PROMOTING CRITICAL THINKING TOPICS TO ENHANCE EFL LEARNERS'SPEAKING SKILL:
BELIEFS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Ms. Rayane Guendouzi   Dr. Salima Maouche

Panel of Examination :

President: Dr. AHOUARI Nadia   MCB   University of Bejaia .
Supervisor: Dr. MAOUCHE Salima   MCA   University of Bejaia .
Examiner 1: Mr. OUALI Chafa   MAA   University of Bejaia .
Examiner 2: Dr. GUEMIDE Boutkhil   MC   University of Jijel .

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Abstract

The present study is designed under the aim of inciting the EFL learners to engage in the classroom discussions. In order to achieve the underlined aim, a suggested technique is implemented. Therefore, promoting critical thinking topics is proposed to be used as a technique to help EFL learners in improving their speaking skill. In this research, a mixed-method (Quantitative + Qualitative) is adopted in order to collect data. To carry out a Quantitative method , an Observation and an Experiment are conducted as means of collecting data .Concerning the Qualitative method, a questionnaire and a checklist are designed as other tools for data collection . These different tools are collected with the cooperation of the third year EFL students at the Department of English at the University of Bejaia. Two groups of these students are chosen randomly to take part as the participants of this research. The findings of the implementation of the suggested technique reveal that it has an effective role in helping the EFL learners to enhance their speaking skill.

Key words: EFL, classroom discussions, promoting, critical thinking (CT), speaking skill.

Dedications

Iwould like to dedicate this simple work to :

My precious Mother

Who has always been both a father and a mother to me

For her infinit Love , for her Care , for her Prayers

Thank you for everything you have done and you still doing to make your one and only child be the happiest one on earth

To you Mother

I dedicate this simple work which I did just to make you proud of me

And to draw a smile on your blessed face

To my SUPER MOM '' Ghania ''

To all the members of my precious family

To my uncles , my aunts and their sons and daughters

To the sweet and the precious little Rimess

To the memory of my dear grandmother Zahra May she rest in peace

To my soulmate Noussaiba for her encouragement and care

To my best and dear friend Abderraouf

I would like to thank him for being always there helping me , thank you for being the source of my motivation

To all my dear friends

Maria , Sadjia,Imane , Ahlem , Meriem , Amine and Yahia

Thank you all for being there for me

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List of Initialisms :

CT: Critical Thinking

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

LMD: Licence Master Doctorat

MT: Mother Tongue

TL: Target Language

Q: Question

%: Percentage

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction:

Speaking skill plays a crucial role in the foreign language teaching and learning .It is considered as the first means of communication through which we can express our ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings creating a smooth interaction with others.

Many researches have been conducted due to the importance of this skill in the foreign language learners' learning achievements; as well as the different difficulties that the EFL teachers encounter when teaching this skill.

Teaching and learning the speaking skill creates various challenges for both EFL teachers and learners the reason which for many researchers pay considerable attention to. They tried in different ways and contexts to tackle the issue of enhancing the speaking skill, in order to help the EFL teaching and learning develop and satisfy the target needs.

The study at hands aims at finding new techniques and strategies to help enhancing the EFL learners 'speaking skills and facilitating the EFL teachers as professionals as well. In this research we are to investigate how promoting critical thinking topics helps in improving the EFL learners' speaking skill. We are also to give a closer look at the EFL learners' perspectives and beliefs towards the new suggested technique.

1. Statement of the problem

As aforementioned, teaching and learning the speaking skill in the foreign language context is considered as a challenging process. The main aim of teaching and learning the speaking skill is to be able to communicate in the target language. Before conducting this research, it has been noticed that the majority of EFL learners at the Department of English at Bejaia University, are suffering from the lack of communication especially in the Oral expression module. Therefore, and on this basis, we have been attracted to carry out a study suggesting promoting critical thinking topics as a technique to help the EFL learners to enhance their speaking skills.

2. Aims of the study

The study at hands has been designed to achieve the following aims:

- To find out that the implementation of promoting critical thinking topics in the oral expression has many significant impacts on enhancing the EFL learners' speaking; there

is another element which consists of inciting the EFL learners and encouraging them to speak voluntarily as well as engaging them in the classroom discussions.

3. Research questions

In order to conduct this study on a well-structured chronology of facts we believe that the following questions should be raised:

Q1: Could promoting critical thinking topics help the EFL learners to improve their speaking skill?

Q2: What could the learners' perceptions and perspectives be as far as this new suggested technique is concerned?

Q3: Could this new technique be applicable in the future learning and teaching process?

4. Research Hypotheses

Referring to the research questions, it is hypothesized that:

- The implementation of promoting critical thinking topics may have effective impacts in helping the EFL learners to improve their speaking skills.

- The EFL learners may have a positive perception towards the implementation of this technique.

- This new technique can be applied in the future learning and teaching process as a means to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills.

5. Research Design and Methodology

In order to carry out this research and collect and analyze data, a mixed method (Quantitative+ Qualitative) is used.

- **The Quantitative Method :**

For the quantitative method: a questionnaire and a checklist are going to be handled as means of collecting data.

- **The Qualitative Method :**

For the qualitative method: an observation-experiment is going to be conducted as another means of collecting data as well.

6. Population and Sampling

❖ **Population**

This research targets the third year students of English at the Department of English at Bejaia University.

❖ **Sampling**

Because of time scarcity and the importance of the undertaken skill, we sought more judicious to limit our population sample to two groups and to reveal obscure layers on the topics of discussion to suggest a sort of material which comprises the implementation of critical thinking topics.

This research targets the students of third year at the Department of English, University of Bejaia. They will be gathered randomly and homogeneously into two groups of 20 to 30 individuals.

7. The structure of the study

This study is divided into three chapters:

➢ **Chapter one**

It is concerned with the background studies which many researchers have conducted in relation to our theme of research (Literature Review).

➢ **Chapter two**

It is however concerned with a detailed discussion of the two main variables of the research (speaking skill and critical thinking).

➢ **Chapter three**

It is devoted to introducing the methodology and research design in details. As it is devoted to the data analysis procedures and presentation of the findings of the whole research.

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CHAPTER ONE: Background Studies

Introduction

Critical thinking is a concept that has been applied in various fields like: economics, computing, Human resources ...etc. This chapter is an overview about the other different applications of critical thinking in the field of teaching and learning. In addition to that, some other studies have been stated in relation to the different achievements of many researchers concerning the speaking skill. Furthermore, throughout this chapter, we have been working towards demonstrating the importance each variable has upon the other, and mainly how critical thinking as a new technique may have on the target skill's development.

1.1. The Speaking skill

1.1.1 Speaking difficulties

Foreign language learners face various difficulties when learning the target language. One of the main issues that they may struggle with is that there are not enough opportunities to practice the target language. According to Nunan (1997) ''Learning speaking skills is very challenging for students in FL context, because they have very few opportunities to use the target language outside the classroom.'' (p. 54). Ur (2009) listed the four main problems that learners may have with speaking and they are as follows:

1.1.1.1. Inhibition:

The speaking skill needs a more degree of real-time exposure to the interlocutors unlike the other skills (listening, writing and reading). When trying to engage in a speaking performance, learners face some factors like shyness and the fear of making mistakes which prevents them from doing so. Ur (2009) claimed that "Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts." (p. 121)

1.1.1.2. Nothing to say

'' I have nothing to say '' ; '' I have nothing to talk about '' ; '' I have no comment '' ; '' I don't know what to say '' , these are typically the common expressions that learners produce when are imposed to talk in class . Students tend to use these expressions or even remain silent because of different factors like the lack of motivation or the lack of vocabulary about the topic. As stated in Ur (2009) ''you often hear learners complain that they cannot think of anything to

say: they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking. '' (p. 121)

1.1.1.3. Low uneven participation

It is commonly known that students' participation differs from one class to another according to the learners themselves in many cases. We may find some learners who like to dominate the class discussions and participation over others who prefer to be silent or participate just for one time or two if they had the chance. We generally notice that each time there are the same faces speaking, raising hands, engaging in the different speaking activities while the other learners remain in the same quiet position most of the time. This phenomenon may occur due to several reasons. It may occur for instance because of the learners differences (introvert and extravert students); as it may happen also because of the teacher's attitudes towards learners. When the teacher for example is used to interact only with active students and tends to ignore the passive ones. Learners may not also be provided with equal chances to participate as a reason of their large number for instance; as Ur (2009) stated referring to this point:

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

However, EFL classes can overcome these issues depending on various techniques and strategies but the most attention should be paid on the teacher's motivating students in any way. If there is no motives to foster learners to speak, even the active learners they are going to lose interest.

It is noticed that voluntary participation is limited to a few number of students; the teacher instructs the whole group but he only notices few hands raised(Saihua,2009).As teachers we every time see only the usual best students who are always participating. To get the majority of the class participate it is like to '' pull teeth '' but it has been discovered recently that many students generally enjoy competition through which they participate (Walker, 2003). That's what is going to be provided in this   research through promoting critical thinking topics which

increases the sense of participation and challenge as they debate and negotiate to persuade each other.

1.1.1.4. Mother Tongue use

Using the mother tongue in the foreign language classrooms is considered to be easier for learners to communicate with and to express oneself clearer.

> In classes where all , or a number of , the learners share the same mother tongue, they may tend to use it : because it is easier , because it is feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language , and because they feel less 'exposed' if they are speaking their mother tongue . If they are talking in small groups it can be quiet difficult to get some classes – particularly the less disciplined or motivated ones – to keep to the target language (Ur, 2009, p. 121)

1.1.1.5. The focus on accuracy

As all teachers we know that students learn to speak by speaking. This can be achieved through class interaction and engagement in class discussions .Teachers most of the time provide their learners with activities that make them engage in through oral interaction but they focus only on how did students manipulate the linguistic forms studied before ; did they use what have been learned or not ? . The aim from these activities most of the time is assessment and not only for creating opportunities for learners to participate (Nunan, 1991). In contrast to what has been mentioned before, this research will provide our learners with opportunities to talk and participate but only for the sake of participation. In addition to that, students are going to speak only for the sake of speaking and discussing different topics with no correction or assessment objectives.

1.1.1.6. The learners' fear of the teacher's negative feedback

Other researchers found that when providing learners with opportunities to speak and communicate in the classroom, students fear to be corrected that's what influences their willingness of class participation (Nazari and Allahyar, 2012). Therefore through promoting critical thinking topics there will be no correction because there will be no right or wrong

answer from the first place. The first aim is to interact and tell what's in your mind with no boundaries or limits.

1.1.2. Strategies to foster learners' class speaking

1.1.2.1. Increasing class participation through

1.1.2.1.1. The teacher's instructions

Some researchers claim that teachers' careful instructions should lead to a classroom communication that makes the learners listen and talk to each other. It teaches them also how to negotiate and how to exchange ideas and messages (Shumin,1997). These instructions are going to be embedded in the topics that promote critical thinking in our research. This tip indeed woks for the benefits of this research by which we agree upon.

1.1.2.1.2. The students' questions

Others claim that also students' questions and comments allow interaction to take place and provide the teachers with a clear idea about how and what do they think about. However, large classrooms do not provide a chance to all students to participate, which led to increase voluntary student participation as a solution .The solution that was found is enhancing voluntary participation through giving credits to students (Robert, 2007). We agree upon paying more attention to students' questions and comments through using them to increase participation .However, giving credits to enhance participation as a solution is disapproved from the view of our research. If we want to increase voluntary participation through giving credits to learners, it will work as a push. Students will be pushed to learn and as it is widely known we can never push anyone to learn. In addition, learners will feel bored and like there is nothing else encourages them to participate only these extra credits. This idea is seen as an example of punishment and reward; it brings no creativity or additional development to the students' learning.

1.1.2.1.3. Raising debates and classroom discussions

Debating and formulating arguments were found as useful techniques to make students express their thoughts, engage into open discussions, have positions argue them and support their view points (Eison, 2010). We strongly agree with that because that is what is going to be provided through promoting critical thinking topics.

It has been also found that when the learners notice that there is a relation between the issue and the topic discussed and what exists there in real life, they may be more active to engage in classroom discussions. Furthermore, instructors should play an important role to create discussion areas and provide learners with different opportunities to be engaged in these class discussions (Foster, Krohn, McCleary, Aspiran, Nails, Quillivan, Taylor & Williams, 2009). We agree indisputably with what have been said before because the topics stimulating critical thinking that are going to be provided in this research are inspired from real life events. These topics are going to make the students actively engage in the class discussions.

Some other studies had discussed the same concept of increasing participation and making benefits from critical thinking .Crawford ,Saul , Mathews , and Makinster (2005) said "going beyond questions that require simple memory or recall, we, as teachers, help students tap higher levels of critical thinking, even as they develop factual knowledge'' (p, 5) Here we can deduce that the teacher's questions which stimulate the students' critical thinking (CT) can play an effective role to incite students to participate actively during the classroom discussions which is agreed upon in this research.

1.2. Enhancing the speaking skills of the EFL learners

1.2.1. Enhancing the EFL learners' speaking skills through increasing speaking confidence

Boonkit (2010) found that among the main factors that enhance the development of the EFL learners' speaking skills is building up confidence in speaking. Another remarkable factor was the tasks based on speaking for special communication. It played an effective role for the participants' preparation for speaking, as well as it helped in decreasing anxiety and increasing the speaking confidence of the learners.

1.2.2 Enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills through practice

Another study conducted by Rodríguez (2011-2012) showed that one of the preferable affective ways that should be considered to develop the learner's speaking skills is practice. This can be achieved with the implication of activities through which the interaction between students is going to be promoted.

1.3. Critical Thinking in the speaking skill

1.3.1. Raising critical thinking awareness to enhance the speaking skill

Sanavi and Tarighat (2014) claimed that raising an explicit critical thinking awareness has a positive effect on the speaking proficiency of female Iranian adult intermediate EFL learners. That was the first finding of their study which we agree upon in this study.

1.3.2 Teaching Critical thinking to enhance learners' speaking skill:

The study of Malmir and Shoorcheh (2012) revealed that there was a crucial impact on promoting learners' speaking ability after implementing a critical thinking training on the EFL Iranian learners. They have also found that the implication of critical thinking techniques played an important role in helping the learners to use evidence skillfully when interacting with their classmates. Malmir and Shoorcheh (2012) claimed "In fact, critical thinking strategies help the learners consider all the characteristics of a good conversation when they were talking in the classroom" (p, 614) .What have been found in this study confirms that critical thinking has a crucial impact on developing the learners speaking ability and speaking skill which is agreed upon in our research.

Jantrasakul (2012) another researcher who had explained how critical thinking-related EFL lessons provides the students with the opportunity to practice the language in a cultural context. The author claimed that the learners' opinions are shared in public as they are communicating verbally when giving their viewpoints about the given reading text. We agree upon this at the point that when providing the students with the reading texts, they are asked to think critically about the cultural context within the text. After reading, they are given the chance to discuss the content critically and share their opinions in the classroom. This encourages the learners to engage in and interact with the teacher and the classmates.

1.4. Promoting Critical thinking topics in the Speaking skill

Oros (2007) has stated the benefits of active learning, and how it is applied through the use of political science instructions. He also showed how politics and political events are manipulated as a means to make the students debate critically in the classroom. This idea was really welcomed in our research since the provided means looks beneficial and applicable. The political events are supposed to be implemented in our research as a source of topics that promote learners' Critical thinking.

Other researchers like Martinez and Nino (2013) have investigated how teaching critical thinking related-tasks is helping in improving the language competence of the EFL students. How it stimulates the students' engagement in comparing and contrasting thoughts for instance, and also stating their opinions about the discussed issue, giving arguments and judgements to support their viewpoints. All what have been said previously results in creating an active oral class interaction that plays an effective role in developing the learner's speaking. We approve what has been said above since teaching critical thinking related-tasks makes the students give judgements and arguments to support their opinions , it incites them in the same time to participate actively in the classroom .This idea resembles what is going to be provided in our study not through CT related-tasks but through promoting CT topics.

Conclusion:

In this chapter we have seen many studies from different teaching and learning contexts .They tackled various issues related to critical thinking and speaking skill from different angles. Each study which was discussed above had some sort of relationship to our research as have been showed.

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CHAPTER TWO: Theoretical Background

Introduction:

In this chapter the two main variables of the current study are discussed with more details. This chapter is divided into two different sections. Concerning the first section which holds more details about the Speaking skill like: its definition, its elements, its implications in the classrooms; and more other details. Concerning the second section which provides a more detailed discussion about the concept of critical thinking. In this section many elements are discussed as: the definition of critical thinking, its relationship with learning and teaching and other detailed elements. It is started with section one which deals with the detailed discussion of the speaking skill.

Section One: The Speaking skill

1. Definition of the Speaking skill:

Speaking is a productive skill that the foreign language learners should master besides the other skills. It is known as a verbal means to produce expressions and communicate through. It is commonly known that to speak and communicate are the main reasons why do people learn a foreign language. As Ur (2009) claimed:

> Of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems
>
> intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as
>
> 'speakers' of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing
>
> and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning
>
> to speak (p. 120).

Learning speaking is considered as a crucial step in learning a foreign language. Although it is a difficult productive skill to master, it is important as a way for communication, expressing ideas and feelings; and also interacting with others.

1.1. Reasons for teaching speaking

McDonough and Shaw (2003) said that "speaking is desire-and purpose-driven" (p. 134). From this we can deduce that we speak for a reason and whatever we say must have something to be achieved after. We may speak to express ideas or feelings, exchange pieces of information, to give opinions ... and many other reasons. Teachers also have various reasons to make their

learners speak in the classroom. Among these reasons, we shall discuss the three main ones as Harmer (2007) classified them:

1.1.1. Speaking provides rehearsal opportunities

It means that the teaching of speaking provides the learners with more real-life speaking chances to practice in the classroom.

1.1.2. Speaking tasks provide feedback

Teachers teach speaking for the reason that through the speaking tasks and activities, feedback will be provided for both teacher and learners. Through the provided feedback, everyone can have a clear idea about their progress. Also, it gives them a chance to detect their language problems and facilitates the way to overcome them.

1.1.3. Raising students' autonomy

When the learners have many chances to activate the various language elements they know, they will tend to use them in a more automatic manner. This gives the result that the learners' autonomy of the language use will gradually be raised.

1.2. Elements of speaking

In order to have the ability to speak the target language fluently and accurately, EFL/ESL learners should know about an important elements which help to improve their speaking skill. These elements were stated by Harmer (2001) in which he said "the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only a knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language 'on the top" (p. 269).

A. Language features

The features that are necessary for an effective speaking production are the following:

1. Connected speech

To master this feature you need to have the ability to produce a more connected and linked fluent speech. In this case the target language speaker should not produce the sounds as a separated phonemes. The sounds in connected speech may be omitted, modified, added or weakened.

2. Expressive devices

The native speakers of English have the ability to use the phonological rules effectively. They can make changes in the pitch, stress, volume, speed and use non-verbal means. Natives can convey their intended meaning through the use of these devices, for that learners should have at least some knowledge about this in order to be an effective communicators.

3. Lexis and Grammar

Students tend to use most of the time the same common lexical structures when performing language functions. In this case, learners should be provided with various phrases which are applicable in different functions. As a result, learners are going to be able to use them in the different stages of communication they are experiencing.

4. Negotiation Language

The use of negotiation language is very important for learners .They can benefit from it when asking for more clarification while listening to others talk. So, they should be provided with some necessary expressions to use when asking for clarification. In addition to that, they should know how to construct a well performed and accurate utterances in order to be well understood from others.

B. Mental/social processing

The following points are the necessary processing skills of speaking:

1. Language processing

It is the learners' ability of processing the language in their minds and then organizing it coherently in order to make it comprehensible and conveying the intended meaning. They should also have the ability of retrieving words and phrases from their memories and make use of them during the interaction.

2. Interacting with others

Speakers most of the time get involved in different situations of interaction with one or more interlocutors . In other words, to be effective speakers they should be able to listen and understand what others say .Moreover, they are going to react through exchanging turns with the others during the interaction.

3. Information processing

This skill involves speakers to process the piece of information received from the interlocutor rapidly. In other words, the speaker should have the ability to process the information, understand it and respond to it right after getting it from the interlocutor. This what enables the speaker to be an instant communicator.

