.8 % of all the factors suggested. Finally, the factor "*Not understanding what the teacher is saying in English*" did not record any occurrences, as this does not seem to be among the factors that make students unwilling to communicate in the classroom. In the light of the above obtained results, it can be summarized that the major reasons causing the participants' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom are "*Fear of making mistakes*", "*Lack of vocabulary*", in addition to "*Lack of language proficiency*" which seem to hinder students' participation and form a barrier regarding their WTC in the classroom.

Item 09: Which of these psychological barriers prevent you from communicating and participating in the classroom?

Table 13: *The Psychological Barriers Preventing Students from Classroom Communication*

		Responses	
		F	%
Psychological barriers	Anxiety	12	16.9%
	Lack of self-confidence	6	8.5%
	Lack of motivation	11	15.5%
	Shyness	22	31%
	Stress	20	28.2%

The ninth item aims to figure out the psychological barriers which may prevent EFL learners from communicating in the classroom. In the first position, we can notice that the psychological barrier that registered the highest frequency (22 occurrences) is “*Shyness*” accounting for 31% of all the suggested psychological barriers. The second highest factor is “*Stress*” which recorded 20 cases accounting for 28.2% of all the suggested barriers. In the third position, comes “*Anxiety*” which registered 12 cases accounting for 16.9% of the whole barriers. Then comes “*Lack of motivation*” recording 11 occurrences accounting for 15.5% of all the suggested barriers. Concerning “*Lack of self-confidence*”, this was the last frequently chosen by the respondents as it registered only 6 cases accounting for 8.5% of all the barriers suggested. In short, the results obtained from this question analysis reveals that the most influential psychological factors causing students’ unwillingness to communicate in the classroom are “*Shyness*”, “*Stress*”, and “*Anxiety*”. Importantly, as the literature reports, shyness is “*a psychological state that causes a person to feel discomfort in social situations in ways that interfere with enjoyment or that cause avoidance of social contacts altogether*” (Arifin, 2017), meaning that shy learners may face serious obstacles in oral performance and may lose many successful opportunities in the FL classrooms. Moreover, stress seems to be an important factor affecting the learners’ achievement. Swearingen & Cohen (1985) reported that stress is “*the feelings of pressure and worry*”. It is regarded as a serious issue that may be found among people regardless of gender, age and location, and EFL students are no exception; they experience stress during their learning process which can in turn negatively influence their learning and lead to a poor academic performance as well. It is commonly agreed that a given amount of pressure can push people to perform better. However, when the

pressure goes beyond one's capability to successfully manage it, this may cause stress (Chao, 2012). With regards to anxiety, this too may have an undesirable effect on EFL learners as it may serve as an obstacle to FLL as proved by Arnold (1999) who asserted that "*Anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process*" (p.8).

Item 10: What do you prefer?

Table 14: *Students' Preferences concerning Classroom Work*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Individual work	21	42%
Pair work	20	40%
Group work	9	18%
Total	50	100%

Since each type of work has its advantages and disadvantages, this item aims to identify the favourite way for the students when dealing with classroom activities. The findings demonstrate that the majority of the students (42%) preferred to work individually. After that, equal to 40 % of the whole sample prefer pair work. Finally comes the minority of students who prefer group work making up 18% of all the participants. Interestingly, it is obvious from that table that most of the students prefer to work either individually or in pairs, implying that they tend to avoid working in groups. This can be explained by the fact that working in groups may involve different members, hence, making the task a little bit hard as all the members are supposed to work in harmony so that they achieve their goal as opposed to individual work or pair work which does not demand those efforts.

Item 11: How do you find classroom atmosphere?

Table 15: *Students' Judgements (Opinions) on Classroom Atmosphere*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Relaxed	17	34%
Motivating	9	18%
Boring	24	48%
Total	50	100%

The above item seeks to find out if the classroom atmosphere motivates or demotivates learners. Accordingly, in the first position, the majority of the respondents (48%) stated that they feel bored when attending FL classes. Then, 34% of the participants described classroom atmosphere as relaxing. However, only 18% of the participants find classroom atmosphere

motivating, that is, motivating classroom atmosphere plays an important role in boosting students' willingness to participate in the classroom forward. Noticeably, the majority of the students stated that they find classroom atmosphere boring, this can be an explanation of their unwillingness to communicate in the EFL classroom.

Item 12: If you would like that your teacher uses new strategies in teaching what do you suggest they would be? Why?

Regarding this item, the majority of the participants (62%) responded to this question and suggested some strategies that teachers could adopt during their teaching process. However, the remaining students (38%) did not provide any answer concerning this question.

