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**Investigating EFL Students' Macro-Language Skills Difficulties in  
Speaking  
The Case of First Year EFL Students at the University of Bejaia**

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## **Dedication**

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most compassionate, all praise is due to Allah alone, the sustainer of the entire world.

I proudly dedicate this modest work to:

My beloved parents who have been my biggest cheerleaders, thank you for scarifying so much to provide me with endless opportunities.

My lovely sisters Zina & Nawal.

My dearest brothers Farid & Ferdj Allah,

for their steadfast love, I am highly grateful for your enormous support, help, and encouragement.

My close friends: Dida and Mouhiddin whose support sustained me to finish this work

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Special gratitude is due to all those extraordinary people who have stood by me in every hard moment, thank you for your help, support and care that you unconditionally provided

To all my friends with whom I shared the university life with its lights and shadows

To all those who love me

And finally, I want to thank me for believing in me

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## **Abstract**

This present dissertation aims at exploring the speaking macro-language skills difficulties faced by first year English Foreign language (EFL) learners at Bejaia University. In addition, this study explores the factors that influence the learners' speaking performance as well as the different strategies teachers implement to enhance their learners' speaking skill. To reach this aim an exploratory design was used. Hence, to collect the necessary data, two main instruments namely the questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used. These instruments serve to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the challenges faced by EFL learners during the Oral Presentation? 2) What are the major factors that influence the EFL learner's speaking performance? 3) What are the strategies implemented by EFL teachers to overcome the learners 'speaking difficulties? The obtained results revealed that the participants encounter several difficulties in speaking namely in terms of, fluency, vocabulary and accuracy. In addition, the results indicated that psychological factors such as shyness, anxiety, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes are among the factors that influence the learners' speaking performance. Besides, teachers' classroom practices also affect the learners' performance. Regarding the strategies that teachers implement, they are rehearsal, using different activities such as role-plays, discussion, debates, and games. Finally, some pedagogical recommendations were proposed to enhance students' speaking proficiency.

**Keywords:** Difficulties, EFL learners, macro-skills, speaking

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Appendix 01: Students' Questionnaire

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**LMD:** License/ Master/ Doctorate

**FNE:** Fear of Negative Evaluation

**L1:** First Language

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## **General Introduction**

English language has grown to become one of the world's most widely spoken and influential languages. It is considered as a means of communication between several cultural areas around the world. It has spread in different domains especially education. Hence, the demand to learn it had become greater. Teaching and learning English is based on the four main skills which are listening, reading, speaking and writing. As far as speaking is concerned, it is considered as the most important skill which plays a vital role in learning a foreign language and communicating orally. However, most EFL learners face various difficulties speaking because of its complex nature.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Effective communication skills, particularly during oral presentation, play a crucial role in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). However, EFL learners often encounter various challenges and issues that impede the development of their speaking skill. Despite the importance of that skill, there is a lack of comprehensive research investigating the specific difficulties faced by EFL learners in this context. This problem is more existed among the first year LMD students of English Department at the University of Bejaia. Based on the data collected through the research tools the majority of the students find it challenging to express themselves in front of others during their oral sessions. Hence, this study aims to explore and identify those difficulties and obstacles that are encountered by the EFL learners during the oral sessions and offer insights into how effective speaking performance can be developed through adopting different instructional strategies.

### **2. The Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

**1-** What are the macro skills challenges faced by EFL students during the Oral Presentation

**2-** What are the major factors that influence the EFL students' speaking performance?

**3-**What are the strategies implemented by EFL teachers to overcome the students' speaking difficulties?

### **3. The Purpose of the Study**

This research aims at exploring the macro-language skills difficulties faced by first year LMD students of English department at the University of Bejaia. It further aims at exploring the different factors that affect the learners' speaking performance. Additionally, the possible strategies the teachers could use to overcome this problem.

### **4. The Significance of the Study**

This research is significant because it tries to explore and describe different difficulties faced by EFL learners in speaking. Additionally, it tries to give insight about the importance of the language macro skills in learning. It is worthy to note that identifying the factors that lead to speaking difficulties is necessary for a better teaching and learning of speaking.

### **5. Design and Methodology**

The research design is a scientific approach which consists of gathering, analysing and interpreting data to reach the research aims and answer the research questions (Sreekumar 2023). Since this study aims at exploring and describing the main challenges that EFL learners encounter during their oral tasks, and the major factors which affect their speaking performance, an exploratory and descriptive design were relied on. To reach the research objectives, we opted for the use of a mixed methodology which consists of describing a phenomenon through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. As far as the qualitative method is concerned, it is used to collect opinions and to gain a deep understanding of the concepts used

in this research, while the quantitative method is used to quantify and measure the speaking difficulties through numerical data. In specific, a questionnaire is designed to 60 first year EFL students in order to describe their attitudes and collect a valid data from a large number of participants about the speaking skills' difficulties. The semi- structured interview is designed for the teachers of oral expression to collect additional information about the speaking skills from teachers' perspectives. Interview offers flexibility to use different techniques to reach the questions' aim, obtain the original data from the source and reliable responses quickly (Clements 2021).

## **6. Population and Sample**

The population of this study is 1<sup>st</sup> year EFL students at Bejaia University in the academic year 2023-2024. The total number of 1<sup>st</sup> year students is 92 students divided into four groups. The sample consists of 60 students who are chosen randomly to answer the questionnaire. First year students were chosen to participate in this study because they had not been previously exposed to the oral expression course before. Since the first year is the early stage in learning EFL at the university, the majority of students face various obstacles during their oral production. In addition to students, five teachers of oral expression were also involved in this study.

## **7. Chapter Demarcation**

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters. The first one is theoretical; it provides review of the literature about EFL speaking. The second one is practical; it is divided into three sections. Section one provides information about the study, section two provides the readers with the findings of the study and a detailed discussion, and the third sections deals with the limitations of the study, implications, and suggestions for further research.

# **Chapter One: Speaking in English as a Foreign Language**

## **Introduction**

Speaking has been considered as an important part of teaching English as a foreign language in EFL classes. It is a crucial productive skill which is contemplating as an essential process of evaluating EFL learners' performance. It allows the learners to convey information and ideas verbally through knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency and other elements. However, EFL learners find that speaking is a challenging task especially during the oral presentations. To this end, this chapter provides a theoretical framework concerning EFL speaking skill.