2. Characteristics of speaking performance

The two main characteristics of the speaking performance are 'Fluency 'and 'Accuracy'. Recently, many teaching contexts paid more attention on these concepts and how to create a balance between them in the designed tasks and activities. These two characteristics are more explained and detailed as follows:

2.1. Fluency

Nation and Newton (2009) defined fluency as "...learners demonstrate fluency when they take part in meaning-focused activity and do it with speed and ease without holding up the flow of talk" (p, 151) ; according to their definition we can deduce that fluency is about 'speed' and 'the flow of talk' . In addition to considering fluency as a skill , they have stated the two factors through which fluency can be measured which are ' speed of access ' and ' the number of hesitations ' produced by the learner .

Another definition of the term fluency which was provided by Nunan (1997) is "Fluency is the extent to which speakers use language quickly and confidently, with few hesitations or unnatural pauses, false starts, word searches, etc." (p. 55). He also claimed that the more teachers keep interrupting their learners talk to correct their errors, the less they can develop their speaking fluency.

Many EFL speakers think that to be a fluent speaker it means to speak fast and without making pauses. Speed is more required and important for a fluent speaker, however making pauses is also needed. Mainly, all speakers make pauses in order to take breath and even native speakers pause from time to time as Thornbury (2005) argued. That is to say it is not necessary to talk rapidly without stop to be called a fluent speaker of the language. Making pauses is required from time to time for a more clear speech.

2.2. Accuracy

To be accurate it means to be correct; that is why most of the EFL teachers try to pay more attention on the learners' accuracy. If the learners are speaking inaccurately, they are going to

be misunderstood or worst not understood at al. Nunan (2003) defined accuracy as follows ''Accuracy is the extent to which students' speech matches what people actually say when they use the target language'' (p. 55). Nation et al. (2009) claimed that accuracy is measured by "the amount of error; and complexity by the presence of more complicated constructions, such as subordinate clauses" (p, 152) . Accuracy is generally known with three main elements that are: Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation.

2.2.1. Grammar

The grammar of the spoken language tends to be of a less complexity than the written one. The speaking is spontaneous and instant therefore the speaker does not have the time to plan and chose from the different grammatical structures as Thornbury (2005) stated. He listed also the different features of the spoken grammar which are:

- 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: hesitations, repeats, false starts, incompletion, syntactic blends.

2.2.2. Vocabulary

When speakers try to choose the appropriate words during speaking that is what can be called achieving accuracy in vocabulary. Most of the time, EFL learners find it difficult to select the appropriate vocabulary when speaking; as a result they may use the words incorrectly. In this case the knowledge of the word classes is required to allow the speakers of performing well formed utterances; this was according to Harmer (2001).

2.2.3. Pronunciation

In order to develop their speaking skill, EFL learners should practice the English pronunciation. They should also be aware of its different aspects so they can be understood. In other words , if the speaker pronounces a given word inaccurately he/she is not going to be understood .That is to say , there should be a balance between ' accuracy ' and ' intelligibility ' as McDonough et al. (2003) stated referring to a number of pronunciation key aspects such as : individual sounds , word stress , sentence stress and rhythm , intonation , and sound and spelling .

3. Practicing the speaking skill in the classroom

The classroom is considered for many EFL learners as the only context that provides them with a variety of opportunities to practice the target language. In order to be fluent speakers, the foreign language learners need to practice English in a regular way through the various activities that are provided by the teacher. Among these activities, the following are the most used :

- **Communication games**

Games-based speaking activities are effective in providing the learners with a valuable practice of the target language. This type of activities according to McDonough et al. (2003) it creates different chances to students to be involved to practice the oral strategies as: describing, predicting, simplifying, asking for feedback through filling in questionnaires activities and guessing unknown information for example. Moreover, since these activities are games-based, they are entertaining and communication requiring too.

- **Problem solving**

Problem solving activities are based on the information gap principle. As stated by McDonough (2003), 'Jigsaw' activities could be provided as a good example used through this principle. In this activity the learners are going to listen to various information chunks which contain an information gap .In this case the learners are supposed to share the information with their groups to reach the complete form of the given situation and solve what was missing.

- **Simulation / role-play**

Using role-play activities in the classroom is considered to be an opportunity of involving learners to experience different social speaking contexts. Role-plays also provides the learners

with some kind of freedom according to McDonough (2003) where they can express their opinions, points of view and defend their arguments.

- **Discussion :**

    One of the main difficulties which the teacher can face during a discussion session is that many students hesitate and in many cases refuse to express their opinions in front of the whole class .Generally, this situation is what makes the discussions fail. Therefore, to overcome this issue teachers can use the ''buzz group'' as suggested by Harmer (2001). Students in this technique are going to have quick discussions but in small groups before speaking in public. As a result, this preparatory step is going to make them more comfortable and less anxious.

Section Two: Critical Thinking

1. Definition of critical thinking

Critical thinking is a concept that has been defined differently by many scholars; the following are some of the definitions that were stated by some scholars:

Cotrell (2005) defined critical thinking as ''Critical thinking is a cognitive activity, associated with using the mind. Learning to think in critically analytical and evaluative ways means using mental processes such as attention, categorization, selection, and judgement" (p. 2)

Another definition which was stated by Rainbolt and Dwyer (2012) "Critical thinking is the skill of correctly evaluating arguments made by others and composing go arguments of your own" (p. 5).

Crawford et al. (2005) stated a definition about critical thinking saying that "Critical thinking allows us to think about our own thoughts and the reasons behind our points of view. It means that we reflect on our own ways of making decisions or solving problems" (p. 4).

From all these different definitions we can deduce that critical thinking is related to the state of mind that allows us to recognize what is wrong and what is true, which one we should trust and follow and which one we should not.

1.1. Reasons of thinking critically

The reason why we should think critically, especially about things concerning our everyday life issues, is that if we find a good argument or a good belief we are likely to believe it. In other words, finding good arguments or beliefs helps us to understand the issue we are facing and also we consider them (the arguments / beliefs) to be true since they are convincing. According to Rainbolt et al. (2012) "Good arguments give you the evidence for the truth of the conclusion" (p. 13) . Other reasons also stated by Beyer 1995 claiming that students for instance who think critically about the content of the course or the tasks provided by the teacher, can show more improvement in their understanding and their learning achievements. That is to say that students who got used to think critically about everything they learn ; they tend to question what they learn , give arguments and make decisions which makes them more responsible of what to learn and how . This facilitates their learning in one hand, and the teachers' work on the other hand.

1.2. Critical thinking as a process

According to Cortell (2005) the process of critical thinking is a complex one when trying to deliberate what is in the mind. To make use of this process a verity of skills and attitudes should be involved in, as:

- The identification of the other people's positions: their arguments and conclusions.

- The evidence for the alternative viewpoints should be evaluated.

- Opposing arguments and evidence should be weighed up fairly.

- To make use of this process you should be able to: read between lines, to see over surfaces, and to identify unfair or false assumptions.

- The techniques that are used to make certain positions more interesting and noticed should be recognized like: devices of persuasion and false logic.

- Making a reflection on the issues presented in a structured way through bringing insight to bear and logic.

- You should draw your conclusions about whether the arguments presented are valid and justifiable or not, based on good evidence and sensible assumptions.

- In order to convince others you should present a structured, clear, and a well-reasoned points of view.

1.3. Critical thinking and learning

Critical thinking plays an effective role in the learning process. The impact that critical thinking may have on the learners who tend to use it is that it motivates them to learn. Another effect is it improves their excitement about their learning and also encourages them and provides them with a deep vision about what they are learning. Crawford et al (2005: 4) stated that "Students who think critically are typically excited about their learning. They see challenges and opportunities for learning in even the most difficult intellectual tasks" (p. 4). Therefore, learners who tend to think critically about their learning are more likely to have the eager to learn more, to know more and to be engaged more in all the provided opportunities.

1.4. Teaching critical thinking

Many teaching contexts paid more attention lately to critical thinking to be taught in the classroom .Critical thinking can be taught as steps to follow to master this skill however the actual process of thinking critically cannot be taught .Teaching critical thinking brings many benefits to teaching-learning process; as Beyer (1995) claimed: "We use and teach critical thinking because it can help to process ideas and information more effectively" (p. 23). The teaching of critical thinking can be integrated in the different skills of language (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking).

1.4.1. Critical thinking and Reading and Listening

Critical thinking can be integrated in reading and listening through raising a series of critical questions about what have been read and heard. The use of critical thinking in reading can take the process of reading from a passive to an active process. That is to say, critical thinking can raise the learners' curiosity about what they are reading which leads them to question it. Concerning listening, the use of critical thinking may raise the listeners' awareness and the desire to listen more. According to Browne and Keely (2007) who stated how actually listening and reading critically are:

> …a system of questions is more consistent with the spirit of curiosity, wonder, and intellectual adventure essential to critical thinking. Thinking carefully is always an unfinished project, a story looking for an ending that will never arrive. Critical questions provide a stimulus and direction for critical thinking; they move us forward toward a continual, ongoing search for better opinions, decisions, or judgments (p. 2)

As a result, we can say that the raised critical questions can be used as an effective choice whenever the learners want to react to what they are reading or listening to.

1.4.2. Critical thinking and Academic Writing

Using critical thinking in writing creates a different writing formula. According to Browne et al. (2007) it adds to the piece of writing: the clarity, the emphasis, as it may improve the logic of writing. In addition to that, the use of critical thinking in writing provides the writer and also the reader with different ways of questioning. Vallis (2010) claimed that "critical thinking and writing operate in a specific kind of relationship. While it may sound strange, critical thinking

functions not to answer a question, but to answer to the way you are asking a question" (p. 24). Moreover, writing critically is considered to be an act of inquiry. In other words, according to Vallis (2010), it inquires the writer's curiosity about what to write? how? and why ? . It inquires also questioning the issues going to write about and never take anything for granted. In addition, it inquires supervising and regulating the writers' thoughts' processes also.

1.4.3. Critical thinking and Speaking

Integrating critical thinking in speaking enhances the speakers' awareness about their audience through raising some questions like: how the audience are going to interpret what have been said? , are they going to misunderstand? is the speech clear enough ? , are they convinced? , how can they be convinced? ...etc. The speakers in this case are going to pay more attention to the clarity of their speech, their conclusions, their reasons and also their intended meanings; this was stated according to Browne et al. (2007). They claimed also that when speaking critically, the speaker should "Give the audience a clear opportunity to see what you intend. Thus, your task is to use words, sentences, paragraphs, and indicator words to illuminate the logical relationships in your argument." (Browne et al., 2007, p. 33). That is to say, speaking while thinking critically at the same time is not an easy task . Therefore, clarity of the speech (reasons, arguments, intended meanings ...) is more needed.

1.5. The importance of teaching critical thinking

Critical thinking brings numerous benefits to the field of teaching. Among the various benefits of critical thinking in teaching, we have selected some of them which were stated by Vallis (2010) and Browne et al. (2007) as follows:

- Teaching critical thinking helps the students to dig deeper under the surface of what they are learning.

- It helps learners to engage in critical thinking dialogues and debates through discussing theories and arguments.

- It improves the students' eager to make researches and look for answers to their questions.

- It creates for them a chance to see and measure things from different angles.

- It helps them to develop the abilities of evaluating and assessing the work of others critically.

- It allows them to criticize what they are studying from different perspectives.

- It increases their sense of responsibility to look for the answers and to take nothing for granted.

- It helps in enhancing their motivation and self-esteem through recognizing the issue by their own and trying to find out the answers independently.

- Teaching critical thinking allows the learners to question what they are studying in different ways. In each way, students are going end up with a different answer.

- Critical thinking provides the students with many opportunities to make use of various strategies and perhaps to create new ones, in order to reach the final results.

- It also helps them to adapt to the critical thinking ongoing self-corrective habit-of-mind.

2. Critical thinking skills

Figure 1: Core critical thinking skills (Facione, 2011, p. 5)

The figure showed above presents how the different core critical thinking skills are integrated in order to form a purposeful reflective judgement. The following table shows the different critical thinking skills according to Facione (2011)

Core Critical Thinking Skills

Skill	Experts' consensus description	Subskill
Interpretation	To comprehend and express the meaning or significance of a wide variety of experiences, situations , data, events, judgements, conventions, beliefs, rules , procedures , or criteria .	Categorize Decode significance Clarify meaning
Analysis	To identify the and actual inferential relationships among statements, questions, concepts, descriptions , or other forms of representation intended to express belief , judgement, experiences, reasons , information or opinions .	Examine ideas Identify arguments Identify reasons and Claims
Inference	To identify and secure elements needed to draw reasonable conclusions ; to form conjectures and hypotheses ; to consider relevant information and to deduce the consequences flowing from data, statements, principles, evidence, judgements, beliefs, opinions, concepts , descriptions, questions or other forms of representation .	Query evidence Conjecture alternatives Draw conclusions using inductive or deductive reasoning.
Evaluation	To assess the credibility of statements or other representations that are accounts or descriptions of the person's perception, experience, situation, judgement, belief, or opinion ; and to assess the logical strength of the actual or intended inferential relationships among statements, descriptions, questions, or other forms of representation .	Assess credibility of Claims Assess quality of arguments that are made using inductive or deductive reasoning

Explanation	To state and to justify that reasoning in terms of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, and contextual considerations upon which one's results were based; and to present one's reasoning in the form of cogent arguments.	State results Justify procedures Present arguments
Self-regulation	Self-consciously to monitor one's cognitive activities, the elements used in those activities, and the results deduced, particularly by applying skills in analysis and evaluation to one's own inferential judgements with a view towards questioning, confirming, validating, or correcting other one's reasoning or one's results.	self-monitor self-correct

Table 1: Facione (2011, p. 9. Cited: Source: Critical thinking skill definitions cited are from APA Report: Expert Consensus Statement on Critical Thinking. (ERIC ED 315 423)

3. Promoting critical thinking

Teachers can promote their students' critical thinking through different techniques and strategies. The following presented tools were selected among a variety of techniques and strategies stated according to Crawford et al. (2005), Matthews and Lally (2010). Teachers can develop their learners' critical thinking through:

- Creating discussions and debates between learners.

- Intending to ask students critical questions that require thinking critically to answer.

- Providing learners with different thinking activities: problem solving activities.

- Exposing students to reading types of texts that promote their critical thinking. In addition to interpret literary texts.

- Providing learners with issues, events, and topics that foster them to think critically; to write about.

- Teaching CT explicitly through teaching CT skills or implicitly through integrating it in the different tasks and activities.

- Integrating critical thinking skills within a specific subject like academic writing, speaking, or reading comprehension.

- Encouraging students' questioning through providing them with special sessions where they feel free to ask questions about their learning.

- Arranging sometimes a session of an outside speaker. The guest is going to provide the learners with a presentation through which they are going to ask questions and write reports.

- Providing learners with outside-classroom activities like analyzing critically a newspaper's article and writing a report or making a brief presentation discussing what have been found.

Conclusion:

As a brief conclusion of this chapter, we have attempted to provide the reader with an overview about the speaking skill and critical thinking. We have discussed many elements related to the two concepts. Among these elements, we have tackled the different challenges that the EFL learners may face in the speaking skill .We have presented also the different applications of critical thinking in teaching and learning as well and then, we resulted at the fact that both variables can be related.

CHAPTER THREE: The Field Work

Introduction

Section one : Description of the research methodology

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2. Data collection and instruments

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Chapter three: The Field Work

Introduction

This study was conducted to investigate the learners' speaking skill improvement through promoting critical thinking topics. In this present research, an experiment was conducted with a group of the third year students at the Department of English at Bejaia University. In addition to that, questionnaires and checklists were administered to the same participants. In this chapter we mean to introduce first the population of the research, a brief description of the data collection instruments, the data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures as parts of the first section of this chapter. Second, we are going to present a detailed description and analysis of the questionnaire, the observation and the experiment, and the checklist as it is going to be showed in section two. At the end we are going to present our research results and findings about the impact of promoting critical thinking topics to enhance the EFL learners' speaking skill.

Section one: Description of the research methodology

1. Population (participants and sampling)

The population, our research corpus, was composed of 268 third year LMD students at the Department of English at the University of Bejaia. We have randomly chosen randomly 25 students to be the participants in our experiment and who were the members of group 5 in the oral expression session. As an observation, the participants were the students of group 6.

2. Data collection and Instruments :

In this step , we have used a questionnaire which was the first means administered to the participants for collecting data . At the time there was an observation phase with a control group and an experiment with the experimental group ; they took place both at the same time . Finally, a checklist was administered also to the participants of this research.

3. Data collection procedures

3.1. The Questionnaires

The questionnaires were the first instrument to collect data. It was administered to the participants of our research. This instrument was designed in order to provide the researcher with a closer look at the participants' learning differences and their attitudes and perspectives towards the module of oral expression. Only the participants of the experimental group were concerned with the questionnaire. It consisted of 24 questions with mixed answers: yes/no,

multiple choice, Likert scale, and open ended questions where the participants were provided with a space to express their suggestions and perspectives.

3.2. The Experiment and the Observation

The experiment and the observation were conducted at the same time as the second and the main tool of our research. The observation was conducted with group 6 as the control group. Whereas the experiment was conducted with group 5 as the experimental group provided with the promoting critical thinking topics as the suggested treatment.

The Checklists

The checklists were administered to the participants of the experimental group as the third and the last instrument used in our study. They consisted of 7 questions with mixed answers: yes/no and multiple choice questions where boxes were set for the participants to tick the suitable answer. The checklists were designed in order to test the validity of the experiment. Therefore, the participants were asked about their perspectives towards the treatment provided during the experiment.

2.1. The Critical thinking Topics Description

As the treatment of the experiment, we have provided our participants with 5 topics for the classroom discussion. The topics were stimulating and inciting the participants' critical thinking. These discussed topics were a sort of everyday life topics. They represented different issues and events existing in reality. The aim after choosing this type of topics is that the participants have already a background about the topic suggested. They must have heard about or seen it somewhere or even experienced it, so they do not have to acquire neither a specific vocabulary nor a specific knowledge in order to engage in the discussion. This type of topics has chosen also because it concerns the participants as individuals, so they are going to have a lot to talk about.

3. Data analysis procedures

First a detailed quantitative analysis has been conducted and the results presented in tabular and graphic forms for the questionnaire. Second, a more qualitative and descriptive analysis has been provided with some comparison and more details concerning the observation phase and the experiment sessions. Finally, another quantitative analysis of the results is presented concerning the checklists. All these analyses and results are displayed in the following section of this chapter

Section Two: Research Data Analysis

1. **The Questionnaire analysis and interpretation**

Section one : Background information :

Part one :

Q1 : Age : ....