Some of the students who responded to this item stated the following:

Student 01: *"I would suggest that they should focus more on speaking not just on writing, and to give more opportunities to students to express themselves, express their ideas, and opinions because I have noticed that speaking and having accurate pronunciation is often given little attention in classrooms, this could explain the reason why many EFL learners lack self-confidence when speaking in English"*. This means that students wish to be given more opportunities to the speaking skill inside the classroom so as to help build the learners' self-confidence.

Student 02: *"Using games and debate activities between pairs and groups in order to create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere, this makes students defend their points of view freely and participate without feeling anxious or stressed"*. This implies that it would be better if the students are given a chance to study in an enjoyable classroom atmosphere that would help students feel less stressed and anxious.

Student 03: *"Teachers should give attention to the practical side more than the theoretical one; we need to practise in order to learn"*. This implies that students want to deal with the practical side of the content they are provided with which will make them learn.

Student 04: *"Teachers should be more close to their students, be more cool and not strict, they also should explain more than they write using their own experiences as examples in order to facilitate the transmission of information"*. This indicates the student's actual desire to be considered by their teachers and establish that kind of relationship which forms no strict barriers between a teacher and his/her student, this way, learners will feel comfortable when being in the classroom and will be motivated and encouraged to speak and take part in classroom discussions.

Student 05: *“Teachers should adopt new teaching tools like internet and computers”*. This means that nowadays students are not motivated to study with old teaching methods as they suggest for their teachers to use modern technology in their teaching process.

Item 13: Any other suggestions are very welcome

Concerning suggestions, almost all the participants (96%) did not provide any suggestion, only two students making up a percentage of 4% of the whole sample suggested the following:

Student 01: *“You are future teachers, so please try to be polite and understand the situation of students. Please! It’s important”*. This implies that students do really wish their teachers to be helpful and understand them during their learning process, this will encourage them to participate and perform better in the classroom.

Student 02: *“Motivating students to speak and participate in the classroom is very important”*. In other words, this explains the positive effect of the motivation that students can get from their teachers.

2.2.2. Analysis and Interpretation of Teachers’ Questionnaire Results

In this section, the questionnaire directed to the five teachers from the department of English at Bejaia University was analyzed in details; descriptions as well as interpretations for the results were made. All the participants agreed to take part in this research and highly collaborated with us. Hence, the objectives of this quantitative instrument are, first, to obtain more details and clarifications about the issue under study. Second, to get an insight on the major barriers that prevent students from participation in the classroom. Finally, to find out the strategies, techniques, activities that these teachers use in order to boost students’ willingness to communicate in the classroom.

2.2.2.1. Section One: General Information

1. Gender

Table 16: *Teachers' Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	2	40%
Female	3	60%
Total	5	100%

Table 16 demonstrates the number of responding teachers from the English department at Bejaia University. The table shows that most of the participants in this research are females making up a total of 60% of the whole sample. Whereas, males presented a minority of 40% of the whole sample. Hence, it is obvious that the number of female teachers who took part in the present study is higher than that of male teachers.

2. Degree(s) held

Table 17: *Teachers' Degree(s) Held*

Degree(s) held	Frequency	Percentage
B.A.	0	0%
M.A.	1	20%
Ph.D.	2	40%
Pr.	2	40%
Total	5	100%

From a quick look at the above table, we can see that two of the participants hold Ph.D. degree making up 40% of the whole questioned teachers. Likewise, two other teachers are professors constituting 40% of the whole sample. Finally, the remaining respondent who stand for only 20% of the whole sample mentioned that s/he holds M.A. degree.

3. Teachers' Work Experience

Table 18: *Teachers' Work Experience*

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 05 years	0	0%
Between 05 to 10 years	1	20%
More than 10 years	4	80%
Total	5	100%

Table 18 shows that the participants to whom the questionnaire was given have a long experience in the field of English language teaching; four of the participant teachers representing 80% of the whole sample stated that they have more than 10 years in the domain of teaching English; some of them reported that they have been teaching English for more than 30 years. Only one teacher making up 20% of the sample declared that his/her work experience in teaching English ranges from five to ten 10 years. Therefore, since the majority of the teachers do have a long teaching experience, they provided us with pertinent information regarding our subject under study, their answers contributed a lot in the current investigation; they really supported the data gathered through the students' questionnaire dealing with 'Reasons Behind EFL Students' Unwillingness to Communicate in the Classroom'.

2.2.2.2. Section Two: Would you please answer the following questions appropriately?

Item 01: What is the level of participation in the classroom?

Table 19: *Teachers' Views on Students' Participation Level in the Classroom*

Participation level	Frequency	Percentage
Good	2	40%
Average	3	60%
Bad	0	0%
No speaking	0	0%
Total	5	100%

Table 19 reveals teachers' perceptions of their students' level of participation in the classroom. From the above table, it is shown that the majority of the teachers (60%) mentioned that the participation level in their classroom is "average". While, the remaining 40% of the sample asserted that their students' level of participation is "good". Thus, declaring by most of the teachers the students' participation level to be "average" may demonstrate that not all the students do participate during classroom sessions which explains the students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom.