### **I.1. Definition of the speaking skill**

Scholars do not share a single definition of speaking and this is inevitable. In general, speaking is defined as the act of expressing thoughts, feelings and opinions orally in order to promote face-to-face communication (Thornbury, 2005). It is a direct method of producing certain word and sound combinations including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. For Nunan (2001), speaking is the use of language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses which is called fluency “. In his definition, Nunan stressed that speaking is the fluent use of the language. Besides, according to Chaney (1998, p. 13) speaking is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts. Likewise, Harmer (2001) asserted that the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information. In this context, speaking is also a cognitive process and fluency involves not only knowing the language' grammar and vocabulary but also to have the ability to use them effectively in real life situations. In different words, speaking involves both linguistic and non-linguistic elements.

Based on the above definitions, it can be concluded that speaking is the ability to interact with others orally to express and exchange ideas and information. As far as foreign language is concerned, speaking is regarded as an essential skill through which learners could master a language.

## **I.2. Speaking sub-skill**

Brown (2003) argued that speaking is a combination of micro and macro skills. The former refers to the production of smaller chunks of language such as phonemes, morphemes, words collocations and phrasal units. The latter refers to the largest elements of the speaking skill which are: fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion and non-verbal communication. (Brown 2004)

### **I.2.1. The Speaking Micro Skill**

As far as speaking micro skills are concerned, they involve phoneme, morpheme, words collocation and phrasal units (Brown 2004).

#### **I.2.1.1. Phonemes**

According to Brown (2004), phoneme is the smallest distinctive unit in a language. It belongs to the phonological system of the English language. It helps the speaker to understand the relationship between speech sounds and meanings. In English, there are forty-four phonemes which are divided into twenty vowels and twenty-four consonants.

##### **• The Consonant Phonemes**

Consonant phonemes such as /b/, /d/ and /t/ are produced by obstructing airflow using the lips, tongue, teeth or other parts of the mouth. They are divided into voiced and voiceless consonants. The voiced consonants are produced with vibrations such as /b/, /d/ and /z/. The voiceless consonants are produced with no vibrations such as /k/, /s/ and /t/ (Brown 2004).

##### **• The Vowel Phonemes**



Vowel phonemes are produced by an open tract with no obstruction of the airflow through the mouth. There are twenty vowel phonemes in the English language, which are divided into short and long vowels. The short vowels are pronounced relatively briefly such as /ɪ/ vowel in the word “bit”. The long vowels are pronounced in a long duration such as the vowel /u:/ in the word “who” (Brown 2004).

### **I.2.1.2 Morphemes**

Morpheme is the smallest individually meaningful unit at the grammatical level. In other words, it is a unit which cannot be further divided only at phonological level, it can be described as sounds. It belongs to the morphological system of the English language. There are two types of morphemes, free and bound (O’Grady and Archibald 2016)

#### **• Free Morpheme**

The free morpheme is the one which can stand alone. It consists of a word by itself or a word formed of one morpheme, such as door, pen and school (O’Grady and Archibald 2016).

#### **• Bound morpheme**

Bound morphemes are morphemes that cannot stand alone, they must be connected with another morpheme to create a word and convey a certain meaning. They include prefixes, suffixes, and infixes.

- **Prefixes:** are morphemes added at the beginning of a word to change its meaning and create a new word, such as *re* (**re**open), *un* (**un**fair), and *dis* (**dis**connect).

- **Infixes:** They are the affixes that appear within the consonant and the vowel sequence in the middle of a word, such as man-men, foot-feet and mouse-mice. The changes happen with the root of the word which are also known as irregular nouns.

- **suffixes:** Are the morphemes which are added at the end of a word, such as *ly* (**badly**, **slowly**), *ful* (**playful**), and *less* (**helpless**) (O’Grady and Archibald 2016).

### **I.2.1.3. Word Collocations and Phrasal Units**

They are a group of words which are combined during speaking. They are selected or used to enhance fluency and convey certain meaning. This combination of words forms a single semantic unit that includes idiomatic expressions and collocations. These elements help speakers to construct their vocabulary in their everyday conversations.

To conclude, the speaking micro skills are essential to generate language chunks of varying lengths, demonstrate English stress patterns, the rhythm of speech and intonation patterns. They are also used to generate the appropriate number of words to achieve specific goals in communication through the adoption of cohesive devices. Also, they monitor one's spoken language by using strategic techniques such as pauses and self-correction (Heid 1994).

### **I.2.2. Speaking Macro Skills**

The main elements of speaking macro skills are fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion and non-verbal communication (Brown 2004).

#### **I.2.2.1. Fluency**

According to Hughes (2002), fluency is the ability to produce language in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate way without hesitation. In other words, it is the capacity of producing the language as fast and easy as possible.

#### **I.2.2.2. Discourse**

Discourse refers to the structure of a speech which involves an understanding of various strategic linguistic devices such as pauses and self-correction (Harmer, 2001).

#### **I.2.2.3. Function**

Function refers to the accomplishment of appropriate communicative functions according to situations, participants and goals by using an adequate number of words to serve a particular purpose (Harmer 2001).

#### **I.2.2.4. Style**

Style refers to the manner in which the language is used in a particular context. It involves the use of several linguistics devices including vocabulary, tone, and syntax to convey the message clearly (Harmer2001).

#### **I.2.2.5. Cohesion**

Cohesion refers to the connections or ties that exist between several parts of speech in a logical order to clarify the meaning such as using connections, synonyms and antonyms (Harmer2001).

#### **I.2.2.6. Non –Verbal Communication**

The non- verbal communication involves facial expressions, gestures, postures, eye contact and other cues in conjunction with spoken language (Harmer 2001).

### **I.3. Elements and Components of Speaking**

Vanderkevent (1990) asserted that the speaking process involves three main elements which are the speaker, the listener, and the message. As far the speaker is concerned, it refers to the one who produces the utterance while expressing opinions or feelings to the hearer. The listener is the receiver of the speaker's opinion or feelings. In the absence of the listener the speaker's utterance transforms into a written one. And the message refers to the verbal expressions made by individuals during the communication.

As far the components of speaking are concerned, Harris (1974) mentioned that they include pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and grammar.