Results, analysis and interpretation

Table 2 : Students'Age :

Years	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Total
Numbers	3	10	8	2	1	0	1	25
%	12 %	40 %	32 %	8 %	4 %	0 %	4 %	100 %

Figure 2 : Students'Age
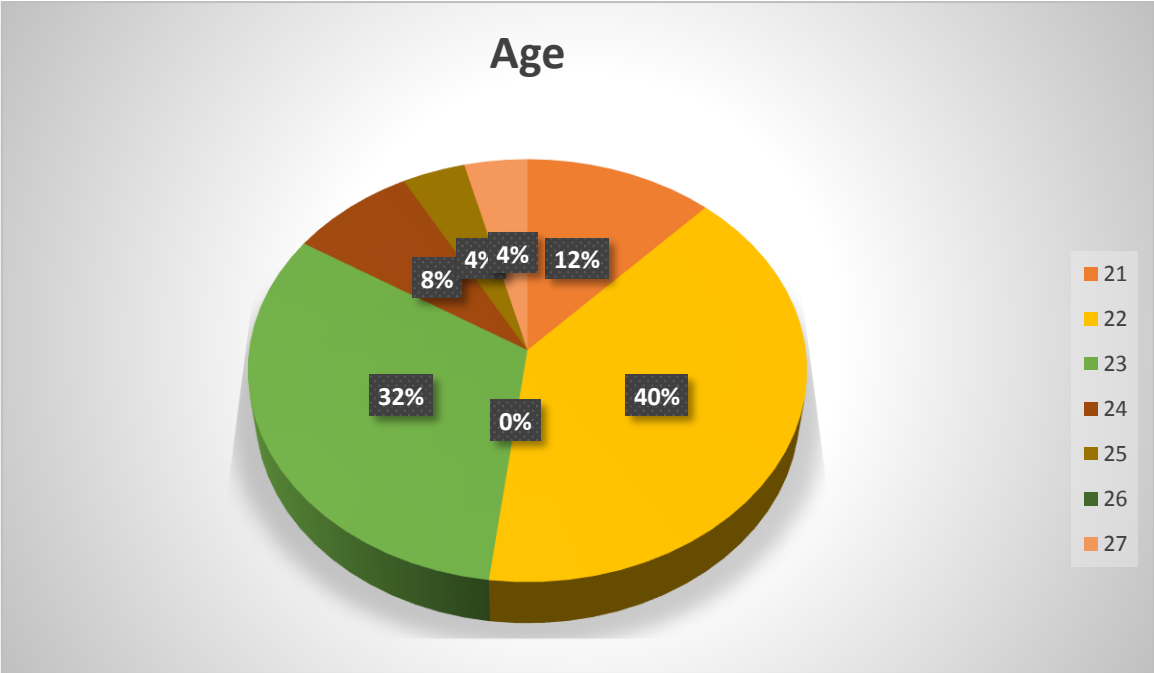
The results presented in the table above show a diversity concerning the age of our sample. The students' age was divided into 7 groups, from 21 to 27. The participants presenting the age of 21 are only 3 which represents (12 %) of the whole sample. The participants who are 22

years old which is considered as the normal age of the third year LMD students, are 10 which represents the majority of the sample with (44 %) . 8 students are 23 years old representing (32 %) of the whale sample . Only 2 of the participants are 24 years old with the percentage of (8 %). Only one of them is 25 years old representing (4 %). None of the participants is 26 years old, and only one of them is 27 years old with the percentage of (4 %). This implies that the participants are:

- Mature enough .

- Self-responsible.

- Aware about their learning styles and choices.

- Can take part in the learning material selection.

Q2: Sex: ....

Results, analysis and interpretation:

Table 3 : Gender

Gender	Males	Females	Total
Number	2	23	25
%	8 %	92 %	100 %

Figure 3 : Gender
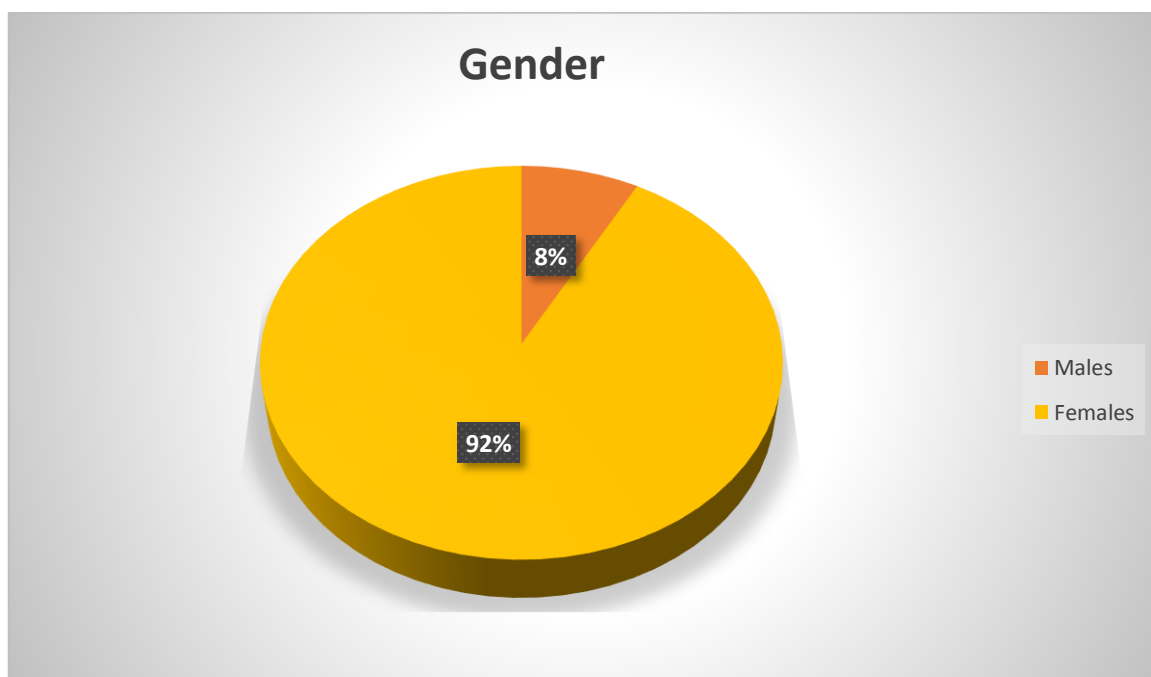
The results above show that the majority of our participants are females (23) from 25 participants with (92 %). Only 2 of our participants are males with a percentage of (8 %). This implies that girls may tend to study languages more than boys do who prefer more scientific specialties.

Q3: Studying English was: ....

Results, analysis and interpretation

Table 4: Students' choice of studying English

Option	Your choice	Obligatory	Total
Number	22	3	25
%	88 %	22 %	100 %

Figure 4: Students' choice of studying English

Students'choice in studying English
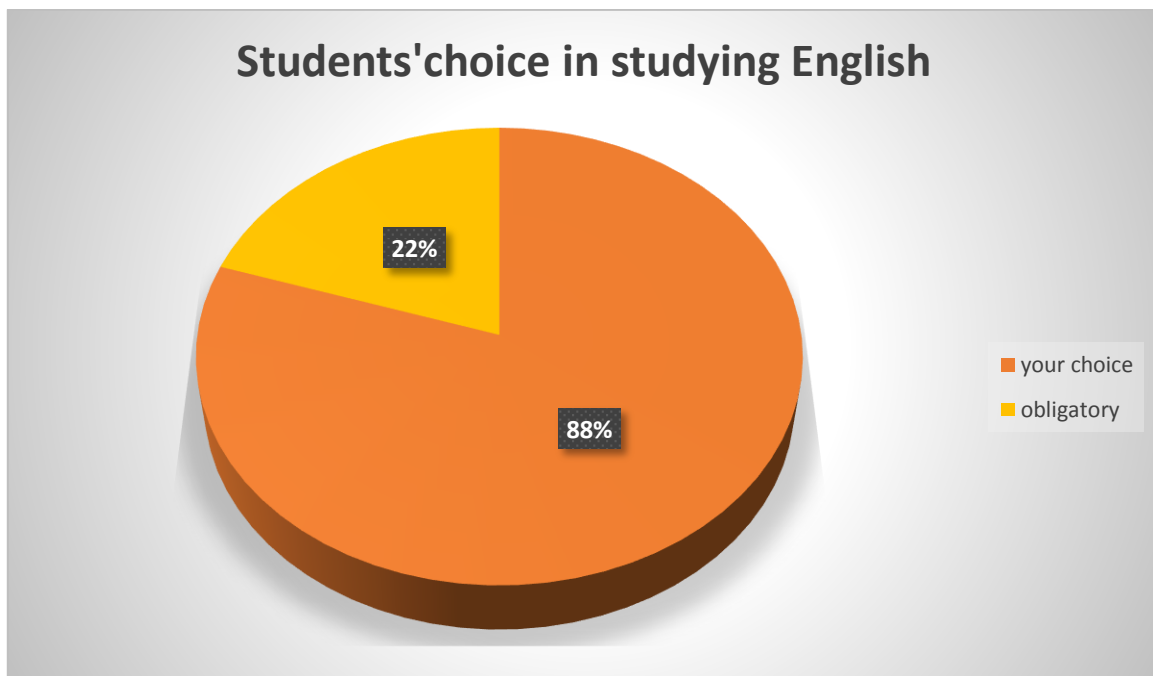
The look at the results presented above reveals that 22 of our participants answered that it was their choice with (88 %) of the whole sample. Only 3 of the participants have chosen ''obligatory '' representing (22%) of the whole participants. This question aimed at knowing if the participants are motivated and like to study English or not. Our reaction may reveal the following truth:

- A choice of life long career in the target language.

- No alternative to do otherwise with a given mark at the Baccalaureate.

- An opportunity to cope with the new world communicative, competences,.....

Q4: How long have you been studying English?

Results, analysis and interpretation

Table 5: Years of studying English

Years	3 years	4 years	5 years	9 years	10 years	11 years	Total
Number	5	2	1	1	13	3	25
%	20 %	8 %	4 %	4 %	52 %	12 %	100 %

35

Figure 5 : Years of studying English
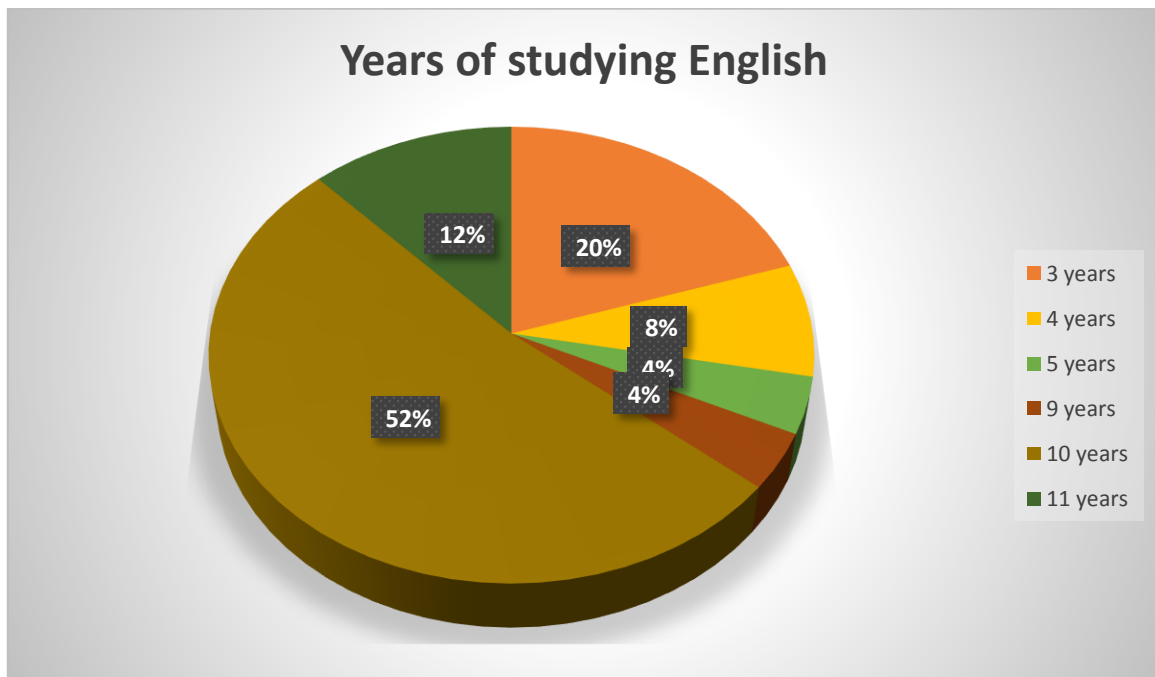
The results above show a diversity in the participants' answers. According to their answers 5 of them said that they have studied English for 3 years with (20%). Two of the participants said that the have been studying English for 4 years. Only 1 participant has been studying English for 5 years, and only 1 also has been studying English for 9 years. 13 of the participants said that they have been studying English for 10 years which is ordinary for third year students. 3 of the participants have been studying English for 11 years which implies they they have repeated at least one year during their learning. First, the interpreted results imply that some of the participants misunderstood the question. Some of them thought that this question is concerned only with the years they studied at the University .It implies also that the participants have studied English for many years which allows them to have an acceptable level of English .

Q5: How do you evaluate your level in English?

Results, analysis and interpretation

Table 6: English level evaluation

Option	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Total
Number	1	10	14	0	25
%	4 %	40 %	56 %	0 %	100 %
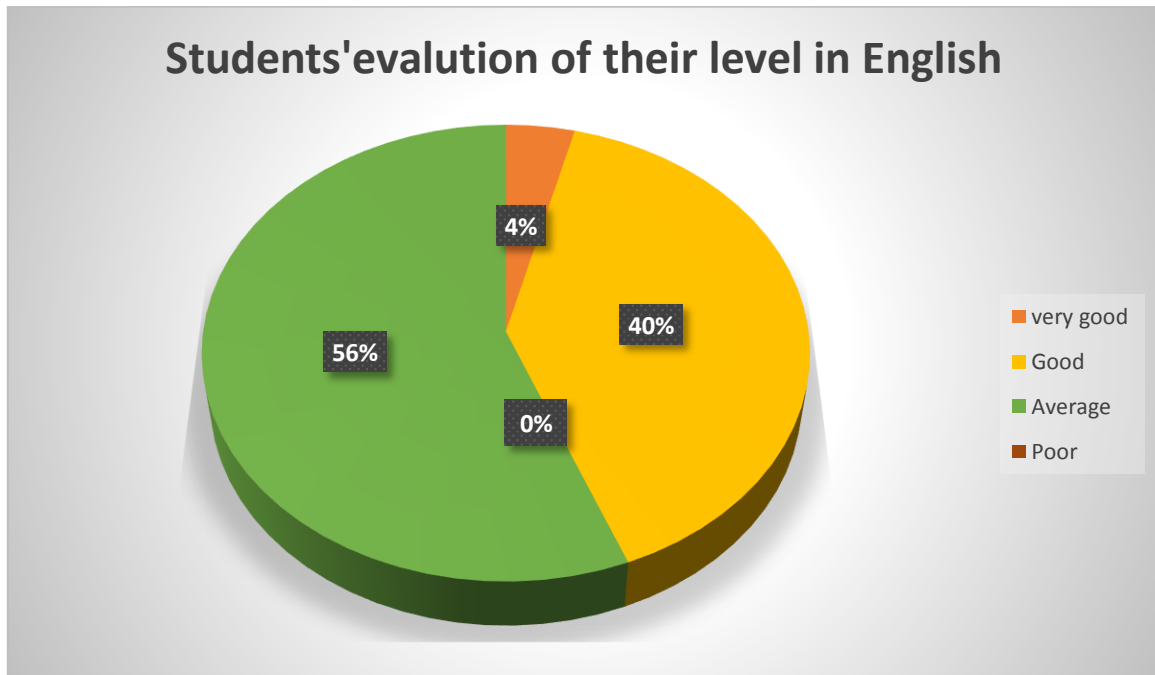
The results of the table above present that only 1 participant evaluated his/her level as 'very good' with a percentage of (4%). 10 of the participants have chosen Good. 14 of the participants have an average level presenting (56%) of the whole sample which is the majority. None of the participants has chosen 'poor'. This implies that the English level of the majority of the participants is between Good and Average. It implies also that they are competent enough to engage in the classroom discussions and debates.

Section Two: Students' perceptions of the speaking skill and their attitudes :

Part two:

Q6: Are you given opportunities to speak as much as you want in the Oral session?

Table 7: Students' speaking opportunities in the oral session

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	19	6	25
%	76 %	24 %	100 %

Figure 7 : Students' speaking opportunities in the Oral Expression
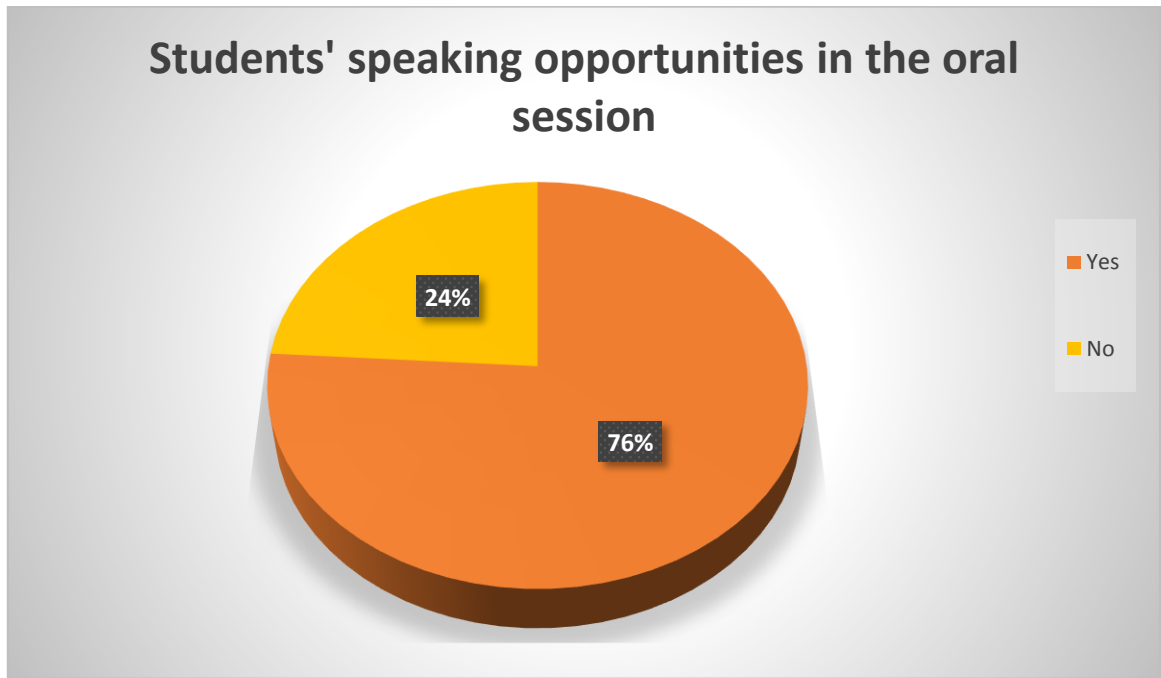
According to the results presented in the table above, (24%) of the participants have chosen 'No' ; while (76%) of them have chosen 'Yes' which represents the majority of the whole sample .This implies that the participants are familiar with the different speaking activities .

Q7: If yes

Results, analysis and interpretation:

Table 8: Speaking opportunities' frequency in Oral session:

Option	No answer	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number	6	4	14	1	0	25
%	24 %	16 %	56 %	4 %	0 %	100 %

Figure 8 : Speaking opportunities' frequency in Oral Expression
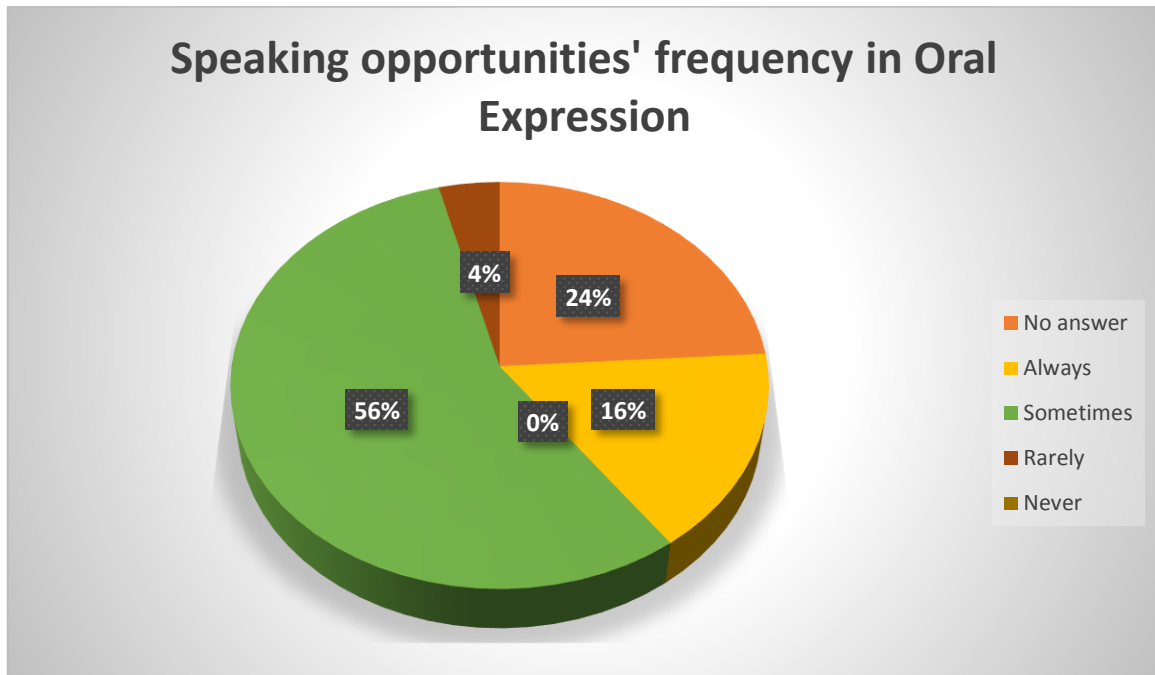
The results presented above show that (24%) did not answer, (16%) have chosen the variable 'always', the majority (56%) have chosen the variable 'sometimes'. Only (4%) have chosen the variable 'rarely' and none has chosen the variable 'never'. This implies that the EFL learners are most of the time provided with chances to speak and enhance their speaking skills, however they might not take advantage from these chances. Perhaps they are introvert learners or they are not interested.