Item 02: Have you already noticed your learners' hesitation to speak in the classroom? If yes, in your opinion, what are the barriers that prevent them from participating?

Table 20: *Barriers that Prevent Learners from Participating according to Teachers*

		Responses	
		F	%
Barriers	Psychological barriers	5	50%
	Linguistic barriers	3	30%
	Others	2	20%

The objective of this item is to identify the barriers that lead to students' unwillingness to actively perform in the classroom. Interestingly, we can notice that "Psychological barriers" registered the highest frequency (5 occurrences) standing for 50% of all the given options, meaning that all the teachers stressed on the fact that learners' willingness to speak in the classroom is highly influenced by psychological barriers. Then, the second highest selected option is "Linguistic barriers" which recorded 3 cases accounting for 30% of the suggestions provided. Finally, the third option "Others" recorded 2 cases accounting for 20% of all the suggestions. One of the two respondents who stated that there are other barriers that would negatively influence students' readiness to speak in the classroom stated that "most of the time, being enrolled in foreign language learning has never been the student's choice". In other words, this shows that the learner's achievement would be negatively influenced when studying the English language is not the proper choice of the learner himself/herself but he/she was pushed to do that. Therefore, in the light of these findings we can say that the majority of the teachers emphasized the idea that psychological barriers are mainly the ones that prevent learners from participating in the classroom.

Item 03: Do you think that such barriers have a negative effect on the learners' oral performance?

Table 21: *Teachers' Judgements on the Effect of Barriers on Learners' Oral Performance*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%

Table 21 reports teachers' answers concerning whether or not the aforementioned barriers (in table 20) have a negative effect on students' oral performance. It is apparent that all the participants making up the total of the sample (100%) agreed on the fact that such barriers have a negative effect on learners' oral performance, "*largely and critically*" as stated by one of them. In the light of these results, we deduce that such barriers do form an obstacle for students learning in general and students' willingness to take part in classroom sessions in particular.

Item 04: In your class, have you noticed students who get good marks in written exams but are unable to express themselves orally? If yes, how can you explain this contradiction?

Table 22: *Teachers' Responses Regarding the Difference between Students' Written and Oral Performance Level*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%

The table above demonstrates the teachers' answers concerning the observable phenomenon which is found in the majority of EFL classes; students get good marks and perform well in written exams but are incapable to express themselves orally. As can be noticed, all the teachers (100%) confirmed the existence of this phenomenon in their classes. This implies that students feel more comfortable and at ease when expressing themselves through writing rather than through performing orally.

Regarding the teacher's explanation of this state, the following were their responses:

Teacher 01: "*This can be related to psychological factors*".

Teacher 02: "*I think that they are a kind of introverted students who dislike classroom communication and participation. That is, they have a solitary learning style*".

Teacher 03: *“Yes, I think so. The teacher-centered method, where the students are not asked to elaborate and diversify their sessions and lesson plan, is one of the main blocking problems that sustain this contradiction”.*

Teacher 04: *“This is not a contradiction. I often relate this to learning styles and personality traits. We need to adapt our teaching to all types of learners. Introverts should also find in our teaching a space that is appropriate to them”.*

Teacher 05: *“Honestly and psychologically, mastering the writing skill, automatically refers to good speakers as the students are linguistically, emotionally and psychologically competent enough. However; there are some exceptions which demonstrate that oral competences encounter kinds of hindrances, may be because of:*

- *The cognitive domains, (prior knowledge in the target language)*
- *The social and emotional domains, (the role of the society in motivating and constructing positive emotions)*
- *Context (the country, the university where the student is registered), Culture, behaviour, socio-cultural behaviour, (how the society behaves towards the target language culture and its natives’ behaviours) and values (human values, personality)”.*

This item displays teachers’ explanations concerning the fact that some students get good marks in written exams but are unable to express themselves orally. Overall, the teachers stated some contributing factors to this phenomenon. They said that this can be due to psychological barriers, as it can also be because of learners’ personality and their learning styles. Furthermore, the teachers reported that learners’ inability to express themselves orally can be caused by adopting the teacher-centered approach where students do not take a great part in the classroom. Accordingly, the teachers’ responses to the item in question explained this issue as being sustained by students’ lack of prior knowledge in the TL, the role of society in motivating and constructing positive feelings and emotions, in addition to culture, behaviour, and human values.