#### **I.3.1 Pronunciation**

Thornbury (2005) defined pronunciation as students' ability to produce comprehensible utterances to fulfil the task requirements. In other words, it is the act of producing meaningful and correct sounds. Additionally, Harmer (2001) referred to the elements of pronunciation as pitch, intonation, minimal pairing, spelling, rhythm and stress.

The primary goal of oral lessons is to assist learners in speaking accurately and correctly. By achieving accuracy, individuals are able to use proper linguistic structures. According to Bryne (1986), statements should be free from errors in areas such as phonology, syntax, semantics and discourse features.

### **I.3.2. Grammar**

Pinker (1999) defined grammar as a set of rules and principles that control the language structure and arrangement. The main role of grammar is to enhance the connection between the structure and meaning. Grammar is classified into two types namely descriptive grammar and perspective grammar. While the former aims to depict actual language usage, the latter informs readers about the grammatical rules they ought to follow.

### **I.3.3. Vocabulary**

Harley (1996) explained that words have two important aspects which are recognition and meaning. Recognizing a word involves determining how familiar it is and accessing all the information linked to that word. Word recognition includes various skills such as phonemic analysis, analogies, syllable analysis, sight word mastery and morpheme analysis.

Vocabulary is the essential element of a speech as it enables the precise expression of thoughts and ideas. A rich vocabulary enhances communication and makes it more impactful. Also, it allows learners to convey their thoughts with clarity and assist them to become self-sufficient and able to infer or acquire the meaning of unfamiliar terms.

### **I.3.4 Fluency**

According to Chambers (1997), fluency refers to the smooth and connected flow of sounds, syllables and phrases. When a person does not have pauses in his/her speech, s/he is considered to be a fluent speaker. Additionally, Zhang (2009) defined fluency as speaking at a consistent pace without hesitation, using clear and simple English to effectively communicate

the message. He also emphasized the importance of adapting the language to suit the listeners' understanding and delivering comprehensible sentences without difficulty.

### **I.3.5. Comprehension**

According to Cohen et al. (2009), comprehension is the ability to understand spoken language and respond appropriately. Thus, comprehension is very important to avoid misunderstanding and to maintain the flow of the communication.

## **I.5 The Importance of Speaking**

The main goal of teaching and learning a foreign language is to become proficient and accurate speakers. Many EFL learners prioritize speaking because it demonstrates their proficiency in the language. The importance of being a fluent speaker of a foreign language makes of speaking the most important of the four skills. In this context, Ur (2000) argued that “of all the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important. People who know a language are referred to as speakers of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing” (p.12). In today's globalized world, learning English as a foreign language has become necessary to communicate and to compete the international job market. Consequently, it is essential and highly crucial for EFL classes to focus on developing speaking.

In addition, speaking skills help learners to express clearly their feelings, opinions and thoughts in classroom discussions. It is worth pointing that practicing speaking provide learners with new vocabulary. According to Gillis (2013), speaking offers the speaker a range of advantages such as the ability to confidently address the audience, convey information through informing or persuading the listeners.

In sum, the speaking skill helps EFL learners to develop language proficiency through communication. It allows learners to use language differently in several contexts.

## **I.6. Classroom Speaking Activities**

Speaking should be taught in an attractive way, there are many types of activities that may help in developing the learners' performance.

### **I.6.1. Role Play**

It is a learning activity in which participants take a particular role and engage in simulated conversation. Role plays are crucial in the communicative approach since they provide students with opportunities to practice communication in several social contexts and social roles (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2013). Besides, role plays are effective in getting reluctant or shy students to speak and promote class interaction. It also increases confidence and fosters empathy, teamwork and adaptability by simulating real life scenarios. The success of the role plays depends on choosing the right topics to discuss. These topics should be relevant to the learners' needs and interest while also encouraging their engagement. As far as teacher's role is concerned during the activity she/he can be facilitator, a spectator or a participant. To conclude, Role play allows the teacher to provide feedback, offer comments and advice, and act as a speaking model.

### **I.6.2. Story Telling**

In this type of activities, students can talk about a movie, a book or a story. It involves using words, images or other mediums to create a compelling and engaging story. According to Thorbury (2005);” *narration has always been one of the main means of participating speaking in the classroom, although this is used to take the form of having learners recount folk tales or amusing or dramatic incidents based on series of pictures*” (p.96).

Telling a story offers numerous advantages. In this context, the British council suggests that narrating a story can enhance oral communication skills, stimulate imagination, foster cultural exploration and illustrate the universal presence of wisdom across different societies.

### **I.6.3. Discussions**

Most often, discussions and debates are the activities that EFL teachers usually use in their classes. They allow students to express and defend their opinions, share their interests and experiences. When participating in a discussion, students can express agreement or disagreement on a topic, provide evidence and arguments. It is important for the topic to be attractive and relevant to their everyday lives, and for students to be actively engaged and have something specific to contribute (Littlewood, 1981; Thornbury, 2005).

#### **I.6.4. Academic Presentations**

Academic presentations refer to students preparing a formal presentation on a particular topic of their choice. They can work either individually, in pairs, or in groups. This kind of activities helps promoting the students' critical thinking, raising their self-confidence and enhancing their technological skills (O'Malley and Pierce 1996).

#### **I.6.5. Interviews**

This activity helps learners improve their communicative competence and language fluency, and prepares them for professional interaction in real-life situation (Doody, 2013; Bolderson 2012).

#### **I.6.6. Communicative tasks**

Nunan (1991) defines communicative activities as a piece of meaning-focused work that involve learners in comprehending, producing and/or interacting in the target language. In other words, they refer to the educational task which are designed to develop students' communication skills through interactive activities and real life language use such as dialogues, conversation debates and public speaking. This kind of activities plays a significant role in developing the learners' speaking competences, as noted by Wright (2011), engaging students in the communicative tasks help them to learn more effectively.

According to Thornbury (2005, p.79), communicative tasks have certain characteristics, the task should be from real life situation, make students practice and interact in classroom, so that students use their language without barriers.

### **I.6.7. Communicative Games**

Games are considered as one of the useful activities in teaching a foreign language especially for young learners. It involves the oral strategies such as the oral description, predicting and asking for feedback. Games can be a fun and engaging way to incorporate speaking practice into language lessons (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). They increase the creative thinking in the target language and allow for opportunities to practice oral skills. Besides, they create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for students while also providing valuable speaking practice.