Q8: If no, why?

Results, analysis and interpretations

Table 9: Students' justifications about the lack of the speaking opportunities

Reasons	No answer	Limited vocabulary	Lack of interest	Fear of making mistakes	No reason	Feeling uncomfortable with the teacher	Total
Number	19	1	1	2	1	1	25
%	76 %	4 %	4 %	8 %	4 %	4 %	100 %

Figure 9 : Students' justifications about the lack of the speaking opportunities
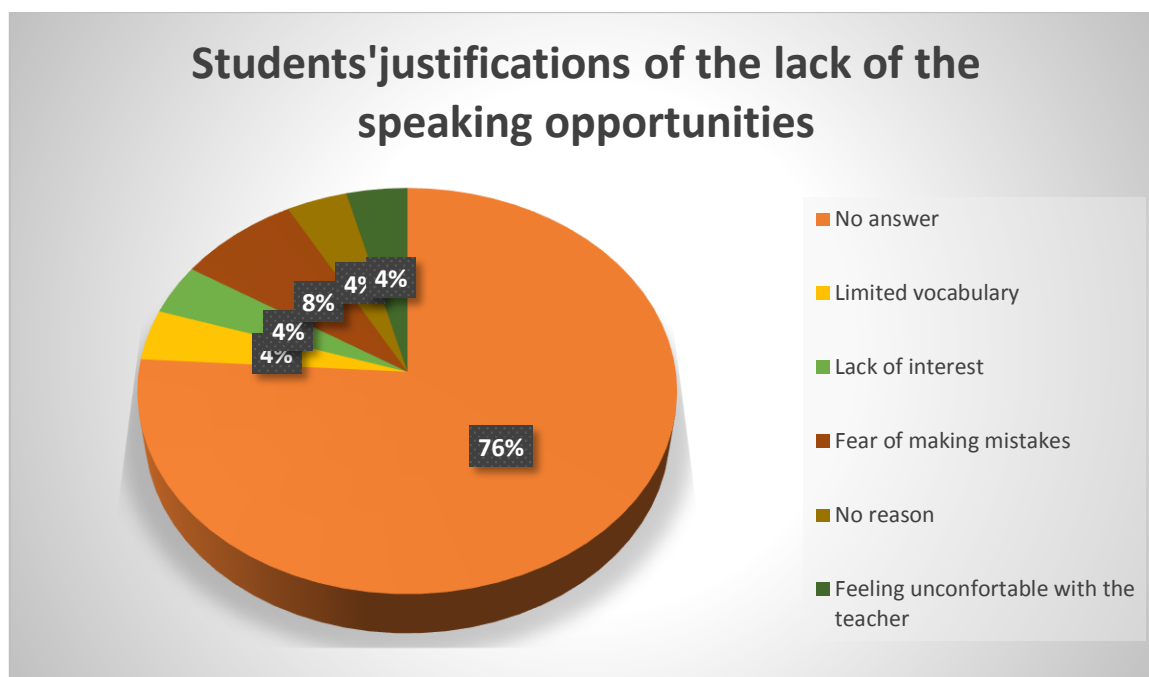
According to the results, we can see that (76%) did not answer because they have answered the question before. (4%) participants said that they have a limited vocabulary the reason why they do not speak. (4%) participants also said that they do not take advantage of the speaking opportunities because they are not interested. (8%) participants are frightened when speaking. (4%) participants did not provide any justification .(4%) also justified that they feel uncomfortable with the teacher that is why they refuse to speak .These results imply that the teachers should pay more attention to the learners' lacks and difficulties before providing them with the different activities which they might not benefit from .

Q9: Do you feel comfortable in the oral class?

Results, analysis and interpretations

Table 10: Feeling comfortable in the Oral class

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	21	4	25
%	84 %	16 %	100 %
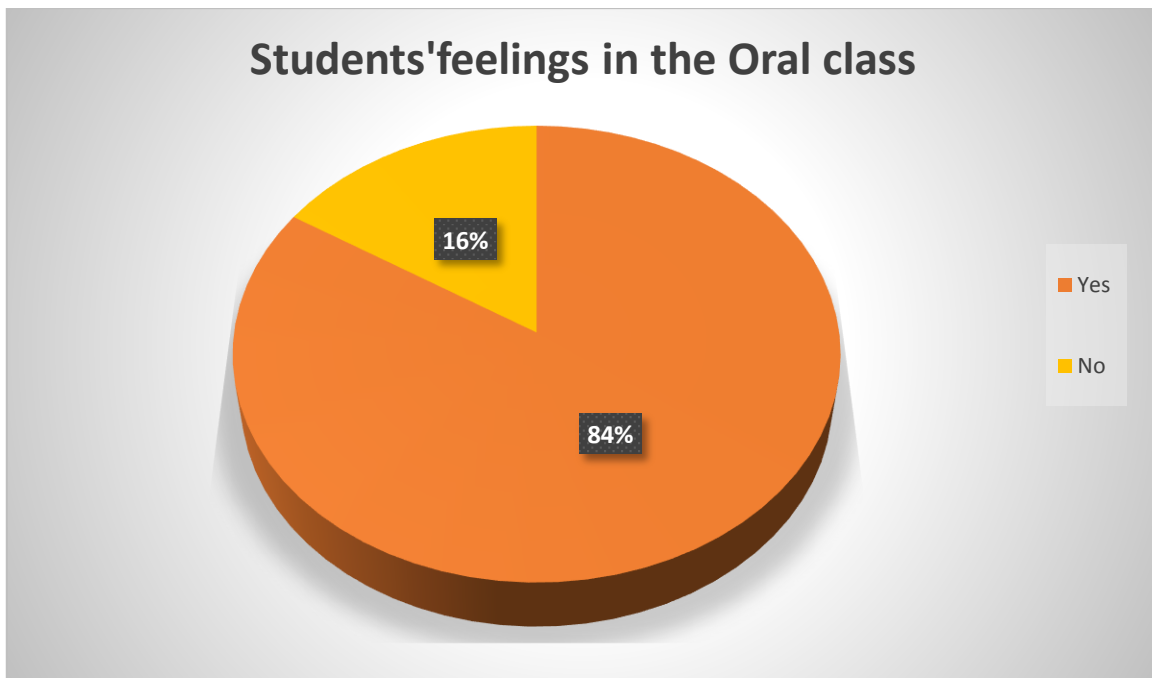
We can see that (84%) participants feel comfortable in the class, while only (16%) of they do not. This implies that the oral activities should be at the students' level of interest and competence.

Q10: If no, what makes you feel so?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 11 : Learners' justifications of feeling uncomfortable

Reasons	No answer	Your Teacher	Your classmates	The activities	Total
Number	21	1	1	2	25
%	84 %	4 %	4 %	8 %	100 %

Figure 11 : Studenrs' justifications of feeling uncomfortable

Students'justifications of feeling unconfortable

- No answer
- Your Teacher
- Your Classmates
- The activities

70% / 13% / 13% / 4%
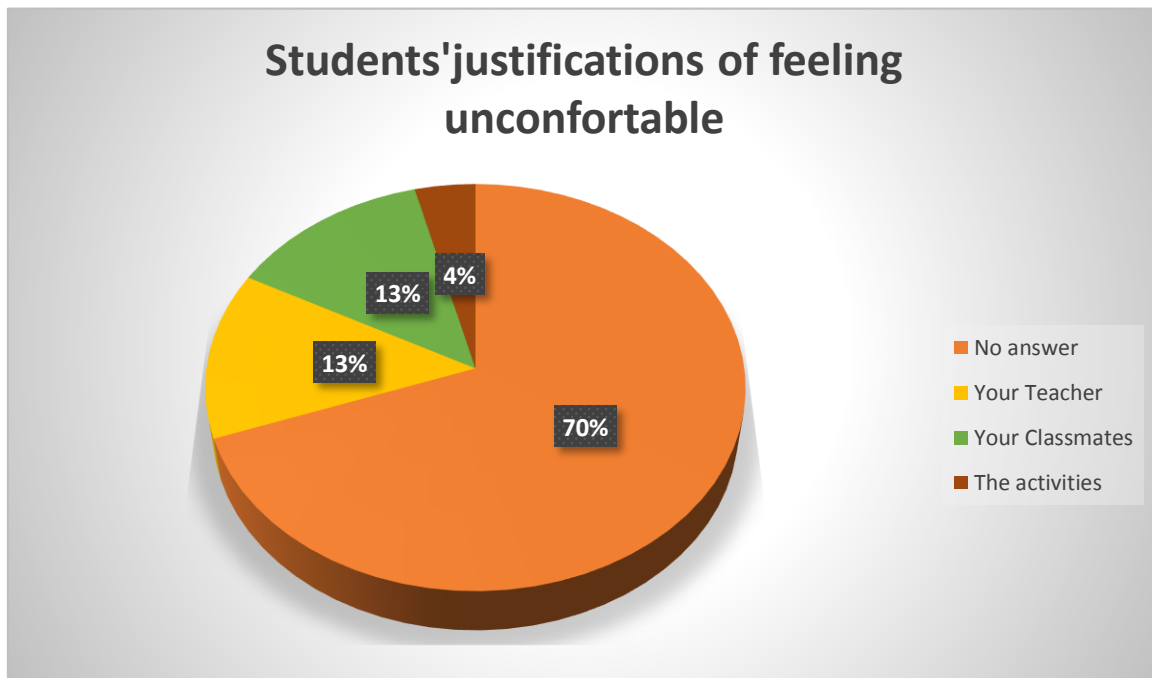
The results reveal that (70%) of the participants did not answer this question because they have answered the question before. (13%) participants justified that the teacher is the reason why they do not feel comfortable in the oral class. Similarly, (13%) participants stated that their classmates the reason they feel uncomfortable in the oral class, in addition only (4%) participants felt uncomfortable because of the activities. According to these results, we can deduce that teachers should take into consideration their learners' perception and attitudes in order to create for them a healthy learning atmosphere.

Q11: How many hours do you study oral expression per week?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 12: Hours studying Oral expression per week

Option	One hour and a half	Total
Number	25	25
%	100 %	100 %

Figure 12: The hours of studying Oral expression per week
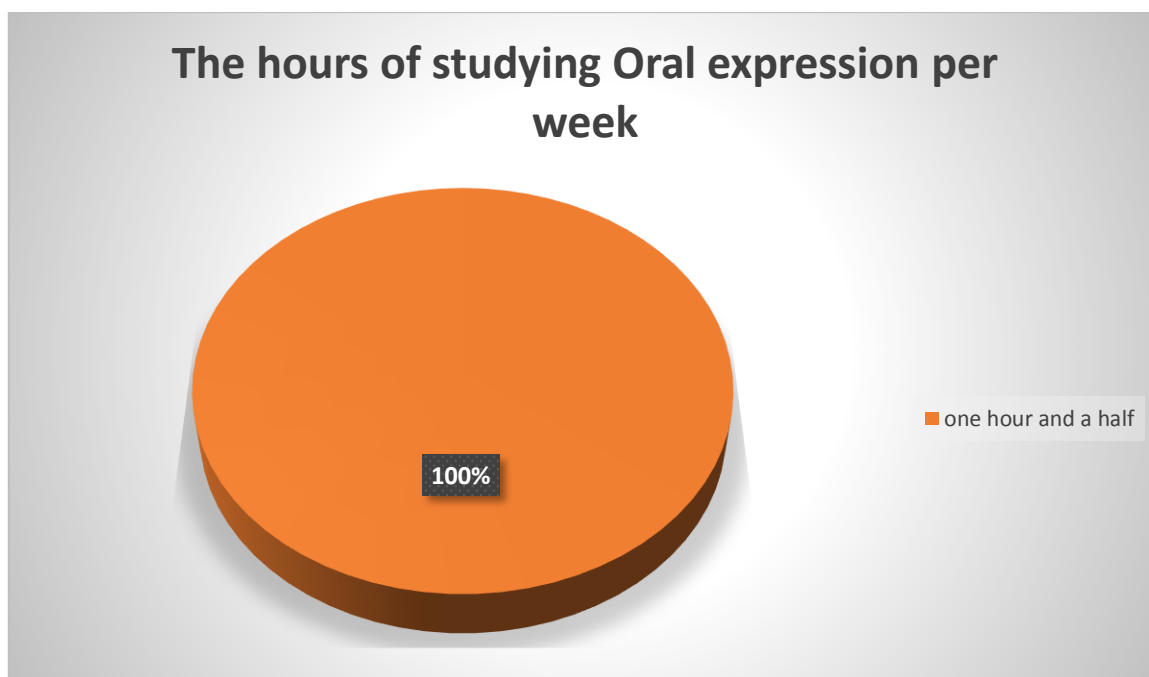
Results show that all participants (100%) agreed on one answer that is 1:30h.

Q12 : Do you think that this amount of time is sufficient ?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 13 : Learners' perception abou the amount of time

Option	Yes	No , more time is needed	Total
Number	2	23	25
%	8 %	92 %	100 %

Figure 13 : The students' perceptions about the amount of time devoted to the Oral expression
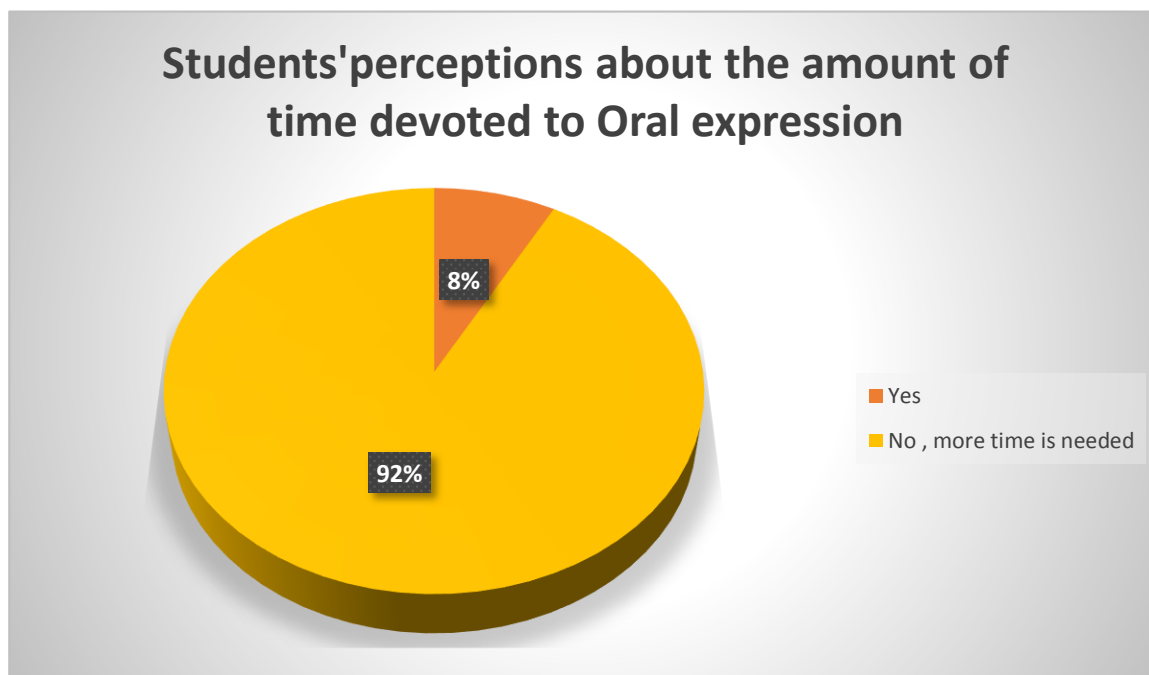
As it is noticed, only (8%) participants thought that the amount of time which is devoted to the oral expression is sufficient. The majority of the participants (92%) thought that it is not sufficient and more time is needed. This implies that the EFL learners are aware of their lacks and difficulties in their learning process. It implies also that the EFL learners really do not have enough speaking opportunities and they seek these different chances in order to practice the speaking skill better and to enhance their speaking competences and proficiency.

Section Three: Students' preferences :

Part three:

Q13: Do you like talking during the oral session?

Results, analysis and interpretations

Table 14 : Students' preferences of speaking in the Oral session

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	19	6	25
%	76 %	24 %	100 %

Figure 14: Students' preferences of speaking English in the classroom
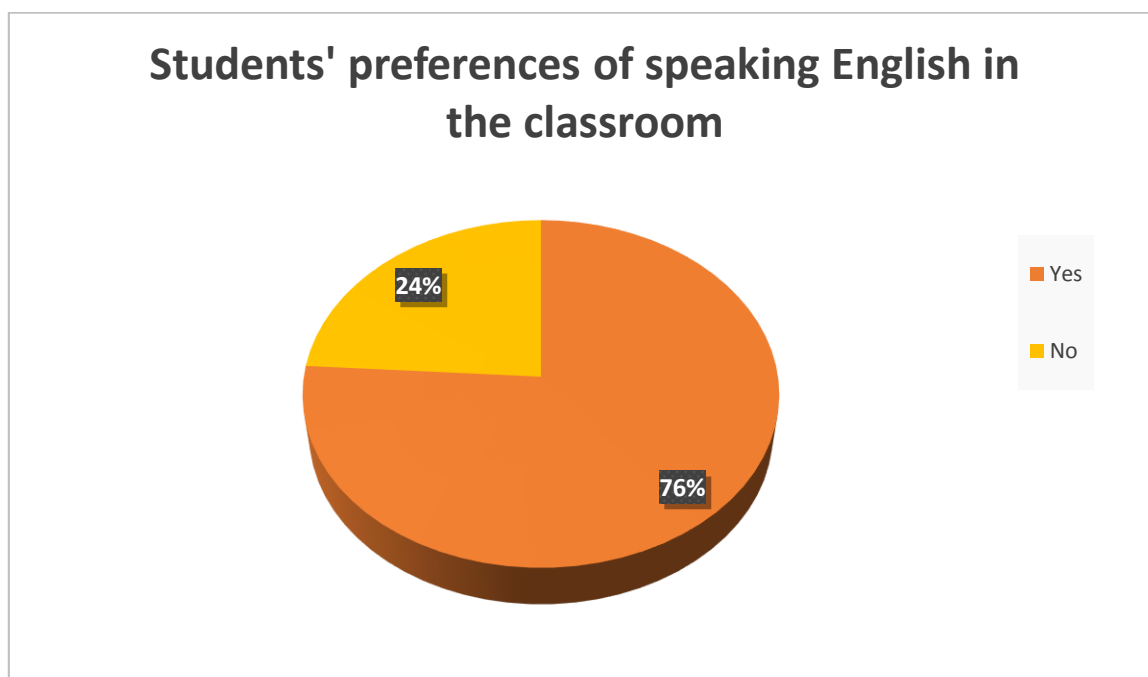
According to the results, (76%) participants like taking during the oral session, while only (24%) participants do not like to talk. We can deduce that our the majority of our students are talkative learners, this implies that the discussions that are going to be raised in the experiment might be fluent, smooth, and successful .