Item 05: Your learners have difficulties when speaking in:

Table 23: *Students' Difficulties when Speaking Basing on Some Teachers' Views*

		Responses	
		F	%
Students' difficulties when speaking	Pronunciation	4	36.4%
	Vocabulary	3	27.3%
	Grammar	4	36.4%

Table 23 reports the teachers' responses about the difficulties their learners encounter when speaking. The table indicates that "Pronunciation" and "Grammar" recorded the highest frequency (4 occurrences each) accounting for 36.4% each of all the given suggestions. "Vocabulary" registered 3 cases standing for 27.3% of all the provided suggestions. In the main, based on the teachers' views, we can conclude that pronunciation and grammar are the main difficulties that the learners face when speaking.

Item 06: How do you react when your learners are reticent to communicate in the classroom?

Table 24: *Teachers' Reaction to Students' Reticence to Communicate in the Classroom*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Oblige your learners to take part	1	20%
You kindly invite them to take part in classroom activities	1	20%
Ask your learners to choose the topic in which they are interested to talk about	3	60%
Change the topic	0	0%
Total	5	100%

Table 24 indicates teachers' reaction and the ways they adopt when their students are unwilling to communicate in the classroom. Importantly, most of the teachers (60%) highlighted that to encourage their students to communicate in the classroom, they ask them to choose the topic in which they are interested to talk about. Besides, a small minority of teachers (20%) demonstrated that when their learners are reticent to communicate in the classroom, they kindly invite them to take part in classroom activities. Similarly, a small minority of the respondents (20%) stated that they oblige their learners to take part so as to push them to interact in the classroom. Nevertheless, none of the teachers opted for the last option "Change the topic". In essence, according to the above findings, it can be concluded

that most teachers encourage their learners to take part in classroom discussions by letting them choose the topic they are interested in to talk about which may raise their motivation and self-confidence.

Item 07: How do your learners prefer to work during classroom sessions?

Table 25: *The Way Students Prefer to Work during Classroom Sessions according to Teachers*

		Responses	
		F	%
Students' preference	In small groups	3	42.9%
	In pairs	4	57.1%
	Individually	0	0%

The above table displays teachers' opinions on the way their students prefer to work during classroom sessions. We can notice that working "*In pairs*" registered the highest frequency (4 occurrences) accounting for 57.1% of the three suggestions. The second highest chosen option is working "*In small groups*" which registered 3 cases accounting for 42.9% of all the options. The last option which is working "*Individually*" did not record any occurrences. In short, this may be in a direct relation with the students' preferred learning styles, that is the way they find themselves comfortable and eager to learn, which apparently seems to be working in pairs.

Item 08: According to you, how could teachers help their students overcome classroom communication difficulties and be active in the classroom?

Teacher 01: *"I kindly invite them to take part in the classroom activities and to try even if the answer is not pertinent. Importantly, I always provide positive feedback"*.

Teacher 02: *"To enhance their own communication skills, I usually ask them to prepare a 10 pages Project in a given subject to be prepared in a fortnight or less, then I ask them to present it to the class. This process creates a positive stress and competition between the students with an external motivation consisting of splitting the mark on 20 between Writing and Speaking (representation and answering the oral questions by the students)"*.

Teacher 03: *"By creating a good and relaxed atmosphere and encouraging all students to participate"*.

Teacher 04: *“Varying topics, motivating them, role play, simulation activities, offering them the opportunity to act as teachers”.*

Teacher 05: *“We need to be eclectic, use diverse teaching methods, techniques and strategies. Respond to the learners’ needs, provide opportunities to all students with equity, create a smooth environment, concentrate on their active participation and not on their errors”.*

In general, the above responses mirror the ways teachers use to help their students overcome classroom communication difficulties and be active in the classroom. The teachers being questioned provided some of the techniques they rely on during their classroom sessions including; creating a relaxed atmosphere, encouraging students to participate, varying topics of discussion, using role play tasks, offering them the opportunity to act as teachers. Adding to that, asking them to prepare projects then present them in front of their classmates, kindly inviting students to take part in classroom activities even if they do not have the supposed answers, and providing positive feedback. Furthermore, they asserted that teachers should respond to the learners’ needs, concentrate on students’ active participation and not only on the errors they commit.

Item 09: What are the activities, strategies, and techniques you rely on most frequently and you believe in their effect to boost students’ willingness to participate during the lesson?

Teacher 01:

“-Tailor the lessons (or part of them) to the students’ prior knowledge (if it is not a new course)”.

“-Allow the students’ collaboration in the classroom”.

“-Give the students activities to solve and ask them for a collaborative correction”.

“-Adapting Think-Pair-Share strategy”.