## **I.7. Approaches for Teaching Speaking in EFL Classroom**

Applegate (1975) argued that effective communication can only take place if the learners are aware of the social and cultural differences in language use between the native and second languages. There are three main approaches to teach speaking in EFL classes, the direct, the indirect and the communicative approach.

### **I.7.1. The Direct Approach**

This approach deals with recording conversations to identify areas where learners struggle in observing real speaking transcripts, good speaker and the difference between non-native and native speaking (McCarthy,1991). The direct approach focuses on creating innovative language learning techniques such as using visuals, dictation and imitation.

### **I.7.2. The Indirect Approach**

According to Brown (2001), this approach is designed for learners who are already proficient in the language, and desire to practice their speaking skill through classroom conversations or other activities such as reading discussions and role play.



### **I.7.3. The Communicative Approach**

This approach aims at developing the learners 'speaking abilities for communicative purposes. Richards and Rogers (1986) listed the main characteristics of the communicative approach. First, language is a tool that conveys meaning. Second, the main purpose of language is interactional communication. Third, the primary units of language are the categories that convey functional and communicational meaning in everyday conversation rather than grammar and structural features.

### **I.8. Reasons behind encouraging students to practice speaking activities**

According to Harmer (1998), there are three reasons behind making students practice the speaking activities: rehearsal, feedback and encouragements.

#### **I.7.1. Rehearsal**

Encouraging students to engage in open discussions in the classroom can lead them to practice their communication skills outside the class. For instance, integrating them in a role play activity allows them to stimulate real-life situations within the comfort of the classroom. By practicing such activities, learners will be able to observe and understand how communication in a foreign language actually takes place (Harmer 1998).

#### **I.7.2. Feedback**

Speaking activities provide valuable feedback for both teachers and learners. These activities allow teachers to improve the effectiveness of their classes and identify the challenges learners are encountering. Additionally, learners benefit from these activities by increasing their self-confidence and providing a sense of achievement (Harmer, 1998).

#### **I.7.3. Encouragements**

Speaking activities can be a source of students' motivation through participating in the classroom and receiving a useful feedback from the teacher (Harmer 1998).

## **I.9. The Teacher' Roles in Teaching Speaking**

In teaching EFL speaking, the teacher plays a crucial role in facilitating the learning process. According to Harmer (2001), a teacher can perform a variety of roles in teaching speaking such as a participant, an organizer, and a prompter. What is more, s/he creates a positive atmosphere, encourages active involvement, and provides students with meaningful opportunities to practice speaking. Besides, s/he acts as a motivator, corrector, and a source (Harmer 2007).

### **I.9.1. Participant**

Teachers have an opportunity to be part of the lesson and engage in various aspects of it such as discussions with students. In this context, the teacher introduces new information to support learners and simplify feedback through practicing during the lesson (Harmer, 2001).

### **I.9.2. Organizer**

The teacher's main responsibility is to organize students for several activities, this include organizing them into pairs or groups. The teacher should be also step and clarify any misunderstandings (Harmer, 2001).

### **I.9.3. Prompter**

When students face confusion and struggles in finding the right words, the teacher should step in as a promoter. However, the teacher should be careful because the more he provides them with feedback, the less they learn by themselves. the primary role of the teacher is to motivate students to speak and enhance their skills (Harmer, 2001).

## **I.10. Learners' Speaking Difficulties**

### **I.10.1. Linguistic Barriers**

According to Thornbury (2005, p.11), "being skillful assumes having some kind of knowledge base...knowledge that is relevant to speaking can be categorized either as knowledge of feature of language (linguistic knowledge) or knowledge that is independent of

language (Extra linguistic knowledge)”. He highlights the importance of linguistic knowledge in learning especially in speaking. Besides, the poor or lack of knowledge leads students to face different obstacles in their learning. These difficulties are because of grammar mistakes, lack of vocabulary and pronunciation.

#### **I.10.1.1. Grammar Mistakes**

Grammar is considered as the foundation of any language and the most important aspect of speaking proficiency. However, the majority of EFL learners avoid participating in classroom because they are scarred of being radicular while producing ungrammatical structures or expressions. Davies and Pearse (2000) stated that “many people do not like speaking in front of large groups of people. This is especially true in a foreign language, because we may worry about producing utterances with many errors or additives in them” (p.82). Thus, grammar difficulties are one of the obstacles that contribute to decreasing the EFL learners’ participation and practice in classroom. In this vein, Hana (2022) claimed that the Algerian learners commit plenty of grammatical mistakes because of several factors mainly lack of practice and motivation to learn grammar.

#### **I.10.1.2. Limited Vocabulary**

The ability to speak is interrelated with the learners’ vocabulary as it is the basic element in learning any foreign languages. The words choice during speaking plays a significant part in constructing a well formed and meaningful language through choosing the appropriate words or expressions. Moreover, learning a foreign language requires a great knowledge of its vocabulary, but many students face difficulties to find the appropriate words while expressing in oral sessions because of their limited vocabulary. Therefore, this limitation impedes the EFL learners speaking process. According to Choauchi and Bahloul (2022), one of the reasons behind the poor performance of the Algerian EFL learners at Batna University is limited vocabulary

### **I.10.1.3. Pronunciation Mistakes**

Pronunciation is an important aspect of a foreign language because it reflects the students practice and awareness of the language in all its several rules of sounds as stress and intonation. Bada, Genc and Ozkan (2011) sustained that speaking is often dealt with at pronunciation level. However, pronunciation mistakes are widespread among the Algerian EFL learners (Abid and Rouaghe, 2023) which impedes them in speaking freely in the classroom.

### **I.10.2. Psychological Barriers**

The psychological barriers are the negative emotions that impede EFL students in speaking. They include different obstacles such as anxiety, shyness, fear of negative evaluation and lack of self-confidence.

#### **I.10.2.1. Anxiety**

Wrench, Gorham and Virginia (2009, p55) asserted that “many students do not communicate when they are fearful, anxious, apprehensive or scared”. The majority of EFL learners face this problem. According to Littelwood (1999, p.93) “it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety”. Because of their inner fear of making mistakes, cultural differences and unfamiliarity with the presentation format. All of these affect negatively the learners’ speaking performance. Regarding the Algerian context, Smail (2023) stated that most EFL learners at the university of Ghardia experience some level of speech anxiety. This phenomenon occurs during oral presentations. The main reasons according to the researcher are fear of being the center of attention, lack of preparation, immediate error correction, and students comparing their self with others’ performance.