Q14 : If yes, how often ?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 15 : Learners' speaking chances

Option	No answer	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Number	5	11	9	0	25
%	20 %	44 %	36 %	0 %	100 %

Figure 15 : Learners' speaking chances
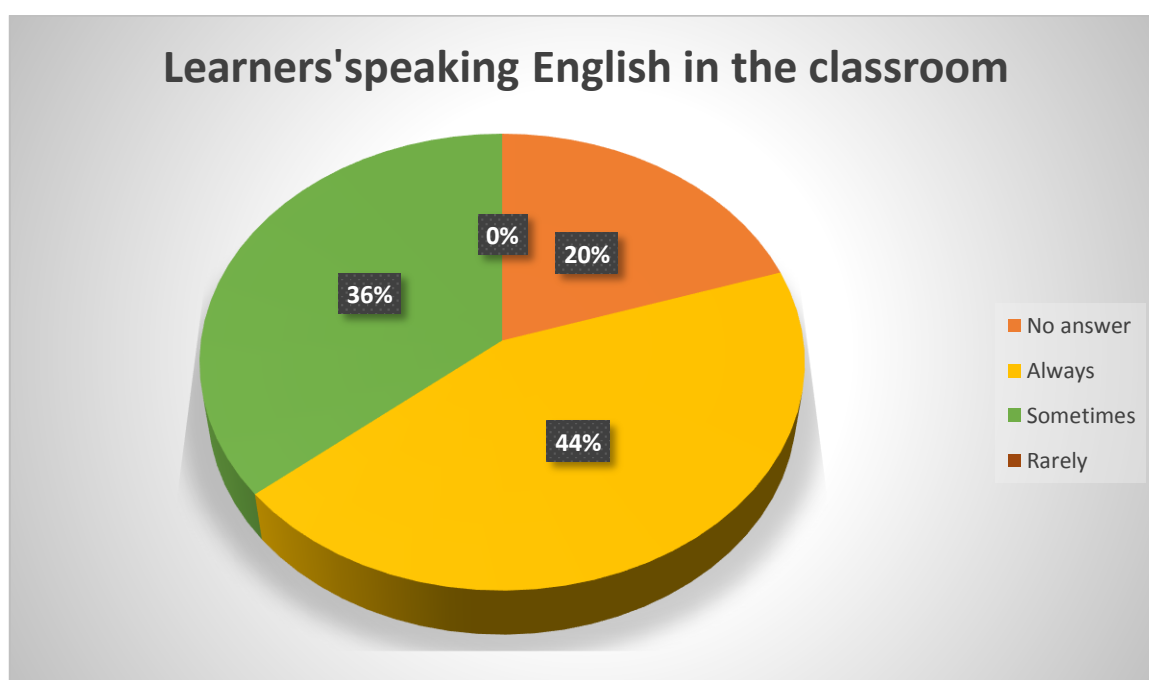
It is noticed that (20%) participants did not answer this question. (44%) participants said that they always have chances to speak, representing the majority of the whole sample. (36%) participants have chosen the variable 'sometimes'. None of the participants has chosen the variable 'rarely'. Again, these results imply that the EFL learners are provided most of the time with the speaking opportunities, and perhaps they have some issues that prevent them from taking advantage from these chances.

Q15 : If no , why ?

Results, analysis and interpretations

Table 16 : learners' justifications for not speaking in the classroom

Option	No answer	You are not talkative	You are an introvert student	You fear making mistakes	Total
Number	19	3	0	3	25
%	76 %	12 %	0 %	12 %	100 %

Figure 16 : Learners' justifications of not speaking in the classroom
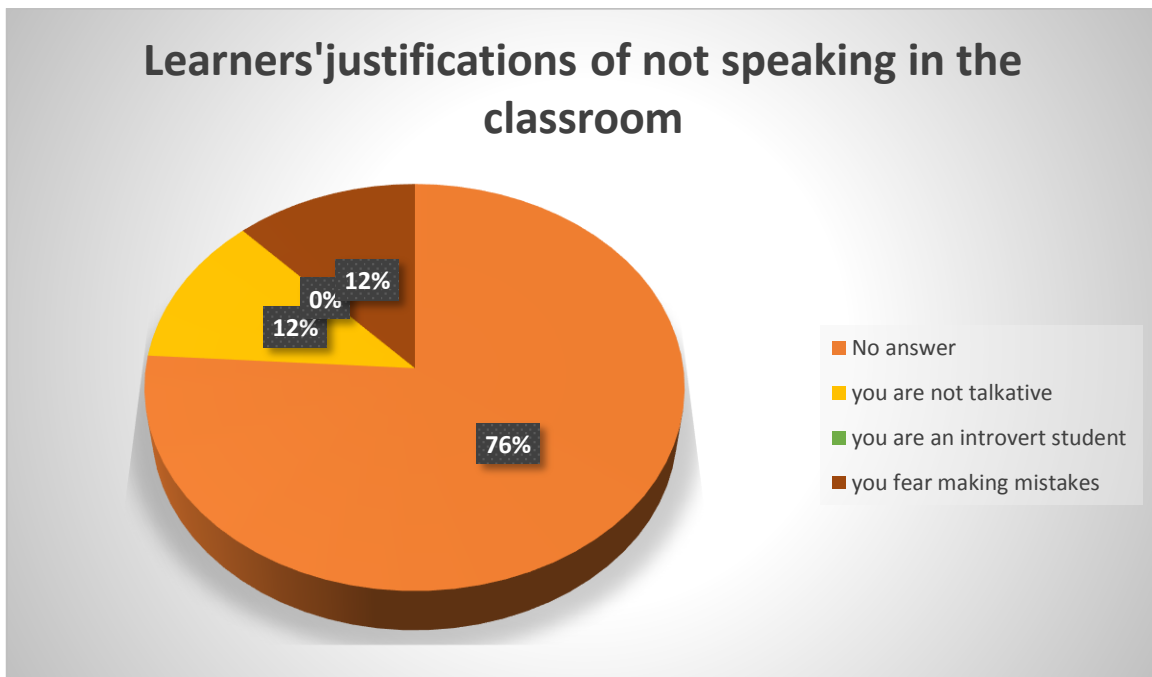
The results above show that, (76%) participants did not answer this question because they have answered the previous question. (12%) participants said that they do not speak because they are not talkative. None participants said that they are introvert students. (12%) participants said that they do not speak because they fear making mistakes. This implies that although the EFL learners are given enough chances to speak, they are still hesitating and frightened to speak.

Q16: How do you like to be in the oral class?

Results, analysis and interpretations

Table 17 : Learners' preferences about being talkative or silent

Option	Silent	Talkative	Total
Number	3	22	25
%	12 %	88 %	100 %

Figure 17 : Learners' preferences about being talkative or silent
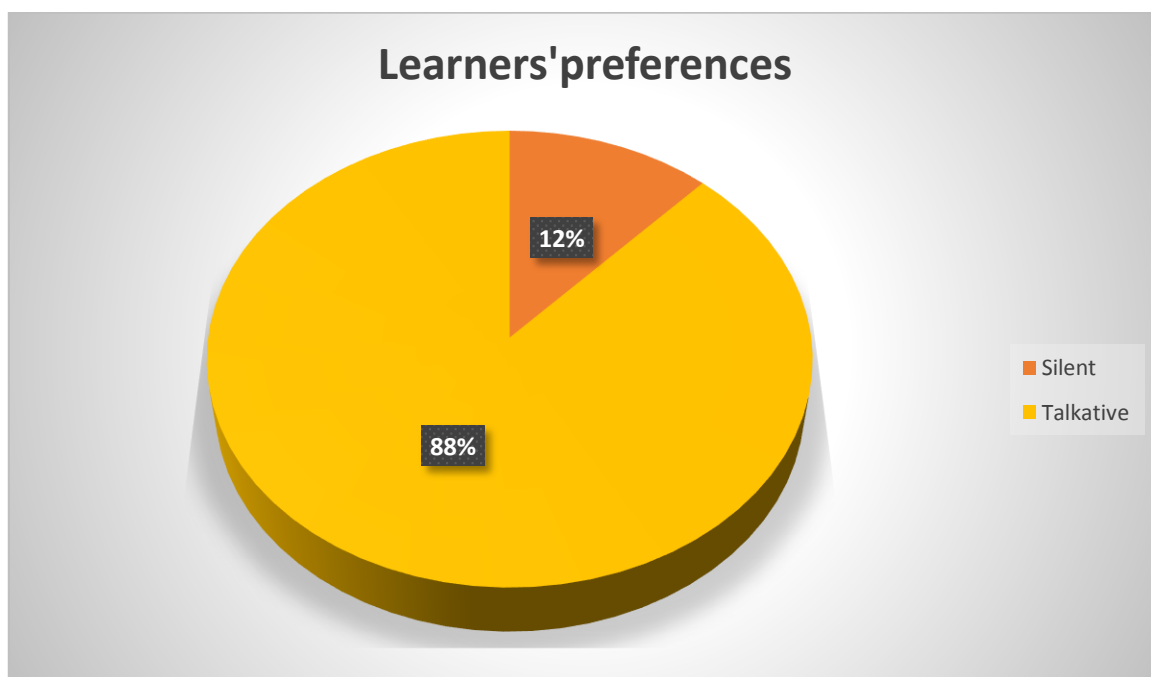
It is noticed that, (12%) participants prefer to be silent in the classroom, while (88%) prefer to be talkative. This implies that most of our participants are taking advantage of the speaking chances in order to develop their speaking skills.

Q17: In the oral session, you prefer

Results, analysis and interpretations

Table 18 : Learners' preferences

Option	Teacher talk	Student talk	Total
Number	3	22	25
%	12 %	88 %	100 %

Figure 18 : Learners' preferences
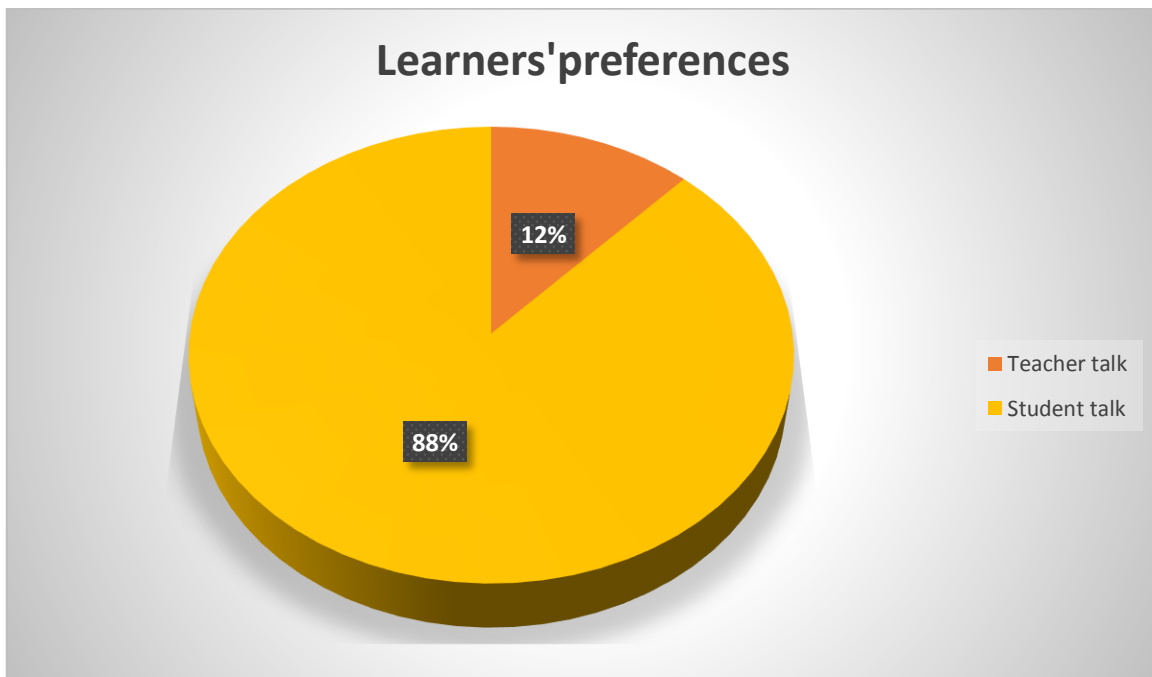
We can see that the majority of participants (88%) prefer student's talk, whereas (12%) participants prefer teacher's talk. This means that teachers should allow students to be responsible of their own learning, and also to take part in deciding about what they want to learn.

Q18 : Are you given chances to interact with your classmates ?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 19 : Learners' chances to interact with their classmates

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	21	4	25
%	84 %	16 %	100 %

Figure 19 : Students' interaction with classmates
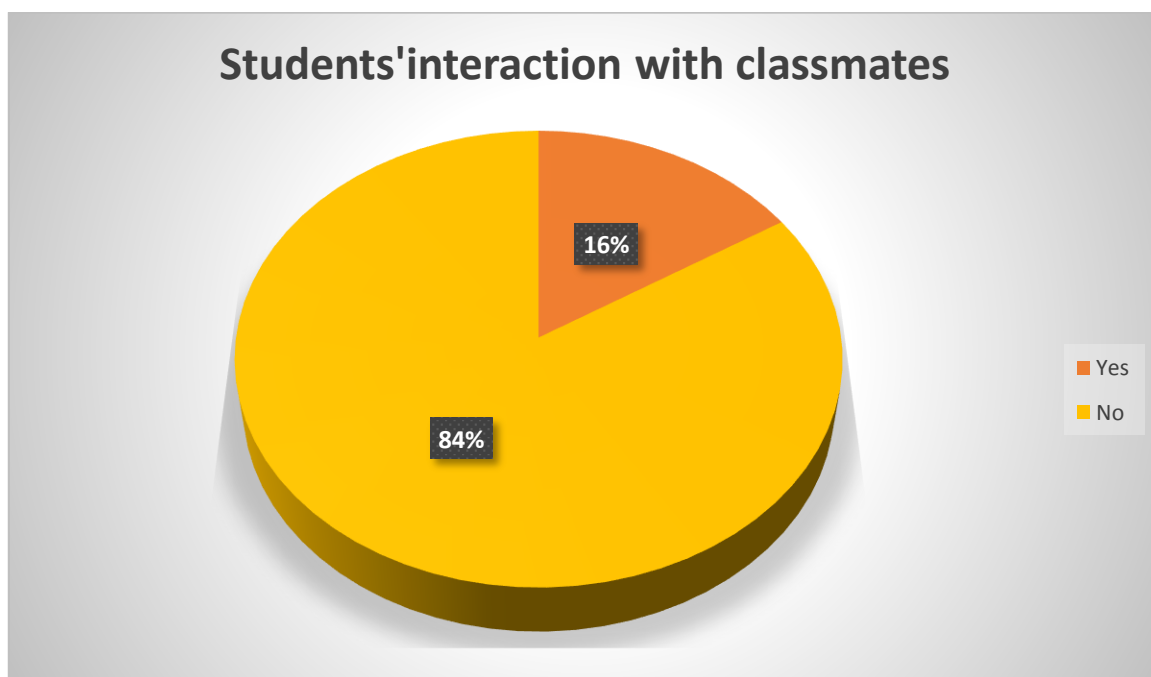
It is noticed that the majority of participants (84%) said that they are given chances to interact with their classmates, while (16%) participants stated the opposite. This means that students are provided with opportunities to share their ideas among their classmates.

Q19: If yes:

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 20: Learners' degree of interaction with classmates

Option	No answer	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Number	4	4	13	4	25
%	16 %	16 %	52 %	16 %	100 %

Figure 20 : Learners' chances of interaction with classmates
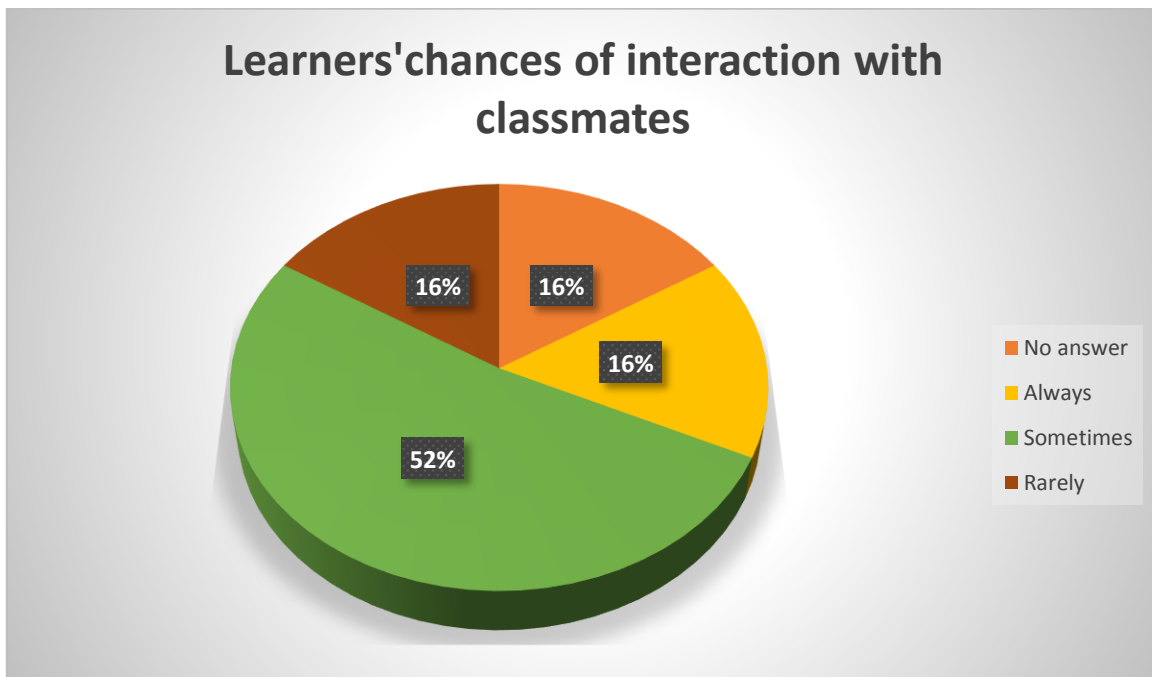
It is noticed that (16%) participants did not answer this question, (16%) participants have chosen the variable always. The majority of the participants (52%) said that they are sometimes given chances to interact with their classmates, while (16%) participants have chosen the variable rarely. This implies that our participants are sometimes interacting with each other and most of the time they only interact with their teacher.

Q20 : If yes :

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 21 : Learners'justtificatios about the chances of interaction with classmates

Option	No answer	Not talkative / Introvert	Total
Number	21	4	25
%	84 %	16 %	100 %

Figure 21 : Students' justifications about the chances of interaction with classmates
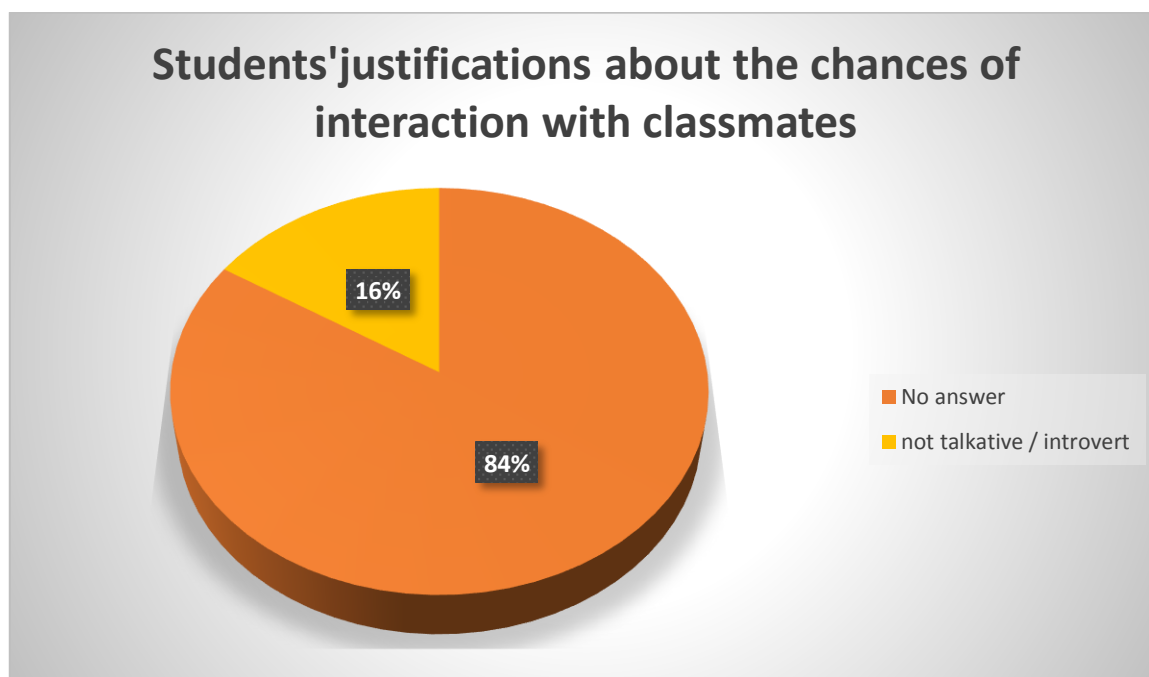
Result s show that the majority of participants (84%) did not answer this question, because they have answered the question before. Whereas, (16%) participants said that they are not talkative and introvert students, the reason why they do not interact with their classmates. This implies that introvert learners should be provided with special activities in order to engage them in the classroom interaction.