Teacher 02: *“As I have explained in response to question 8, The Project to be exposed or represented in a classroom has its fruit when done well by a teacher. It boosts the competition between the students and enhances their own communication skills. This constant interaction and creativity makes a learner the centre of classroom communication process. The teacher takes more the role of a guide rather than an instructor. This strategy, when stressed by the external motivation (Marks), will be fruitful”.*

Teacher 03:

“By designing activities that foster students’ motivation”.

“By using collaborative teaching/learning or group work”.

“By designing activities that give opportunities for all students to participate”.

“Praise students for their efforts”.

“Encourage students to participate even when they make mistakes”.

“Do not interrupt students when they speak”.

Teacher 04: *“Varying topics, motivating them, role play, simulation activities, offering them the opportunity to act as teachers”.*

Teacher 05: *“Put the learners at the heart of the work and make them responsible of their choices, work, Project-based approach, task-based approach, experiential learning, learning by doing”.*

For a successful performance in English language, students are required to be more active and highly involved in classroom activities. By setting this item, we aimed to see the diverse techniques, activities, and strategies teachers count on and believe in their effect to boost students’ willingness to participate during classroom sessions. The participant teachers provided various methods which helped them maintain a pleasant atmosphere. The first respondent suggested that activating the students’ prior knowledge about the previous lesson at the beginning of the session will help boosting their willingness, as well as encouraging pair and group work. The second teacher stressed on the strategy of exposing projects in the classroom, according to him/her, this will boost the competition between the students and provoke their speaking skill. The third teacher insisted on the use of activities that foster students’ motivation, and offer them all the opportunities to take part in classroom activities without interrupting them while speaking; this will certainly push their willingness to interact forward. The fourth teacher, on the other hand, said that s/he relies on simulation activities, varying topics of discussion and importantly giving students the chance to act as teachers. The last respondent asserted that s/he relies on project-based method, trying to make the learners feel responsible by putting them at the heart of the work; that is, the strategy of learning by doing.

Item 10: Feel free to add any comments you would like to share about students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom.

Teacher 01: *"The Attitude of the teacher must be a vivid one. It is all about the attitude. A Teacher must serve as an example for his students. If the teacher is passive and not knowledgeable about the module he is supposed to teach, the students are going to be less motivated and more frustrated and annoyed. The teacher who is dynamic and more like "a social worker", to quote Paolo Freire's, creates a tremendous creative environment where the students' skills will be sharpened up and where they feel to be part of the course and not marginalized from it. It is also worth mentioning that the attitude of the teacher must be pedagogical and not judgmental".*

Teacher 02: *"Student's unwillingness to communicate in the classroom is a very interesting topic because many students suffer from this situation. Sometimes even if they have right answers they do not participate because of some factors such as psychological ones. They are afraid of making mistakes and they think that their mates or teachers are going to judge them negatively; this is why some students prefer to be passive learners who do not participate".*

Teacher 03:

"The most important reactions from teachers are to look for the factors which block in a way or another the students' participation".

"Find out issues which meet these students' needs and preferences".

"Create through sound strategies twin-classes and integrate kinds of rewarded competitions".

"Fully integrate the technique of the flipped classroom where the students feel they are important because they will react and act as teachers, providing them with a program to develop and enrich and through which the teacher will become a tutor and a guide".

The last item concerns the additional comments given by the participants regarding our research topic dealing with the reasons behind students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. To illustrate, one respondent emphasized the point that teachers' attitude plays a vital role in enhancing students' motivation to speak; if teachers are active in the classroom, their students' WTC will be activated and vice versa. Another teacher stated that our research topic sounds very interesting and worth studying since many EFL students suffer from this issue. Whereas, another participant invited teachers to seek for what causes students' reluctance to communicate in the classroom by suggesting a set of methods and strategies

they could adopt in order to boost their students' willingness to participate during FL classroom sessions.

2.3. Section Three: Discussion of the Major Results, Limitations of the study, Recommendations & Pedagogical Implications, and Suggestions for Further Research

2.3.1. Discussion of the Major Results:

The current sub-section summarizes the results gathered through the two employed research tools (students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire) hence, provides answers to the research questions.

Interestingly, the current research aimed at exploring the reasons behind EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom as well as providing some recommendations for both teachers and students in order to help learners overcome this issue and become active in the classroom.

With regard to the first research question which seeks to figure out the factors that may negatively affect EFL students' WTC in the classroom, the results obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the respondents are unwilling to communicate in the classroom because of various factors. Importantly, the majority of the students stated that fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, lack of language proficiency, shyness, stress, anxiety, and lack of motivation are the major factors that prevent them from communicating. As it is confirmed through the questionnaire distributed to teachers; they argued that the barriers that detriment students from participation in the classroom are mostly the psychological and the linguistic ones. This conforms to the results achieved in both Hamouda (2012) and Mazouzi (2013) studies which revealed that students are unwilling to communicate in the classroom due to several factors such as anxiety, poor self-esteem, lack of motivation, low English proficiency, fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and shyness.