#### **I.10.2.2. Inhibition**

Ur (2000) claimed that “learners are inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. they are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism.,

loosing face, or simply feel shy of the attention that their speech attracts (p.11)”. In other words, inhibition occurs while learners are anxious and afraid of making mistakes in front of their group. Similarly, Saouli (2020) stated that anxiety, fear of risk, and passivity in class are the main source of the Algerian students’ inhibition.

### **I.10.2.3. Shyness**

Shy learners avoid interacting in the classroom, avoid asking questions and expressing themselves. Shyness can interfere with socializing and it affects the learners’ self-confidence thus loosing opportunities to develop their speaking skills. Hedidane (2023) claimed that shyness negatively affects the first year secondary school of Tbessa in Algeria. Based on the researcher’ investigation, shyness hinders students’ speaking proficiency and decreases their interaction in the classroom.

### **I.10.2.4. Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)**

This concept is also known as “Atychiphobia”, it is considered as a negative attitude toward a particular task evaluation (Milosevic and Randi 2015). In the case of EFL learners, this problem is widely spread. FNE has been linked with social anxiety, public speaking anxiety and test anxiety. Learners feel stressed and anxious about the teacher’ evaluation which decreases their participation and their speaking development. This fear can stem from lack of confidence and cultural differences. In this case, the teacher plays a valuable part in creating a positive environment for learners to be more comfortable and focus more on the language use rather than evaluation (Watson et al. 1969). According to Bencharga et al. (2023), speaking anxiety negatively affects the Algerian learners’ performance in the oral sessions particularly.

### **I.10.2.5. Lack of Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence is a crucial factor that can significantly impact several aspects of an individual’ life. As concerns EFL learners, lack of self-confidence is one of the barriers that

impede their speaking proficiency. In specific, low self- confidence can have a negative impact on students' motivation and acquisition of the foreign language (Bong,2008; Pajares &Miller,1994). Because of several factors such as lack of English language knowledge, lack of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar knowledge and lack of practice, students' self- confidence decreases. In this vein, Bouchareb (2016) emphasized the role of self-esteem in enhancing the students' oral performance at the university of Constantine 1 in Algeria. According to her, self-esteem plays a significant role in speaking any language and it reflects the students' level of proficiency. Yet, the majority of students have low self-esteem leading to low performance.

#### **I.10.2.6. Fear of Making Mistakes**

In EFL classes, students often struggle to communicate in and hesitate to participate because of their fear of making mistakes and being corrected in front of others. According to Juhana (2012), the reason behind this fear is the issue of correction and bad evaluation. Likewise, according to Zaghar (2023), first year EFL students at the university of Oran in Algeria encounter issues during their oral expression and comprehension course because of various barriers such as lack of vocabulary, anxiety and fear of making mistakes.

#### **I.10.2.7. Lack of Interest in the Topic**

In the oral sessions the most important point is the subject' choice. The more the topic is attractive for learners, the more active they will be. Interesting topics engage learners in discussions and make them feel free and confident. According to Belit and Aliouchouche (2022) topics play a valuable role in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. According to them, first year secondary school students in Béjaia do not participate in oral discussions because of the quality of topics suggested by the teacher.

#### **I.10.2.8. Non –Motivating Atmosphere**

In EFL classes, environment can either motivate or demotivate learners. The non-motivating atmosphere discourages learners to participate and impedes their speaking skills'

development. The teacher is the first responsible of creating a positive, relaxed and friendly environment for learners. Littlewood (1981) argued that students can improve their speaking and communication skills only if they are motivated and if they have the opportunity to express themselves and interact with those around them.

### **I.10.3. Large Classes**

Celce Murcia (2001) confirmed that “large classes are often the norm of overseas, limiting both students’ opportunities to talk and teacher opportunity to provide feedback” (p.110). Large class are often seen as a significant challenge for both Learners and teachers. In a large class environment, teachers are unable to effectively control their classroom leading to reduced opportunities for EFL learners to participate (Mokeddem, 2023).

### **I.10.4. The Use of the Mother Tongue**

Students who share the same mother tongue language often use it both inside and outside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. When they are unable to express themselves in foreign language, they use words from their native language. According to Baker and Westrup (2003), the use of the mother tongue can create barriers in learning. In particular, students may unintentionally transfer cultural rules from their native language to the foreign language which hinders effective communication. In this context, Ait Aneur and Bdja (2017) claimed that the majority of students at Aoudiai Mohamed Secondary school in Tizi Ouzou use their mother tongue (Arabic and Berber) while speaking in the target language at various levels such as grammar, syntax and pronunciation.

### **I.10.5. Time Constraints**

Time constraints is as another challenge that EFL learners face during their learning process. It prevents students from having enough opportunities to participate. Consequently, lack of learners’ interaction can create a negative attitude toward their teachers and feelings of

injustice with them. Ultimately, limited time can hinder students' abilities in participating and communicating in the class (Ait Aissa and Chami, 2021; Bowman et al., 1989).

## **I.11. The Relationship between Speaking and Other Skills**

Speaking is not just about producing oral language and listening, but also about integrating the four language skills. The focus on these skills may vary depending on the objective of teaching procedures.

### **I.11.1. Speaking Vs Writing**

Speaking and writing skills are both productive skills but they are different from each other. According to O'Grady et al. (1996), speaking and writing are different in terms of both origin and practice. Spoken language is acquired naturally without specific formal instructions whereas writing is taught and learned through deliberate efforts. Again, for Brown (2001) speaking differs from writing in some aspects namely, permanence, processing time, distance, orthography, complexity, vocabulary and formality.

- **Permanence:** the information must be perceived and remembered immediately by the listener, whereas with written language the reader can always refer back to the information.

- **Processing Time:** readers have a great amount of time compared to listeners. This means that readers can read at their own pace, while listeners have to listen to the spoken language immediately. In written language, the message can be transferred across physical distances and time, whereas in face to face conversations the speaker and listener can interact and clarify meaning in real life situations.

- **Orthography:** In spoken discourse, we use phonemes along with other elements like stress, rhythm, intonation, volume, pauses and non-verbal signals to communicate. However, in written communication, we rely on graphemes such as punctuation marks, illustration, charts and similar devices to convey the message.