Q21: How do you prefer your oral expression teacher to be?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 22 : Learners'preferences about the teacher's role

Option	A participant	A guide	A Controller	Total
Number	10	11	4	25
%	40 %	44 %	16 %	100 %

Figure 22 : Learners' preferences
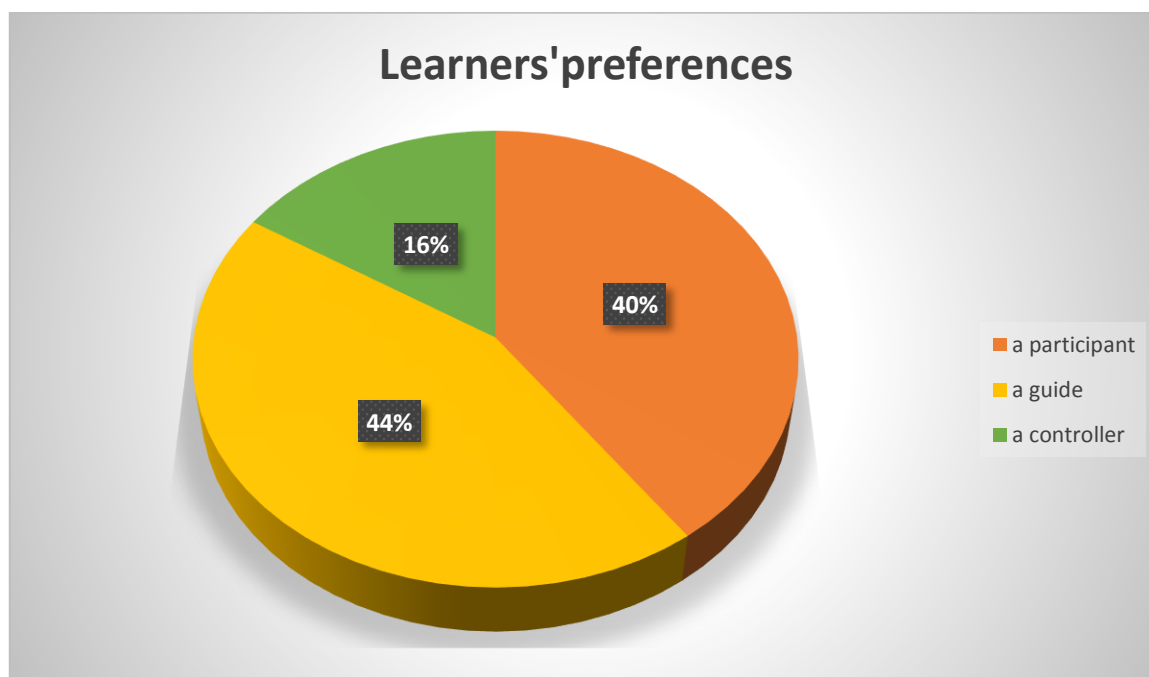
We can see that almost the majority of participants (40%) have chosen the variable a participant. While the majority (44%) preferred their oral expression teacher to be a guide. (16%) participants liked the variable a controller. This implies that teachers should pay more attention to the roles they play in the classroom, because it may influence the learners' attitudes towards the each other and the subject studied.

Q22 : Which activity do you like to have most in the oral session ?

Table 23 : Learners' peferences about the oral session's activities

Option	Language Games	Role play	Discussions and Debates	Total
Number	7	1	17	25
%	28 %	4 %	68 %	100 %

Figure 23 : Learners'preferences about the oral session activities
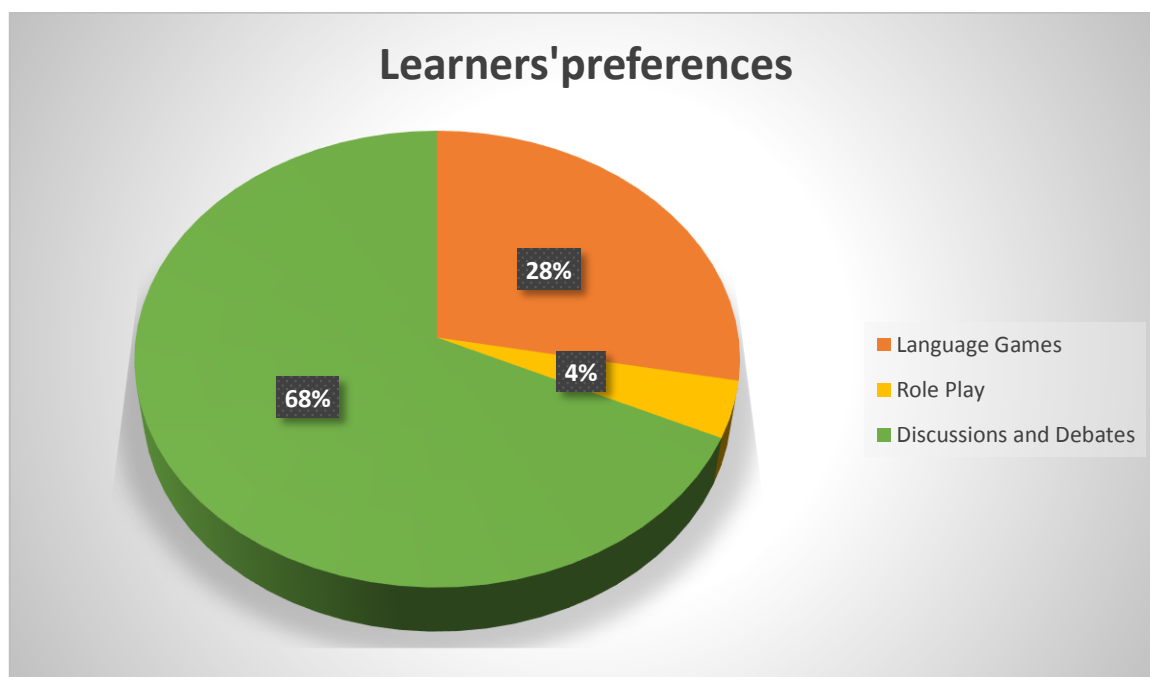
It is noticed that (28%) participants liked language games. (4%) participants liked role play activities and the majority of them (68%) liked discussions and debates. This implies that our participants are more active in debates and discussions which helps when conducting our experiment.

Q23: When you are given a topic, do you like to debate and discuss it with your classmates?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 24 : Learners'perceptions about debates and discussions

Option	Yes	No	Neutral	Total
Number	20	3	2	25
%	80 %	12 %	8 %	100 %

Figure 24: Learners' preferences about debates and discussions
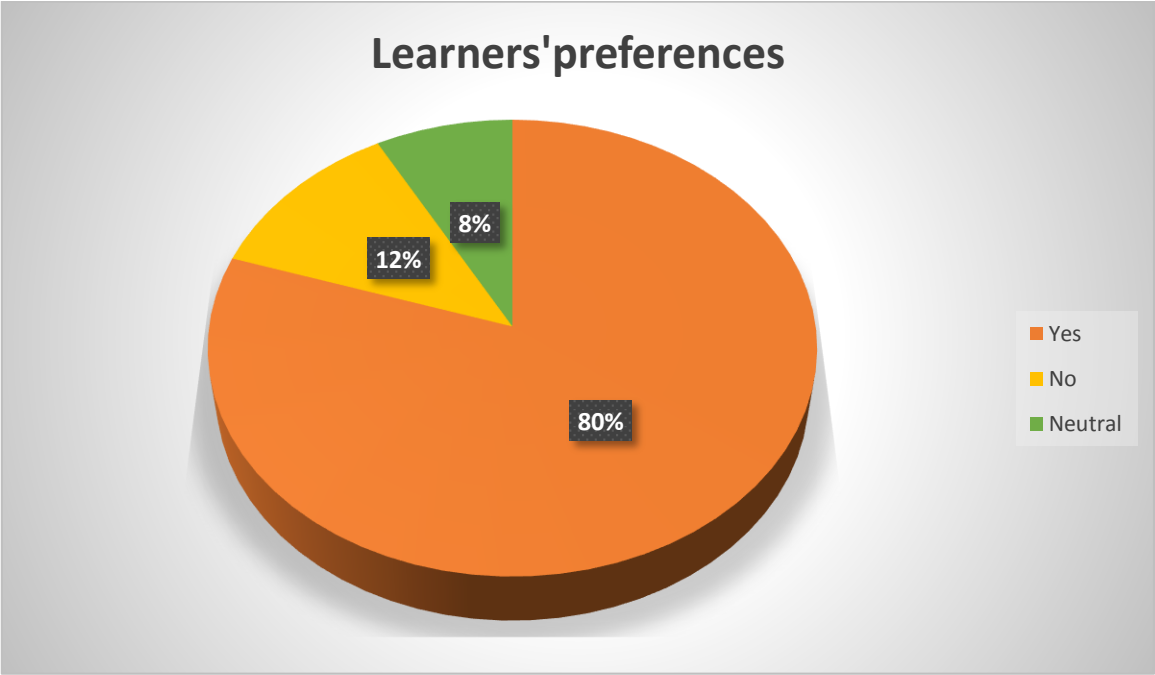
From the table above, we can see that the majority of the participants (80%) have chosen the variable 'yes'. (12%) have chosen the variable 'no', while only (8%) participants have chosen the variable 'neutral'. This implies that the majority of our participants like class discussions and debates; this might help when conducting the experiment.

Q24 : If yes which type of topics you like the most ?

Results, analysis and interpretations :

Table 25 : Learners' preferences about the topics of discussion

Option	No answer	Everyday life	Religion	Politics	Education	Culture and Society	Science	Total
Number	6	6	2	2	2	5	2	25
%	24 %	24 %	8 %	8 %	8 %	20 %	8 %	100 %

Figure 25 : Learners' preferences about the topics
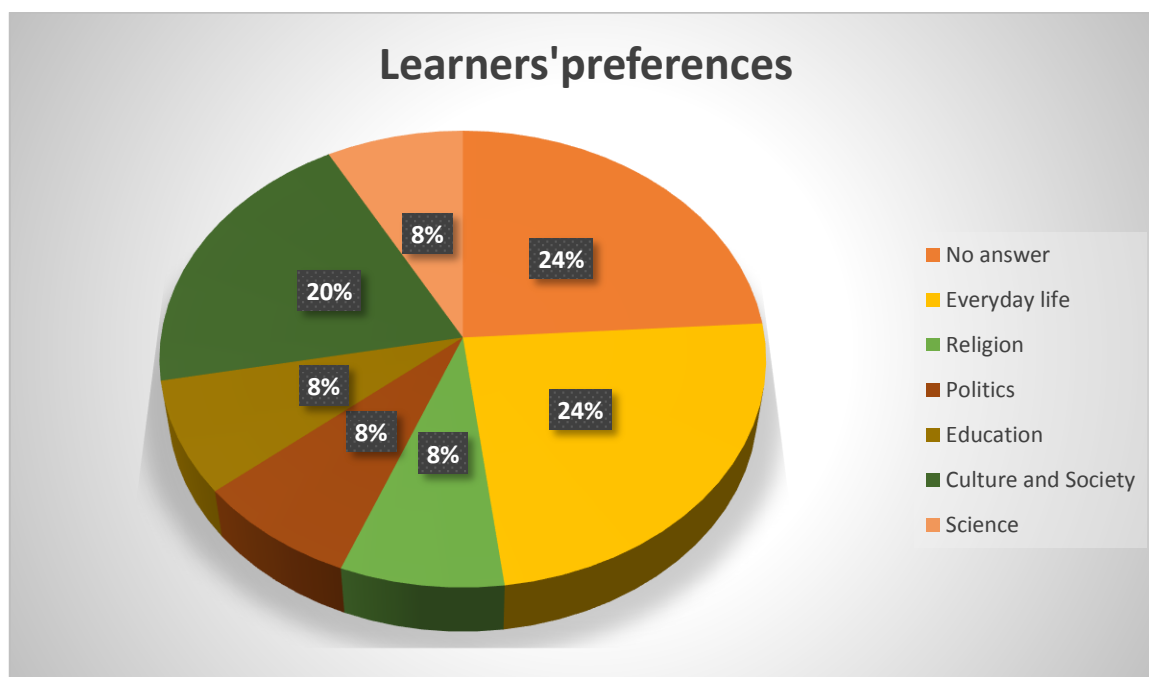
According to the results, we can see that (24%) participants did not answer this question because they have answered the previous one. (24%) participants have chosen everyday life topics. (8%) participants liked topics about religion. (8%) participants too liked political topics. (8%) also liked topics about education. (20%) participants liked sociocultural topics. (8%) participants liked scientific topics. These results imply that EFL learners have different interest concerning the topics of discussions which the teachers of oral expression should pay attention too. This question aimed at having a background information about what interests our participants in order to take it into consideration when choosing the promoting critical thinking topics to be implemented in the experiment.

**Q25: If no , why ?**

Results, analysis and interpretations :

Table 26 : Learners' justifications about the chioce of topic

Option	No answer	No discussion with classmates	Do not like to discuss with classmates	Total
Number	22	2	1	25
%	88 %	8 %	4 %	100 %

Figure 26 : Learners' justifications about the choice of the topic
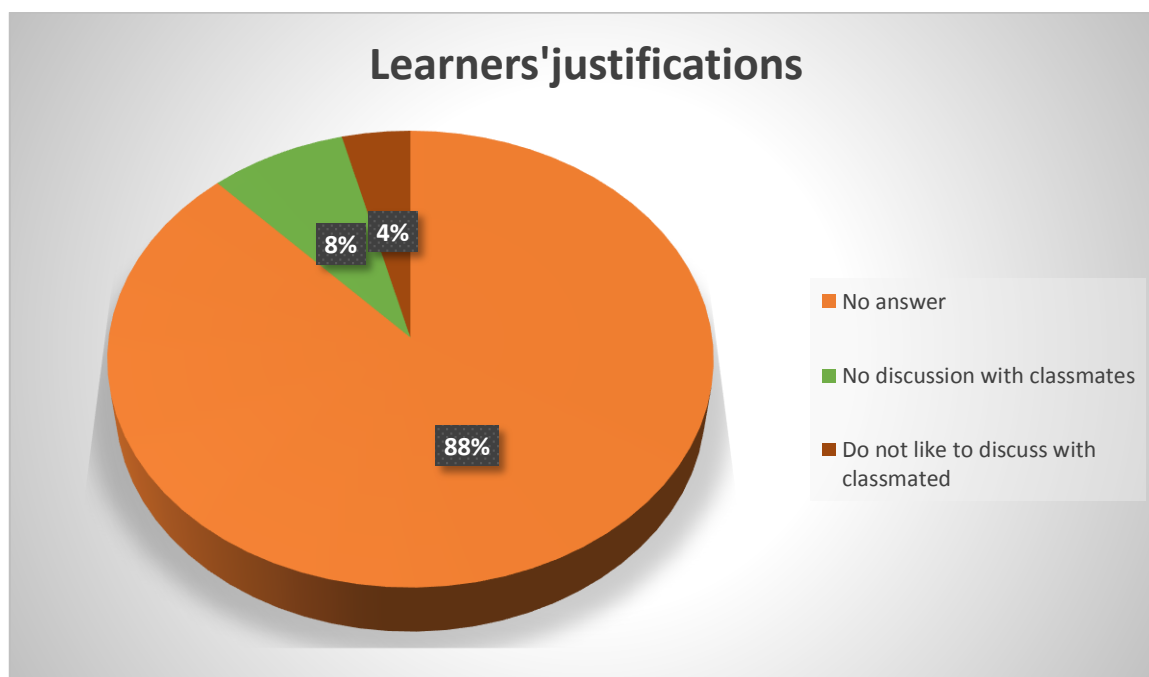
It is noticed that (88%) participants did not answer this question because they have answered the question before. (8%) participants said that they did not used to discuss with their classmates. (4%) participants justified that they do not like to discuss with their classmates. This implies that these participants are used to interact only with their teacher during the classroom discussions.

Q26 : Could you please suggest some solutions the teacher can do to stimulate you to use English ?

Results, analysis and interpretations:

Table 27: Learners' suggestions

Option	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
Number	5	4	2	3	2	4	2	1	2	25
%	20 %	16 %	8 %	12 %	8 %	16 %	8 %	4 %	8 %	100%

A: No suggestion   **B:** Teacher should create a good class environment

C: Interesting topics   **D:** Role of the teacher (controller/ guide / participant)

E: Allow only English use   **F:** Provide more speaking opportunities

G: The use of audios/ videos   **H:** More speaking tasks and activities

I: Motivating and encouraging the students to speak

Figure 27 : Learners' suggestions
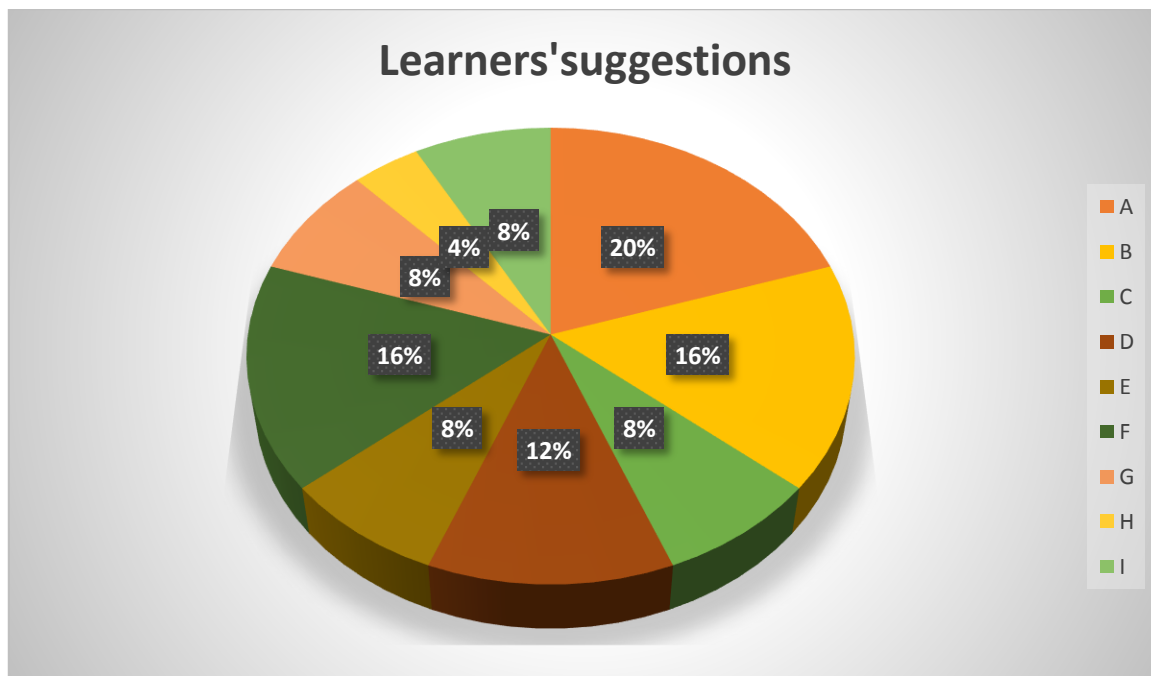
We can see that the participants have provided different suggestions. (20%) participants did not provide any suggestion. (16%) participants suggested that the teacher should create a good class atmosphere. (8%) participants suggested to have interesting topics for discussion. (12%) suggested that the teacher should be a controller, a guide, or a participant. (8%) suggested that the teachers should allow only English in the classroom. (16%) participants suggested that their teacher should provide them with more speaking opportunities. (8%) participants suggested that the teacher should use audios/videos to help them improve their speaking skills. (4%) participants suggested that their teacher should provide them with more speaking tasks and activities in order to help them improve their speaking skill. (4%) participants suggested that their teacher should motivate and encourage them to speak. This implies that the learners' suggestions might help the teacher to have an overview about the learners' interests which might help in facilitating the teaching and learning process.