Concerning the second question, which is about how EFL teachers could help their students overcome classroom communication difficulties and be active in the classroom, the answer to this question can be extracted from the collected responses from the two questionnaires. Hence, in order to help students overcome classroom communication difficulties and be active in the classroom, the participants of our study suggested the following: creating good, enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere, encouraging students to

participate by motivating and praising them, offering the learners opportunities to speak and use the TL in the classroom, asking students to prepare projects and then presenting them in front of their classmates, varying the topics of classroom discussions and kindly inviting learners to take part in classroom activities. Adopting group works, is another helpful strategy that would push students to interact. The same findings were found in Bourezzane's (2015) and Mebarki's (2016) study results, where teachers provided similar helpful solutions that would encourage students to be active in the classroom and overcome their communication difficulties.

Regarding the third research question which attempts to find out tips on how students' WTC in the classroom can be enhanced, the respondents recommended the use of simulation activities, role play, the use of activities that foster students' motivation, encouraging students to participate even when they make mistakes, allowing students' collaboration in the classroom. Moreover, teachers have to be helpful, serve as guides and facilitators and be more close to their students, this will surely push students to interact in an FL classrooms. These findings are consistent with Behadada's (2015) research in which teachers suggested similar tips for the sake of improving students' speaking skill.

In a nutshell, our research objectives had been successfully attained and the study results had positively answered the research questions. In which we can deduce that the majority of third year LMD students at the University of Bejaia are unwilling to communicate in the classroom because of the group of factors already discussed in the findings above. Furthermore, we came out with helpful solutions and recommendations for both teachers and students.

2.3.2. Limitations of the Study

Undoubtedly, any researcher may encounter different obstacles during the investigation process as it was the case for the present study. Although the study came out with interesting results that directly respond to our research questions, we faced several problems while conducting this study. First of all, the major difficulty we encountered was lack of resources at the level of our university library; it was somehow challenging to find the suitable ones easily since the collection of data demands the use of distinct references including books, articles, documents, theses, and dissertations. Second, most of the students were not cooperative enough and did not seriously respond to the questionnaire; they did not provide full responses and even ignored some parts of the given items. Moreover, because of time restriction and COVID 19, teachers preferred to answer the questionnaire online.

Furthermore, the present study was conducted with third year EFL students at the University of Bejaia. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to students of other levels and of other Arabic varieties or nationalities.

2.3.3. Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications

As resulted in the present study, students' speaking skill and WTC in the classroom is negatively affected by various factors such as anxiety, stress, shyness, lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, lack of language proficiency, etc. Thus, in this subsection, based on the study results, we attempt to provide some useful solutions that would be beneficial for both teachers and students in order to improve students' oral performance, get rid of the various factors that hinder learners and prevent them from well performing in the EFL classrooms.

2.3.3.1. Recommendations to Teachers

Creating a safe and enjoyable classroom environment which can improve students' performance is extremely needed. Teachers could attain this through the following activities, techniques and strategies:

Promoting cooperative learning which guides to a less competitive environment, working in groups can help in decreasing students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. Thus, role play is the main group work procedure that can be used, this can make learners engaged, relaxed and less inhibited.

Moreover, teachers should give learners more opportunities to take part in classroom discussions; teachers should talk less than students so as to increase students' oral contributions, motivate and engage them. Students' engagement can be sustained by providing interesting topics for discussion and varying classroom activities so as to avoid making learners bored.

Importantly, teachers have to realize that they should act as facilitators; they are expected to simplify the lessons' content, provide comprehensible input, and be more close to their students; all these will help students overcome their fear of speaking in the classroom and increase their self-confidence.

Besides, teachers should avoid harsh error correction and excessive negative feedback. Instead, errors should be corrected in an indirect and friendly way.

Furthermore, teachers should be aware of the various factors that cause students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom and do their possible to help their learners get rid of them. Teachers should encourage their learners to take part in classroom discussions, this way, students become more confident and, step by step, overcome any obstacle blocking them from interacting.

Finally, English is not to be spoken only during the classroom sessions. However, it has to be practised everywhere. It is really important for teachers to encourage their learners to speak the English language even outside the classroom and not only inside the classroom, everywhere they meet, the conversation should be carried out in English. This way, students will have the chance to practise more the language, get rid of their shyness, acquire new vocabulary, and, more importantly, become accustomed to practise the target language.

2.3.3.2. Recommendations to Students

Students play a vital role in the FL classroom, without their contribution, there will be no successful learning. Thus, in order to overcome their passivity in the classroom and push their oral performance level forward, they are friendly asked to consider the following tips:

Students need to follow the instructions given by teachers, consider what they are saying and listen attentively in the classroom.