- **Complexity:** writing and speaking present different modes of complexity. In writing, longer clauses with multiple subordinate are employed while in speaking shorter clauses with more coordinate conjunctions are typically used.

- **Vocabulary:** writers use a huge variety of lexis due to the time availability. In contrary, speakers use a limited number of words to make the speech more comprehensible and simple.

- **Formality:** The written language is more formal than the spoken one.

### **I.11.2. Speaking Vs Reading**

According to Lewis (1993), vocabulary has a crucial role in learning a second language, as well as any of its associated skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, reading is the most effective technique in acquiring new knowledge. Eskey (2005) wrote: “the relationship between reading and vocabulary is widely documented and reciprocal” (p.567). In addition, Hedge (1985) argued that reading extensively enhances learners’ capacity to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions using contextual cues, and learners who read can improve their understanding and vocabulary which enhance the Oral communication abilities.

Dubin and Olshtain (1977) demonstrated the advantages of intensive reading in improving the speaking skills. First, learners are exposed to the language in a comfortable environment which allows them to develop a deeper understanding of its structure. When reading for enjoyment rather than academic evaluation, individuals experience a more relaxed and unpressured approach to the language. Second, extensive reading has been shown to improve other language skills such as writing and speaking. On the other hand, intensive reading helps learners in understanding and using the language in various real-life situations. According to Oya et al. (2009), Having a stronger vocabulary and knowing more words can enhance one’s storytelling ability, demonstrate a wider range of language skills, and improve overall clarity. Additionally, it can increase the speaker’s confidence.

### **I.11.3. Speaking Vs Listening**

According to Lynch (2009), there are several reasons for connecting listening and speaking. He summarized them in three research-based principles, the first principle states that individuals who are effective listeners tend to be better speakers. This idea is supported by evidence from the Scottish study, which found that secondary school students who engaged tasks performed well as speakers. Lynch (2009) suggested that their success in speaking is not related to their practice but to their previous experience as attentive listeners. The second principle, as stated by Brown, Anderson, and Yule (1984, as cited in Lynch, 2009) highlighted how listeners have an impact on what speakers say during the face to face communication. Speakers need to adjust and simplify their communication in order to ensure understanding. The third principle emphasizes that true conversation involves both listening and speaking. In any conversation, there is a dynamic exchange where the listener acts as an engaged speaker by providing verbal reactions and feedback while the speaker assumes the role of an attentive listener.

Basically, listening comes before speaking. That is, in the process of learning a foreign language, it is important for students to listen to the language before they can effectively speak it. In this context, Anderson and Lynch (1988) argued that speaking is developed after listening and not while listening. Likewise, Wilson (2008) emphasized that listening is a crucial prerequisite for speaking. Anderson and Lynch (1988) further explained that successful listening is essential for second language learners to become proficient speakers. Essentially, being a good listener is a key factor in becoming a competent speaker.

### **Conclusion**

Speaking is a crucial skill for evaluating learners' language proficiency and teachers need to use specific strategies to teach it effectively. The oral expression course is essential for improving the learners speaking abilities. However, there are some obstacles that impede their

achievement such as the linguistic, psychological barriers and other several reasons which include the lack of vocabulary, self-confidence, practice and anxiety which are mentioned in details in this chapter. The teacher's role in teaching the foreign language inside the classroom and the useful activities which help to develop the learners' oral production, as well as, the reason behind encourage them to practice these activities. Accordingly, throughout, this chapter we have focused on the speaking skill and the challenges that are faced by EFL learners.

## **Chapter Two: Design, Methodology and Results**

### **Introduction**

This study is conducted to explore the different macro language speaking skills difficulties faced by EFL learners. The previous chapter shed light on the theoretical foundations and backgrounds of the research variables. This chapter is devoted to the methodological approach and the discussion of the rationale behind the choices made in this investigation. Therefore, three main sections are presented; section one describes the study including; the design, methodology, the participants, and the instruments of data collection. Section two presents the results and discussion. Then, section three presents the research' implication, limitations and suggestions for further research.

### **Section One: The Description of the Study**

This section is devoted to providing information about the research design and methodology, the participants, data collection instruments, as well as data collection and analysis procedures.

#### **II.1.1. Research Design and Methodology**

Since the objective of our study is to explore the macro- speaking difficulties that EFL learners encounter during their oral sessions and to identify the main factors that hinder their performance, the choice of the design was made accordingly. We have opted for the exploratory and descriptive research design because exploratory design allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the EFL learners' speaking difficulties by using the qualitative methods (Tegan 2023). Besides, the descriptive design provides detailed information and describes the characteristics and behaviors of the population included in the study through either the quantitative methods or qualitative, or both (Calderon 2006). In the same line of thoughts,

descriptive design “is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context which it occurred” (Yin, 2003).

Consequently, to explore the EFL learners’ difficulties in the speaking macro skills, we opted for a mixed methodology relying on both quantitative and qualitative methods. The choice of method was determined by the nature of the study and since it is exploratory. This latter is an appropriate method to collect relevant data in relation to our aim. The mixed methodology allows us to measure the data in terms of quantity and quality, and then represent it in tables and graphs. In a similar vein, Given (2008, p.527) claimed that “the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches will provide more complete understanding of the research problem”. In this methodology, we used different tools namely the questionnaire and a semi-structured interview.

#### **II.1.1.1. The Quantitative Method**

The quantitative method is helpful method in quantifying the EFL learners’ difficulties in speaking skills and attain greater knowledge and understanding about the problem. It involves presenting the results in graphs, charts, and statistics (Traci 2021).

#### **II.1.1.2. The Qualitative Method**

The qualitative method focuses on understanding the individuals’ behaviors, experiences, and perspectives through the use of non-numerical data. It aims at gathering in-depth details about a particular problem (Bhandari 2023). For this we selected the mixed method to reach our participants’ views about their feelings and behavior during the oral sessions. Hence, we opted for the interview to reach this purpose. In particular, we used open-ended and closed-ended questions to gain more detailed information from the teachers about the students’ performance.

## **II.1.2. Population and Sample**

Participants describe the people involved in the study (Sargeant,2012). In order to carry out this research, we selected First year LMD students of English department at Bejaia University during the academic year 2023/2024 as participants. The total number of first year is 92 students grouped into 4 groups. Our sample consists of 60 students grouped into 3 groups. The choice of the sample was done randomly. First year students are frequently asked to prepare and deliver oral presentations during the whole academic year, so this will help us explore their difficulties in this context.