2. The Observation-Experiment Data Analysis :

The classroom observation and experiment were conducted at the same time in this study. We had a three sessions' class observation and a five sessions' experiment. They are presented as follows:

2.1. The Observation data analysis:

The classroom observation of this research was conducted with the students in group 6 of the third year LMD at the Department of English at Bejaia University. They were chosen as the participants of the control group .During the three sessions of observation, many notes have been taken concerning the learners' behavior , the classroom atmosphere , the use of the target language , the teachers' role , and the types of activities provided to the learners . These notes are stated in the following table:

Elements of the Observation	Teacher	Learners	Activities
The most dominant talk	The teacher's talk was the most dominant talk .	They do not talk too much ; only few members .	The teacher presents the topic and provides the learners with different pieces of information about it (as a lecture) .
The role of the teacher	A controller most of the time and sometimes a participant.	They only listen to the teacher what does he say and sometimes they say few expressions.	Presenting the topic as a sort of lesson ; writing note on the board while learners write them down on ther copybooks to use them later on in the discussion
The types of activities	He presents the topic and starts proving the learners with knowledge about it .	They listen to the teachers' explanations, taking	Different topics for discussion like : traditional dishes ,

		some notes to discuss them later .	Woman's day , Aprils' fool day .
The use of the TL	He uses the TL sometimes mixed with French and mother tongue (Kabyle) .	A little use of TL ; and most of the time they use French and their mother tongue in many cases . They code switch and make translations to French and MT .	When discussing topics speaking about traditions, the learners tend to use their mother tongue more then the target language .
The classroom climate	The most dominant speaker (teacher's centered approach) .	Learners most of the time do not participate or interact which creates a silent classroom. They only interact with their teacher ; they do not interact with their classmates	The topics discussed create a law rate of classroom participation an interaction among students .

Table 28: Describing the classroom observation .

2.2. The Experiment data analysis:

The experiment was conducted with the students of group 5 third year LMD at the Department of English at Bejaia University. We had 5 sessions of experiment. In each session we have provided our experimental group with a topic that might help in promoting their critical thinking. As a suggested technique, the promoting-CT topics were provided to the participants in order to open discussions and debates through. The fifth sessions are described with more details as follows:

- **Session 01 :**

The topic of the first session was:

''Tamazight as an official language in Algeria ''

At the beginning of the session, the topic was written on the board and then the participants were instructed to give their opinions. At the very first 10-15 minutes, we have noticed some signs of hesitations and shyness among the participants. After a more 5-10 minutes the participants started to interact and felt at ease with the researcher. We noticed that the topic really attracted the participants' attention because they showed interest as they had a lot to say about it . Many opinions have been raised and different students had the chance to speak and share their thoughts about the discussed topic. Some agreements and disagreements were expressed which created a kind of debate between the participants.

- **Session 02 :**

The second sessions topic was:

''Terrorism and Islam ''

In the second session we intended to ask some critical questions that were related to the topic discussed and also to provide the participants with some examples for which they might have a basic background knowledge . The aim of asking such questions during the discussion was to guide the participants towards the target discussions and to promote their critical thinking as well .Concerning the examples, they were provided to help the participants remember what they knew about the topic in order to know what to discuss about . These examples were about ' Paris attacks' , ' Ankara attacks', and ' Bruxel attacks' .Concerning the different CT questions that have been raised by the researcher and which were related to the suggested topic (Terrorism and Islam) were :

- What do you know about Paris , Ankara , and Bruxel attacks ?

- What do you know about Terrorism?

- Why did these attacks happened ?

- Who was responsable ?

- Is this a sort of ' Terrorism' ?

- Is this related to Islam ? and what is its relationship with Islam ?

During the discussion , we have noticed that many new members have participated sharing their opinions and expressing their agreements and disagreements with their classmates . We have noticed also that some kind of iteration has occurred between the participants.

- **Session 03 :**

The topic which was discussed in the third session was:

'' Taking too much medicines (antibiotics) happens only in the Third World ''

In this session, different critical thinking questions were raised during the discussion of the topic .They were raised in order to guide the participants' discussion as well as to foster them to speak more . The different questions which were raised concerning this topic were:

- Why does this phenomenon happen only in the poor countries?

- Who might be the responsible? and why ?

- Developed countries produce the different medicines (antibiotics) but only underdeveloped countries consume them in large quantities, what are the reasons behind ?

We have noticed during this session that the participants were interested in the topic which made them raise different questions and try to find answers. They had many chances to speak and express their thoughts as they felt free to question each other about the topic discussed. At this stage, we may say that the EFL learners gained much confidence and language mastery throughout the discussed topics. Moreover, they felt they were important in constructing a communicative environment .

- **Session 04 :**

The topic which was raised in this session was:

''Do social media tell the truth?''

This topic raised many questions among the participants and offered them a chance to speak up their minds. We have noticed also that the participants felt at ease when providing examples from real facts as arguments to convince each other. The following questions were raised during the discussion of the topic:

- Do you trust and believe all what is said on TV ? why ?

- Can you provide some events or facts which you knew from TV and did not believe? why did not you believe them ?

- Did you try to look for the truth by your own ?

- How do you try to look for the truth ?

- In your opinion , do you think that there exists any real truth ?

It is worth observing in this session that the participants got used to this type of topics . Moreover, we noticed that they became more comfortable with the discussion . We have observed that the promoting critical thinking topics developed their curiosity which made them ask about what the next sessions' topic would be or asking the same question just when entering the classroom before starting the new session .

- **<u>Session 05 :</u>**

The topic of this session was :

''Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram ...) are chasing our real life ''

Many students showed that they liked this topic maybe because it has somehow a relationship with their daily life ; or, because they had more to say about as well as more examples and stories to tell . The following questions were among the ones raised :

- Is it true that the social networks are chasing our real life ?

- Why in your opinion ?

- Do you think that it is true that we live in a virtual world more than in the real one ?

- Why is that in your opinion ?

After raising this issue, we have noticed that various opinions and arguments have been given and shared among the participants . We have observed also that even the participants who were considered as introvert students , have interacted and got engaged in the discussion voluntarily and freely .

2.3. The Checklists Data Analysis :

Q1: Did you like the promoting critical thinking topics' use in oral session ?

Table 29 : Learners' perceptions about the use of promoting CT topics

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	21	4	25
%	84 %	16 %	100 %

Figure 28 : Learners' perceptions about the use of promoting CT topics
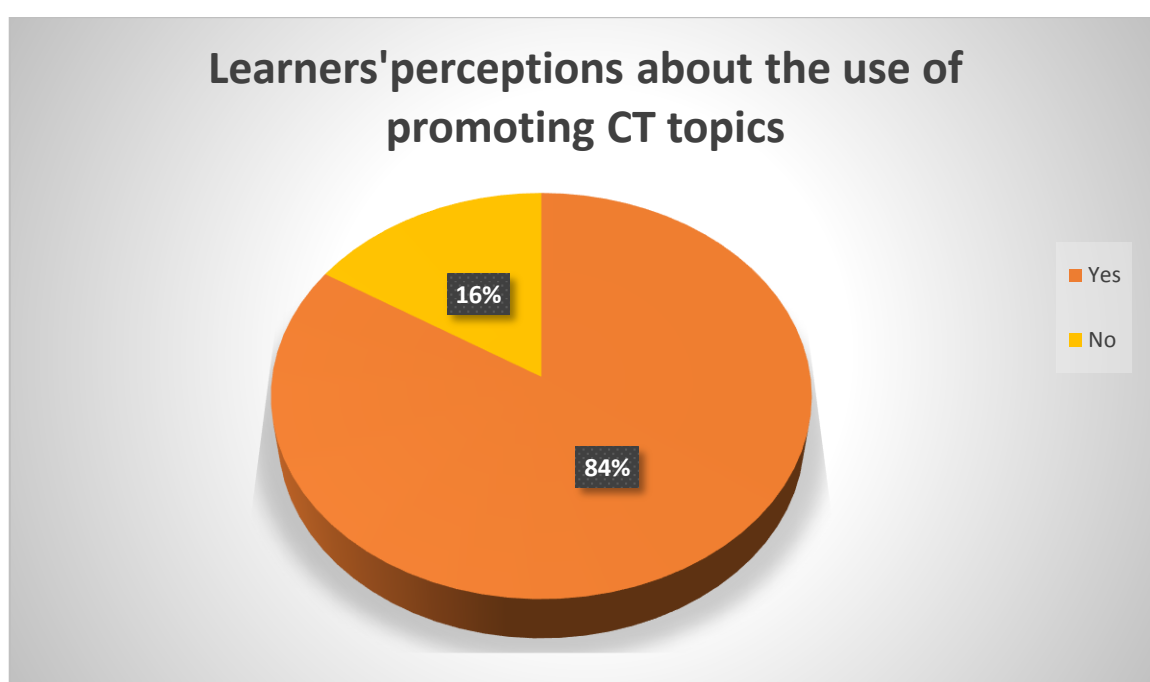
    As the results presented in the table above , we can see that 21 participants said that they liked this new technique of promoting critical thinking topics with a percentage of 84% representing the majority . Only 4 students said that they did not like this technique representing 16% of the whole sample . This might attract our attention to say :

- This category of learners (16%) might not have chosen the target language as their learning syllabus .

- They might present some linguistic and psychological factors which might hinder their learning process progress .

Q2: You liked the promoting critical thinking topics' use because

Results , analysis and interpretation :

Table 30 : Learners' justifications of liking the suggested technique

Option	No answer	It provided you with more opportunities to speak	You liked the type of the topics discussed	You have been given more chances to discuss with your classmates	Total
Number	4	10	6	5	25
%	16 %	40 %	24 %	20 %	100 %

Figure 29 : Learners' justifications about liking the suggested technique
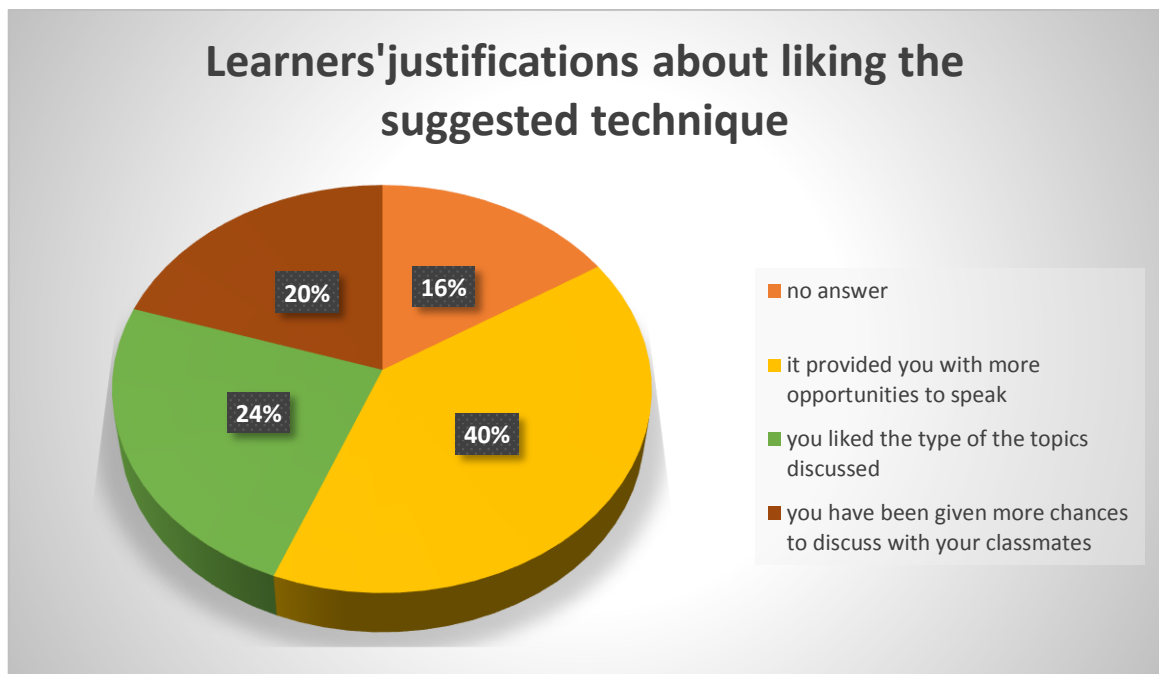
Accorging to the table above, 4 participants did not answer the question because they did not like this technique representing 16% of the whole sample. We can see also that 10 participants said that they liked this technique because it gave them more opportunities to speak showing 40% as the majority. For the second justification which is because they liked the type of the topics discussed, only 6 participants have chosen this option representing 24%. For the last option which was because you have been given more chances to discuss with your

classmates, only 5 students have chosen it representing 20% of the whole sample. As far as we are concerned and on the basis of the obtained results, we may say that this is a common phenomenon as not all the EFL classes can be homogeneous whatever the afforded efforts especially in an environment where English is only used in class .

Q3: You did not like it , because

Results , analysis and interpretation :

Table 31 : Learners' justifications of disliking the suggested technique

Option	No answer	The type of topics was not interesting	The topics were hard to be discussed	You do not like classroom discussions	Total
Number	21	2	1	1	25
%	84 %	8%	4%	4%	100%

Figure 30 : Learners'comments about disliking the suggested technique

Learners'comments about disliking the suggested technique

- no answers
- the type of topics was not interesting
- the topics were hard to be discussed
- you do not like classroom discussions
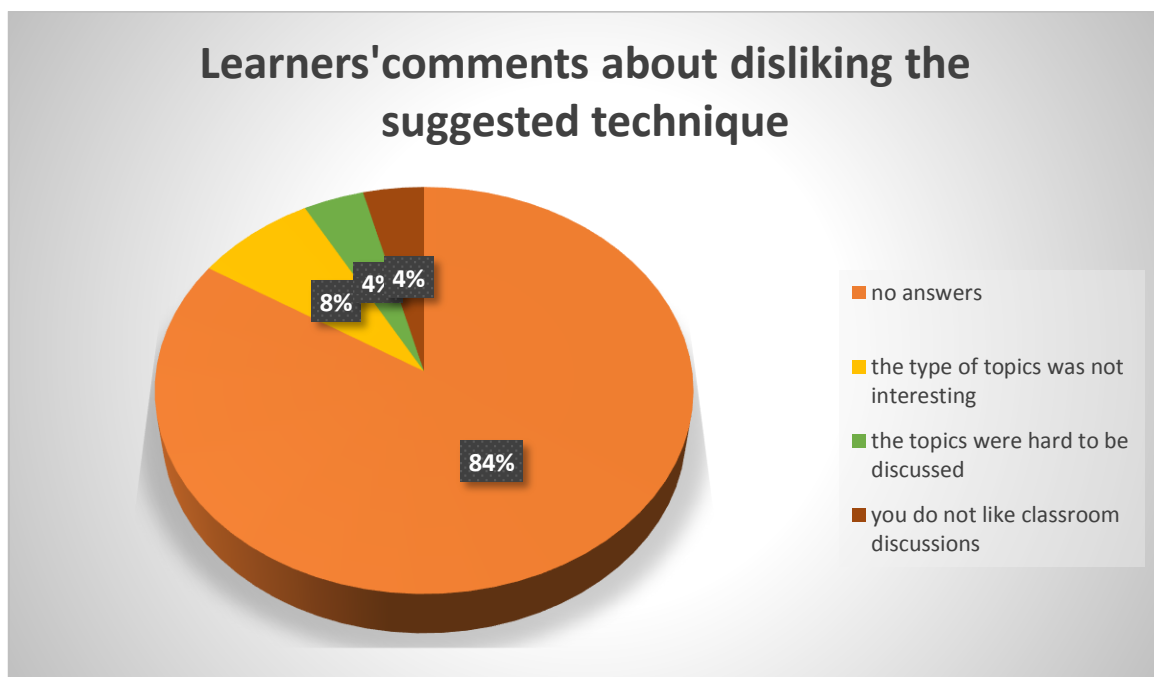
According to the results, we can deduce that 21 of the participants did not answer this question because they liked the technique . Two of the 4 who did not like the suggested technique, justified that the topics were not interesting representing 8% . Only 1 of the 4 said that the topics were hard to be discussed with a percentage of 4% . Another one has chosen the variable: 'you do not like classroom discussions' , representing 4% .

Q4: Do you think that this technique helped you to improve your speaking skill ?

Results , analysis and interpretation :

Table 32 : Learners' perceptions about the effectiveness of the technique in improving their speaking skill .

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	23	2	25
%	92 %	8 %	100 %

Figure 31 : Learners' perceptions about the effectiveness of the technique in improving their speaking skill .
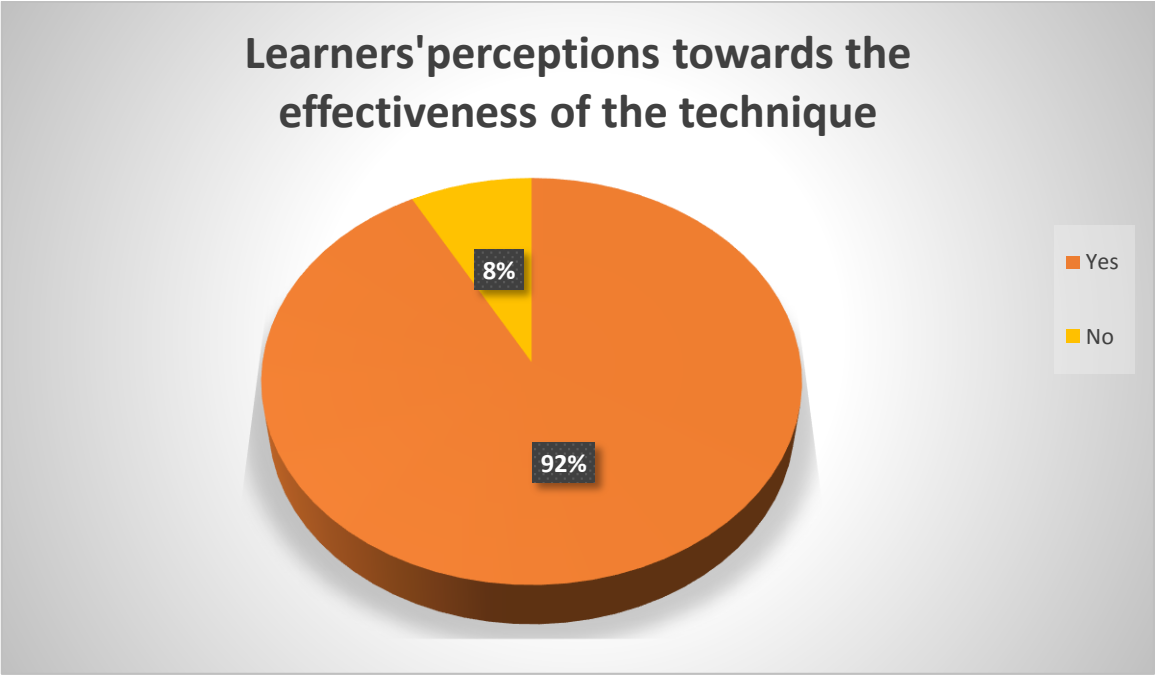
We can see from the table above that 23 of the participants have agreed on the effectiveness of the suggested technique to improve their speaking skills, representing 92% of

67

the whole sample. Whereas only 2 participants disagreed, representing 8%. This percentage is, we strongly believe, a sign which positively maintain our hypotheses.

Q5 : If yes , how much percent ?