Students need to develop their speaking skill, for instance, through listening to native speakers and taking notes, as well as trying to use the TL as much as possible, either with peers or people outside the university so as to enhance their oral production.

Students should not compare themselves to others, they should rather focus on themselves and the way they could improve their capabilities instead of thinking of what people would say about them.

Students should not feel ashamed when making mistakes, because error commitment is a part of the learning process; one learns from his/her mistakes. They should also consider others' criticism as an encouragement and not a blame.

2.3.4. Suggestions for Further Research

On the basis of the current study findings and the ones of previous related studies, we can assume that there are various factors that detriment students' speaking skill and lead to their unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. Therefore, further research and investigation is highly needed regarding this issue since the majority of EFL learners either in

Algeria or outside, encounter such problem. Hence, it is suggested for future researchers to shed light on the present topic by considering the variables of age and gender which were not considered in our study. Moreover, Factors as lack of vocabulary, lack of language proficiency, fear of making mistakes, shyness, stress, and other ones need to be studied and explored thoroughly in the coming researches with more emphasis on providing solutions that fit students' needs, personalities, preferences, and learning styles.

General Conclusion

The chief goal of this research was to shed light on one of the most common issues in EFL classrooms which is unwillingness to speak in FL. During classroom sessions, most of the students do not participate and remain passive what causes a serious problem as those students rarely carry out conversations in FL with their peers or teachers, and hardly respond to the questions asked by the teacher with their own free will. Accordingly, the main goal of the present research is to find out the reasons behind EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. Moreover, it aims to find out solutions that might help EFL learners overcome their classroom communication difficulties and enhance their WTC in the classroom. The case study of our research was third year EFL students at the University of Bejaia, Department of English.

The present thesis is composed of two chapters. The first one represents the theoretical background of our study where we tried to provide an insight into different aspects related to our field of investigation which are organized in six sections; The first one concerns learning English as an FL. The second one is about speaking skill. The third one deals with classroom interaction. The fourth one is about learners' strategies for communication. The fifth one presents factors negatively affecting students' WTC in the classroom. The last section provides some selected previous studies related to the present study. The second chapter is devoted to present the research methods, analysis and discussion of the findings which are presented in three separate sections. The first section comprises details about the methods and study design in which a description of the sample, the research instruments and the data collection procedure is given. The second section, on the other hand, is specifically designed for the analysis and interpretation of the obtained results. Last but not least, we devoted the third section to present and discuss the study main results, provide the limitations of the study, recommendations and pedagogical implications, and suggestions for further research.

The current paper was based on the use of a quantitative method to collect data, in addition to a mixed methodology where both quantitative and qualitative methods were used together to analyze the gathered data. Therefore, we used two quantitative tools in order to collect valid and reliable data; the students' questionnaire which was distributed to a sample of 50 EFL learners, and the teachers' questionnaire which was directed to five teachers from the Department of English.

The findings of this study permitted us to attain our objectives and to answer our study questions. The results revealed that the majority of EFL third year students encounter difficulties when speaking and become unwilling to communicate in the classroom mainly because of psychological and linguistic barriers, in which students confirmed that the major reasons behind their unwillingness to communicate in the classroom are shyness, stress, anxiety, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, and lack of language proficiency. All these factors do negatively affect the learners' learning process and lead to poor oral performance as it is previously argued and confirmed by the teachers being questioned.

Finally, the study ended up by proposing solutions for both teachers and EFL learners so that the learners' WTC in the classroom could be boosted, and in turn, the learners become active in the classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix 01

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

We would be thankful if you could take time to answer the coming questions concerning a study that will be conducted at the English Department at Bejaia University which is about "Reasons behind the Algerian EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom". All the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Thank you for your collaboration.

Please put a tick (√) in the corresponding box, more than one answer is possible when necessary.

The researchers

Part one: General Information

Gender:

Male

Female

Age

19-21

22-23

Level of education

Your level in English is:

Good

Average

Bad

English is:

Your choice

Parents' choice

Administrative orientation

Part two: Students' Speaking Skill

1/ Speaking skill is

An easy task

A complex task

2/ You prefer

Speaking in English

Writing in English

3/ How often does your teacher ask you to speak in front of your classmates?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

4/ Do you speak English outside the classroom?

Yes

No

Part three: Students' Communication in the Classroom

5/ If you are suddenly asked by the teacher to answer questions in an English class, will you respond:

Anxiously Comfortably

6/ I feel shy to raise my hand in English class even if I have got an answer:

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral

Disagree Strongly disagree

7/ Do you feel unwilling to communicate in the classroom?