## **II.1.3. Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedures**

### **II.1.3.1. Students Questionnaire**

#### **II.1.3.1.1. The Aim of the Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was designed for first year LMD students of English department at the university of Bejaia. It aims at exploring learners' perceptions toward the speaking skills during their learning process. It is the most easier instrument which permits the researcher to collect the necessary data from a large number of individuals in a short period of time (Lindemann 2023). In addition to this, the questionnaire allows the researcher to collect data anonymously and assumes the validity of the participants' responses (Allwight & Bailey,1991: Angers 2021). The questionnaire adds validation to our study and helps to widen our understanding of macro speaking difficulties from more than one standpoint.

#### **II.1.3.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire starts with a small introduction and introduces the aim of the questionnaire to the respondents. It consists of (27) questions of different types namely close ended, open ended, multiple choice, and Likert-scale questions. In specific, students were instructed to answer by “yes “or “no”, ticking one answer from a set of options, or questions

that requires students to give their own answers as well as provide justifications whenever necessary. The first section is devoted to general and background information, it contains five questions about the participants' gender, age and their view about learning English language at the university. The second section comprises 22 questions which aim at identifying the difficulties and the factors that hinder EFL learners to speak in the classroom. The questionnaire was administered in the classroom with the presence of the teacher and the researcher to make sure that everything is clear and to avoid any false interpretation of the questions. The questionnaires were collected and students had enough time to read and answer the questions.

### **II.1.3.2. Teachers Interview**

#### **II.1.3.2.1. Aim of the Interview**

For more accurate data about the challenges face by learners in the speaking skills, a semi-structured interview was conducted with five teachers of the oral expression module working at the English department at the University of Bejaia. It aims at gathering more details from teachers' perspectives about the learners' problems in speaking. Clements (2021) argued that interviews permit the researcher to gain authentic and distinctive data directly from the source based on the study's requirements. In qualitative research, interviews assume a pivotal role in facilitating interrogating the underlying assumptions of existing study and engaging in the inductive theory development (Sandberg & Alvesson ,2011). Again, one benefit of the interview is that it permits the interviewer and interviewee to ask for clarifications and explanations in the case of misunderstanding the questions, and it is very advantageous for the research to reach its aim (Best & Kahn,1993).

#### **II.1.3.2.2. Description of the interview**

The interview consists of fifteen questions about the difficulties that are faced by EFL learners in speaking. The questions were also devoted to teachers' strategies to overcome these difficulties and offer a comfortable environment to their learners

#### **II.1.4. Data Collection Procedures**

This study was conducted during the academic year 2023-2024 at the department of English, university of Béjaia, Algeria. The data are collected by administrating a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview.

The administration of the questionnaire started on March, 12<sup>th</sup> with only 60 participants who were present and available. This was after passing the first semester exams. The students' responses have been collected in the same day. After that, on April 17<sup>th</sup> a semi-structured interview was conducted with the teachers of oral expression module.

#### **II.1.5. Data Analysis Procedures**

After gathering the necessary data through the use of the questionnaire and the interview, the obtained results were organized. The quantitative data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and percentages and frequencies were used to describe the results of the questionnaire. The qualitative data collected through the interview were analyzed through thematic analysis. The teachers' responses are recorded during the interview in order to facilitate the interpretation of data and provide necessary details.

## **Section Two: Results and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

In this section, all the data collected through the research instruments are analyzed and interpreted in details. Tables are used to present the results. Finally, the results are discussed in line with previous studies.

### **I. The Results**

#### **I.1. Analysis and Interpretation of students' Questionnaire**

##### **I.1.1. General Background of the Sample**

##### **I.1.1.1. Gender**



**Table 01.** *Students' Gender*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>The total number of the sample</b>	68	88,33%%
<b>The number of the respondents</b>	60	88.23%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	47	78.33%
<b>Male</b>	13	21.66%

From the total number of the participants (68 students), there are (60 students) who have answered to the questionnaire making up 88.33% which is considered as the percentage of the whole sample. This table shows that the most of the participants are females. Out of 60 participants, 47 are females (78.33 %) while 13 (21.66%) are males of the whole sample. This result indicates that females are more likely to study languages than males.

#### **I.1.1.2. Age**

**Table 02.** *Students' Age Distribution*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>percentage</b>
<b>17-19</b>	55	91.66%
<b>20-21</b>	5	8.33%
<b>Others</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	98,99%%

According to the results shown in table (02) above, we notice a diversity in the age of the participants. The age of the majority (55, 91.66%) ranges from 17 to 19 years old. Besides, 5 (8.33%) of the participants' age ranges from 20 to 21 years old. This shows that the most of the students are relatively young. This may be explained by the fact that most of them have started their primary education early, or at least they did not experience failure previously.

### **I.1.1.3. How long have been studying English at University?**

**Table 03.** *Years of studying English at the University*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>6 months</b>	55	91.66%
<b>1 year and 6 months</b>	5	8.33%
<b>Total</b>	100	98,99%

The results on the table (03) shows that 55 students making up (91,66%) have been studying English at the University for six (06) months. Whereas (5) students making up (7,35%) have been studying English for a year and six months.

### **I.1.1.4. Is English your personal choice?**

**Table 04.** *Students' Choice of Studying English*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	53	88.33%
<b>No</b>	07	11.66%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

In table (04), we notice that 53 (88.33%) of the participants have chosen to study English, whereas (11.66%) argued that English was not their first choice. From the obtained results we can point out that the majority of the participants have a willingness to study English as a foreign language.

#### **I.1.1.5. Justification of students' choices**

The participants' answers to this question can be summarized as follows:

❖ A great number of the participants stated that they have been chosen English language because they will need it in their future career and it will serve them if they travel since it is considered as an international language. Besides, some have mentioned that they have chosen English because they just like the language.

❖ Some of the participants assumed that they did not choose to study English because they have other preferences but the baccalaureate average did not allow them to choose the branch they want.