Results , analysis and interpretation :

Table 33 : Learners' perceptions towards the rate of their speaking skill improvement

Option	No answer	75 %	50 %	25 %	Total
Number	2	13	8	2	25
%	8%	52 %	32 %	8 %	100 %

Figure 32 : Learners' perceptions towards the rate of their speaking skill improvement
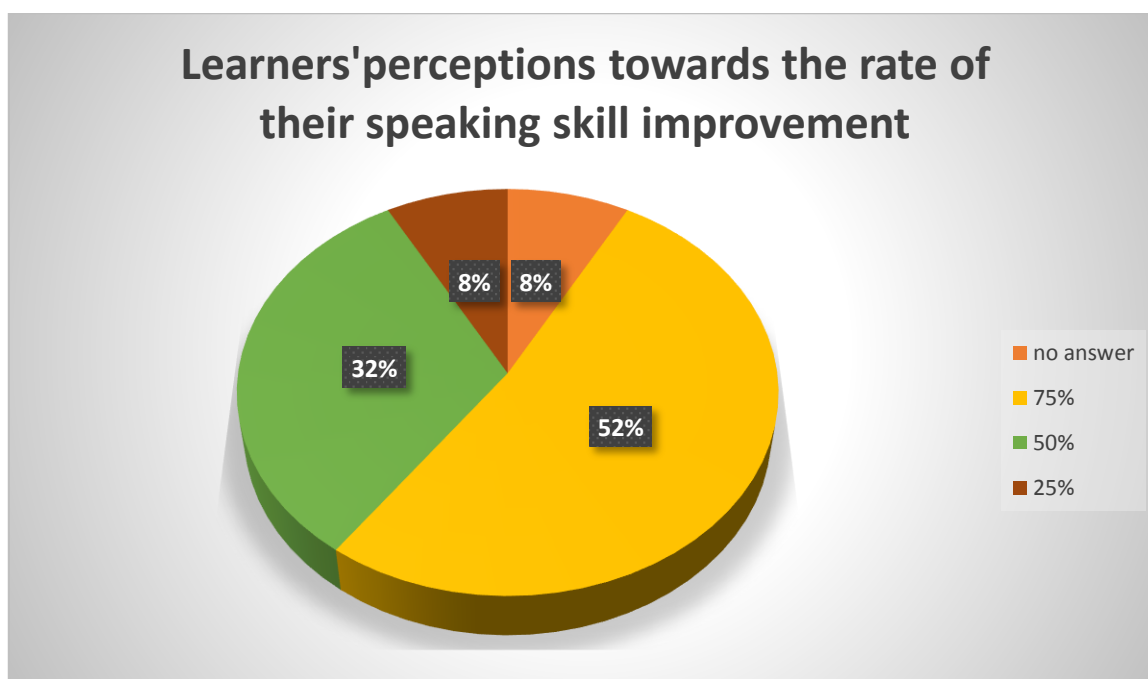
As presented in the table above , we can see that only 2 participants did not provide any answer (8%) . From the previous results , 13 participants (52%) have chosen (75%) as a rate for their speaking skills improvement . 8 students thought that their speaking skills have improved with 50% , representing 32% of the participants . Only 2 students have rated their speaking skills improvement with 25% , representing 8% of the participants . Again, these results underlie the importance of implementing C.T. topics in the EFL speaking skill so as to enhance , foster and develop the EFL learners' oral competences .

Q6 : If no , because

Table 34 : Learners' justifications of disapproving the effectiveness of the technique

Option	No answer	You do not speak because you apprehend making mistakes	You do not speak because you are an introvert student	You do not speak because you fear the negative feedback	Total
Number	23	1	1	0	25
%	92%	4%	4%	0%	100%

Figure 33 : Learners' justifications of disapproving the effectiveness of the technique
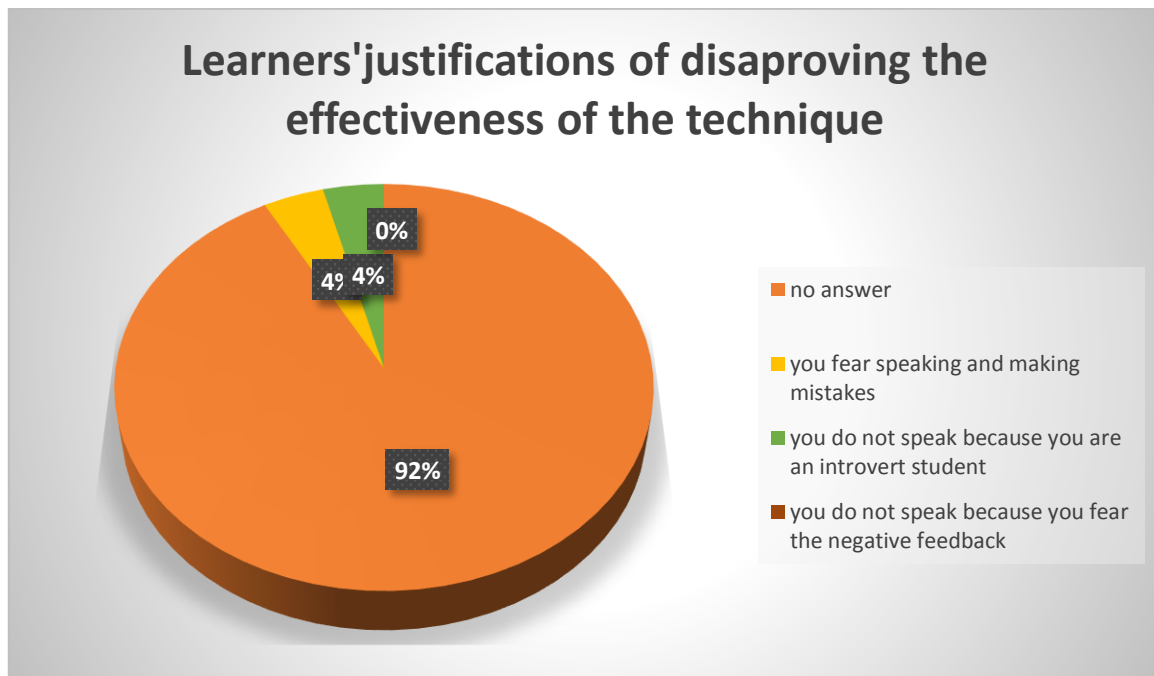
We can see that 23 participants did not answer this question because they liked the suggested technique ; representing 92% of the whole sample . Only 1 participant has chosen the option ' you do not speak because you apprehend making mistakes' ; representing 4% . Only 1 other students has chosen ' you do not speak because you are an introvert student' ; representing also 4 %. None of the informants has chosen the last option . According to the option chosen by the sole respondent ' you do not speak because you apprehend making

mistakes' , we may say that teachers should take the psychological profile of their learners into a great consideration. The problems which emerge from might block the learners' progress and result at a severe frustration .

Q7: Do you want this technique to be more used in the future learning process ?

Results , analysis and interpretation :

Table 35 : Learners' desires towards the application of the technique in the future learning process .

Option	Yes	No	Neutral	Total
Number	18	0	7	25
%	72 %	0 %	28 %	100 %

Figure 34 : Learners' perceptions towards the application of the technique in the future learning
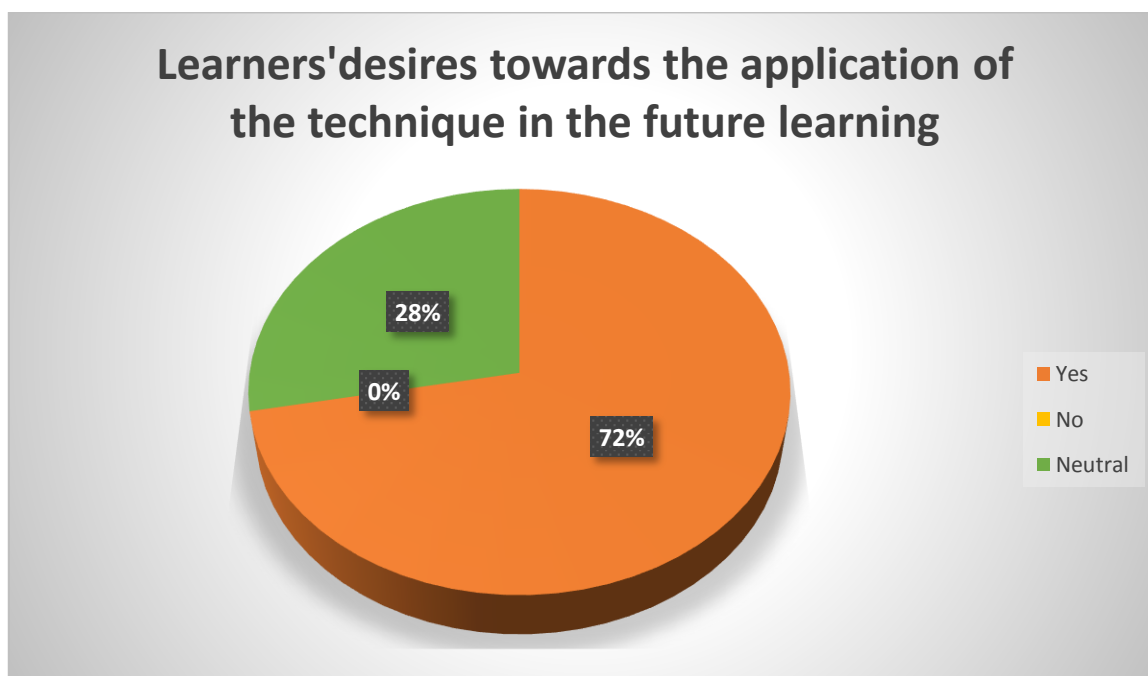
Through the table above , we can see that 18 participants agreed the application of the suggested technique in the future learning process ; representing the majority (72%) of the whole sample. None of the participants refused the idea of applying this technique in their future learning process . Only 7 participants were neutral , representing (28%) . It is a real

encouragement to notice that this technique can bring much enhancement and development in the EFL learners' speaking skills .

Discussion

First of all , using the Questionnaire as a primary source of collecting data aimed at having a background information about our participants (their attitudes , perceptions , and perspectives) . The analyses of the first data collection tool reveal that the majority of the participants have an average level in English as a foreign language. The results showed also that although the students were provided with opportunities to speak ; they still were not satisfied about the type of the activities . The majority of them showed that they needed more time to do fluently and meaningfully with the oral expression. As the results showed, most of the participants liked to talk , they preferred students' talk rather than the teachers' talk. They also preferred their teacher to be a participant or a monitor . Most of the students agreed preferring classroom discussions and debates rather than being considered as simple receptions .

For the second means of data collection which was the Observation-Experiment , it aimed on the one hand at observing the students (the control group participants) learning behaviors , their speaking skill progress , and also their use of the target language . On the other hand , concerning the experiment, it aimed at providing the participants with the suggested treatment which was : promoting critical thinking topics . The results of the second tool revealed that the participants tended to use their MT and French more than the TL. They also tended to translate and code switch to the MT and French . Concerning the experiment, the participants showed more excitement and welcomed the suggested technique of promoting CT topics as a means to enhance their speaking skills . They adapted the topics and participated voluntarily in the classroom discussions and debates . Finally we can say that promoting critical thinking topics helped to some extent to foster the participants to speak .

Concerning the third and the last tool of collecting data embedded in the Checklist , it aimed at testing the validity of the treatment provided in the experiment . After analyzing the checklists , the results revealed that most of the participants liked the application of the suggested technique as a means to help them enhance their speaking skills . The results showed also that the majority of the participants approved that promoting CT topics helped them in some way in improving their speaking . In the end , the analysis resulted that most of them welcomed the idea of applying this new technique in the future EFL learning process .

Conclusion

To conclude , in this chapter we have presented the sample and the population of the research and the different means of data collection as the first step . Second, we have provided a detailed analysis of the three tools of collecting data : Questionnaires , Observation-Experiment , and checklists . Finally , we have presented the results and the findings of our research which revealed that our participants had positive perceptions towards the new technique suggested in this study : promoting critical thinking topics as a means to enhance EFL learners' speaking skill .

General Conclusion

This study was set to investigate the role of promoting critical thinking topics in improving the EFL learners' speaking skills .In this research, some light has been shed on the EFL learners' different perspectives about the use of this technique. In addition to that, more attention was paid on finding out whether this technique helped in enhancing the EFL learners' speaking skills or not.

In order to confirm or disconfirm the validity of the investigations in this research, we had better provide answers to our research questions.

Concerning the aims of the study, it has been confirmed through the results obtained when analyzing and interpreting the data collected using various but meaningful investigative tools that the aims have been achieved.

The first aim was to find out if the implementation of promoting critical thinking topics in the oral session had any significant impact on enhancing the EFL learners' speaking skills. According to the interpreted results, we therefore confirm that the implementation of this technique had a positive impact in helping the EFL learners to enhance their speaking skills .The other aim which was set to incite and to encourage the EFL learners to speak as well as to engage in the class discussions, had been achieved too. According to the results of the experiment which showed that promoting Critical Thinking (CT) topics played a crucial role in inciting the participants to speak and take part in class discussions.

Responding to the research questions we shall say:

Q1: Could promoting critical thinking topics help the EFL learners to enhance their speaking skill?

Answer : According to the revealed results, we can say 'Yes.' This technique helped in some way the participants to enhance their speaking skills.

Q2: What could the learners' perceptions and perspectives be concerning this new suggested technique ?

Answer: the learners liked the implemented technique as they showed positive attitudes towards it.

Q3: Could this technique be applicable in the future?

Answer: According to the experimental process, the answer cannot but be 'Yes'. This suggested technique can be applied in the EFL classrooms not only to develop the EFL learners' oral competences and skills but to set a basis and strategy for social integration and thus fight some psychological disturbances which might be the key barrier to any progress and development.

Concerning the expressed hypotheses, we maintain the idea of implementing this new technique and this has been confirmed according to the findings revealed and the interpretations provided in that direction.

All in all, this research has been conducted to investigate the role of using promoting critical thinking topics as a means to enhance EFL learners' speaking skill. After the various steps and the different procedures, this study has reached finally and positively what it has been set for.

As in any scientific research for which a battery of undertaking tools, research methods, and basic literatures to build up the backbone of the study, the multiple strategies to analyze and interpret the data collected, we ought to say that the task was not so easy to cover. In fact, many difficulties and hindrances have been encountered throughout.

Limitations of the study :

As the limitations that we have faced when conducting our research , we shall state them as follows :

- **Time contraints :**

According to the short period of time for conducting the research , and according to the use the mixed method (Quantitative and Qualitative) which takes much of time . We have faced some constraints of time , especially during the phase of collecting data .

- **The participants' attitudes of using code switching :**

We have faced this kind of limitation during conducting the experiment .The participants used to code switch most of the time during the class discussions which created some interruptions concerning the flow of the target language's communication .

- **The participants' absences :**

This obstacle occurred during conducting the experiment .In some sessions of the experiment, we have noticed that there were some absences among the participants . This might be a kind of limitation concerning the participants' discussions .

- **Lack of ressources :**

For the reason that our research theme was considered as a new one , we have faced some obstacles when looking for resources which are related to our theme .

Implications and Recommendations

On the basis of this research's findings , we shall present the following suggestions and implications to EFL teachers , learners and future researchers :

⊕ EFL Teachers :

- Due to the various challenges that the EFL teachers are facing in order to foster their learners to speak , we suggest this new technique to be used in the EFL classrooms . It may be effectively helpful in improving the EFL learners' speaking skill .

- For the Oral expression , it is suggested that teachers should avoid raising topics which are related to traditions and customs because learners tend to use their mother tongue more than the use of the target language when discussing this type of topics .

- It is suggested also that they try to have at least an overview about their learners' preferences and perceptions concerning the type of activities . It helps in creating a more healthy learning atmosphere in the classroom .

- We advise them to teach critical thinking skills implicitly whether integrated in the other modules , or explicitly as independent lessons ; in order foster the learners to think critically about their learning .

- Teachers of speaking are advised to try to prevent their learners from using code switching/code mixing in the oral session , because it interrupts the flow of the communication and also it reduces the chances of using the target language .

🞇 **EFL Learners :**

- They should try to help their teachers to create more speaking opportunities , through providing their suggestions for instance from time to time .

- It is suggested also that they should practice the target language not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom as well . Due to the small amount of time devoted to the Oral expression , students should try to make extra efforts to enhance their speaking . If they are going to depend only the classroom speaking activities , they are not going to achieve much progress .

🞇 **EFL Future Researchers :**

- Concerning future researchers , it is suggested for them to carry out a research about ' teaching critical thinking skills to promote the learners' autonomy' .

- Another suggested research to carry out is about ' teaching critical thinking to help students in analyzing novels and literary texts' .

- At the end , we suggest that the current research can be carried out again with some modifications and changes .

In the end, and as generally expressed, we strongly believe that this humble contribution to document ideas about developing and finding out salient strategies and techniques for the EFL teaching and learning process betterment, we would rather consider the research work at hand as an open ended field for further investigations which we simply leave to future researchers either to review the technique as part or as a whole, to provide constructive and critical sights and why not suggest new hypotheses on the related theme.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I : Students' Questionnaire

Appendix II: Topics used in the experiment

Appendix III: Students' Checklist

Appendix I: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students:

We would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions concerning our study. This questionnaire aims at investigating the role of promoting critical thinking topics to enhance the EFL students 'speaking skill. We are interested in your viewpoints since you represent the source of this inquiry.

Please circle the right answer according to your opinion.
Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Part one: back ground information:

Age : ....

Sex :
    a. Male
    b. Female

1. Studying English was
    a. Your choice
    b. Obligatory

2. How long have you been studying English?
    .... years

3. How do you evaluate your level in English?
    a. Very good
    b. Good
    c. Average
    d. Poor

Part two: students' perception of the speaking skill and their attitudes.

4. Are you given opportunities to speak as much as you want in the Oral session?
    a. Yes
    b. No

5. If Yes :
    a. Always
    b. Sometimes
    c. Rarely
    d. Never

6. If No, why ?
....

7. Do you feel comfortable in the oral class?
   a. Yes
   b. No

8. If No; what makes you feel so?
   a. Your teacher
   b. Your classmates
   c. The activities or the topics of the lesson

9. How many hours do you study oral expression per week?
   .... hours

10. Do you think that this amount of time is sufficient?
   a. Yes
   b. No , more time is needed

Part three: students' preferences.

11. Do you like talking during the oral session?
   a. Yes
   b. No

12. If Yes , how often ?
   a. Always
   b. Sometimes
   c. Rarely

13. If No, why ?
   a. You are not talkative
   b. You are an introvert student
   c. You fear making mistakes

14. How do you like to be in the oral class?
   a. Silent
   b. Talkative

15. In the oral session , you prefer :
   a. Teacher talk
   b. Student talk

16. Are you given chances to interact with your classmates?
   a. Yes
   b. No

17. If Yes :
   a. Always
   b. Sometimes
   c. Rarely

18. If No, why ?

....

....

19. How do you prefer your oral expression teacher to be?
   a.   A participant
   b.   A giude
   c.   A controller

20. Which activity do you like to have most in the oral session?
   a.   Language games
   b.   Role play
   c.   Discussion and Debates

21. When you are given a topic, do you like to debate and discuss it with your classmates ?
   a.   Yes
   b.   No
   c.   Neutral

22. If Yes , which type of topics you like the most ?

....

23. If No, why ?

....

....

24. Could you please suggest some solutions the teacher can do to stimulate you to use the target language (English)?

....

....

....

....

Thank You

Appendix II:

Topics used in the experiment

1. Tamazight as an official language in Algeria

2. Terrorism and Islam

3. Taking too much medicines (Antibiotics) happens only in the Third World

4. Do social media tell the truth?

5. Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram…) are chasing our real life

Appendix III:

Students' Checklist

Level: Group:

Please tick the suitable answer. You can chose more than one if necessary.

1. Did you like the promoting critical thinking topics' use in the oral session :
   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐

2. You liked the promoting critical thinking topics 'use because :
   - It provided you with more opportunities to speak ☐
   - You liked the type of the topics discussed ☐
   - You have been given more chances to discuss with your classmates ☐

3. You did not like it ; because :
   - The type of topics was not interesting ☐
   - The topics were hard to be discussed ☐
   - You do not like classroom discussions ☐

4. Do you think that this technique helped you to improve your speaking skill :
   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐

5. If yes, how much percent:

   - 75 % ☐
   - 50 % ☐
   - 25 % ☐

6. If no, because:

   - You do not speak because you apprehend making mistakes ☐
   - You do not speak because you are an introvert student ☐
   - You do not speak because you fear the negative feedback ☐

7. Do you want this technique to be more used in the future learning process?

   - Yes ☐

   - No ☐

   - Neutral ☐

                                                                              Thank You