Yes No

8/ You are unwilling to communicate because of:

Lack of preparation

Lack of language proficiency

Fear of negative evaluation

Fear of making mistakes

Lack of vocabulary

Not understanding what the teacher is saying in English

Having nothing to say

9/ Which of these psychological barriers prevent you from communicating and participating in the classroom?

Anxiety

Lack of self-confidence

Lack of motivation

Shyness

Stress

10/ What do you prefer?

Individual work

Pair work

Group work

11/ How do you find classroom atmosphere?

Relaxed

Motivating

Boring

12/ If you would like that your teacher uses new strategies in teaching what do you suggest they would be? Why?

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13/ Any other suggestions are very welcome

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THANK YOU for your cooperation 😊

Appendix 02

Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed as a part of our research in the Master program, option Linguistics that would be conducted at the Department of English at Bejaia University. It is intended to gather data about reasons behind EFL students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. We would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions since your answers are very important for the validity of this research work. Also, make sure that all information you provide will be anonymously treated and will be used only for academic purposes. Thank you in advance.

Please put a tick (√) in the corresponding box, more than one answer is possible when necessary.

The researchers

Section one: General information

Gender

Male Female

Degree (s) Held

B.A. M.A.

Ph.D. Pr.

How many years of experience do you have in teaching English?

Less than 05 years Between 05 to 10 years More than 10 years

Section two: would you please answer the following questions appropriately?

1/ What is the level of participation in the classroom?

- Good
- Bad
- Average
- No speaking

2/ Have you already noticed your learners' hesitation to speak in the classroom? If yes, in your opinion, what are the barriers that prevent them from participating?

- Psychological barriers
- Linguistic barriers
- Others

3/ Do you think that such barriers have a negative effect on the learners' oral performance?

4/ In your class, have you noticed students who get good marks in written exams but are unable to express themselves orally ? If yes, how could you explain this contradiction?

5/ Your learners have difficulties when speaking in:

- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary
- Grammar

6/ How do you react when your learners are reticent to communicate in the classroom?

- Oblige your learners to take part
- Change the topic
- Ask your learners to choose the topic in which they are interested in to talk about

- You kindly invite them to take part in classroom activities

7/ How do your learners prefer to work during classroom sessions?

- In small groups
- In pairs
- Individually

8/ According to you, how could teachers help their students overcome classroom communication difficulties and be active in the classroom?

9/ What are the activities, strategies, and techniques you rely on most frequently and you believe in their effect to boost students' willingness to participate during the lesson?

10/ Feel free to add any comments you would like to share about students' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom.

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THANK YOU for your cooperation 😊

Résumé

La volonté des apprenants de la langue étrangère à communiquer est indispensable pour atteindre leurs objectifs d'apprentissage de la langue. La volonté de communiquer est un concept qui assimile les variables linguistiques, communicatives et psychologiques afin d'expliquer la communication en langue étrangère ou en langue seconde. Néanmoins, la plupart des enseignants de nos jours se plaignent de la réticence des étudiants à parler Anglais durant les séances de classe de langue étrangère (LE). Les étudiants peuvent démontrer une bonne performance dans des compétences telles que la lecture, l'écoute et l'écriture, mais quand il s'agit de parler en LE, ils deviennent passifs ou réticents en classe à cause d'obstacles psychologiques, linguistiques ou peut-être d'autres barrières affectives. Ainsi, l'étude présente vise à explorer les facteurs qui nuisent à la volonté des étudiants de communiquer en classe en suivant un plan exploratoire. La population de cette recherche est constituée d'étudiants de troisième année LMD au département d'Anglais, Université de Béjaïa. L'échantillon se compose de cinquante étudiants et cinq enseignants au département d'anglais. Pour atteindre les objectifs de notre étude et trouver des réponses à nos questions, nous avons opté pour une méthode quantitative pour la collection des données, et une méthode mixte comprenant des méthodes quantitatives et qualitative pour les analyser. Les données ont été recueillies à l'aide de deux instruments; un questionnaire destiné aux étudiants et un autre distribué aux enseignants. Les résultats de l'analyse des données ont révélé que les obstacles principaux qui empêchent les étudiants de communiquer en classe sont la timidité, le stress, la peur de faire des erreurs, le manque de vocabulaire, le manque de maîtrise de la langue, l'anxiété et le manque de motivation. Dans l'ensemble, les résultats de l'étude ont répondu à nos questions de recherche, les objectifs de cette étude sont donc atteints. Enfin, des techniques et des stratégies utiles ont été suggérées pour stimuler ainsi que renforcer la volonté des étudiants de troisième année pour communiquer en classe.

Mots-clés: Apprenants de la langue étrangère, barrières affectives, communication en classe, langue étrangère, la réticence des étudiants à parler.