#### **I.1.2. EFL Speaking**

##### **I.1.2.1. Among the four skills, which one do you prefer the most?**

**Table 05.** *Students' Preference of language Skills*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Listening</b>	19	31.66%
<b>Reading</b>	17	28.33%
<b>Speaking</b>	21	35%
<b>Writing</b>	3	5%
<b>Total</b>	60	99%

This question is designed to know which skill the participants prefer the most. Also, this question aimed to recognize whether the students are aware of the importance of speaking skill in parallel with the other integrative skills. The results show that most of students (35%) mostly prefer the speaking skill indicating that they consider it to be important. In addition, 31.66% of the participants prefer listening and 28.33% prefer reading. As for writing, it seems that it is the least preferred skill as only 5% of the participants prefer it. Importantly, these results exhibit the high classification of speaking skills in comparison with the other skills (Listening, reading and writing). Since all the students regardless their level of proficiency, they show a positive point of view by emphasizing the significant need of speaking English in many fields for future use, in addition, since English is the world' language. Also, mastering a given target language is a good investment to have further chances as travelling or working abroad.

#### **I.1.2.2. Justification of Students' Preferences**

The participants' responses to this question can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ The majority of our participants (35%) have chosen speaking because they consider it as the easiest and direct way of improving pronunciation.
- ❖ Those who have chosen the listening skill believe that it is the foundation of learning any foreign language. Through listening students are able to improve their vocabulary and fluency.
- ❖ 28.33% of students prefer reading because it is one of their favorite hobbies, others consider it as the appropriate way to develop their writing style and improve their vocabulary.
- ❖ The rest of them 5% have chosen writing because it permits them to express their feeling, and opinions freely. Others believe that this skill increases their creativity.

#### **I.1.2.3. Among the four language skills, which one(s) do you find difficult?**

**Table 6.** *Students' Most Difficult Skill*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Listening</b>	10	16.66%
<b>Reading</b>	4	6.66%
<b>Speaking</b>	25	41.66%
<b>Writing</b>	21	35%
<b>Total</b>	60	99,98%

As it is shown in table (06) above, the majority of the students (41.66%) consider speaking as the most difficult skill, then writing comes in the second position (35%) followed by listening (16.66%) and reading (6.66%).

#### **I.1.2.4. Justification of students' choices**

The participants' responses to this question can be summarized as follows:

❖ The majority of students (41.66%) consider speaking as a challenging skill because of their limited vocabulary, lack of practice, and poor pronunciation. Also, some psychological issues such as shyness, stress, fear of making mistakes, and lack of self-confidence make speaking challenging.

❖ 35% of our participants consider writing as a difficult skill because they are not motivated to write so they do not practice it.

❖ A minority of students 16.66% keeps in view that listening is complex because they face difficulties in comprehension and they are unable to understand what others say because of lack of practice.

❖ The remaining ones (6.66%) have selected the reading skill because they face difficulties in pronunciation which prevents them from speaking correctly and clearly. While others are not interested and motivated to learn this skill.

#### **I.1.2.5. Do you like speaking?**

**Table 7.** *Students' liking of Speaking*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	49	81.66%
<b>No</b>	11	18.33%
<b>Total</b>	60	99,99%

Question five aims to investigate the participants' attitudes towards speaking. As it shown in table (09), most of our participants (81.66%) like speaking. While 18.33% of students mentioned that they do not like it because they are not interested in learning English.

#### **I.1.2.6. Students' Justification**

The participants' answers to this question can be summarized as follows:

❖ The majority of the participants like speaking because they feel more comfortable when expressing orally than in writing. Besides, speaking is a way to develop their language proficiency.

❖ For those who do not like speaking, they encounter several difficulties that they do not like to speak. Again for some other, their unmotivation to learn English made them dislike speaking.

#### **I.1.2.7. How often do you speak in front of your classmates?**

**Table 8.** *Frequency of Students' Participation in the classroom*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Never</b>	01	1.66%
<b>Rarely</b>	06	10%
<b>Sometimes</b>	23	38.33%
<b>Often</b>	20	33.33%
<b>Always</b>	10	16.66%
<b>Total</b>	60	98,32%

This question aims at measuring the students' participation in the classroom. The results show that most of the students (38.33%) they participate sometimes while 33.33% of them tend to participate often. Again, 16.66% of them tend to speak always, 10% of them speak rarely, and 1.66% of them never participate.

#### **I.1.2.8. How do you measure you level in speaking?**

**Table 9.** *Students' Proficiency Level in Speaking*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very good</b>	03	5%
<b>Good</b>	33	55%
<b>Average</b>	19	31.66%
<b>Poor</b>	05	8.33%
<b>Total</b>	60	99,99%

This question aims to know how the students measure their speaking proficiency. More than half of the participants (55%) assumed that they have a good level in speaking and 31.66% of them assumed having a midlevel. Besides, 8.33% of the participants assumed having a poor level while 5% assumed having a very good level.

### **I.1.2.9. Do you encounter difficulties in speaking?**

**Table 10.** *Whether students encounter difficulties in speaking*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	46	76.66%
<b>No</b>	14	23.33%
<b>Total</b>	60	99,99%

This question aims at determining whether the students face challenges when speaking in the classroom. As shown in table (10) above, the majority of the students (76.66%) admitted that they encounter difficulties when they perform orally in the classroom while (23.33%) of them admitted that they do not face any difficulties in speaking. We proposed the following question in order to give the possible answer.

### **I.1.2.10. If yes, what kind of difficulties do you encounter?**

**Table 11.** *Challenges faced by the students in speaking*

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>I cannot think of anything to say</b>	01	2.17%



<b>I pause suddenly and inappropriately while speaking</b>	07	15.21%
<b>I hesitate to speak because I am not sure whether I use English appropriately or not</b>	19	41.30%
<b>I do not know how to express my ideas</b>	15	32.60%
<b>I cannot reply because I do not understand what my partner is saying in the conversation</b>	2	4.34%
<b>All of them</b>	02	4.34%
<b>Total</b>	46	99,96%

This question aims to highlight some problems that hinder the students' speaking proficiency. The results show the majority of the participants (41.30%) declare that they hesitate when speaking in English, 32.60% of them face difficulties in expressing their ideas, and 4.34% of them encounter problems at the level of comprehension when communicating in English. Additionally, 2.17% mentioned that they face difficulties related to vocabulary and 4.34% of them face challenges in all the mentioned aspects.

#### **I.1.2.11. Do you feel uncomfortable when you speak in English?**

**Table 12:** *Students' Feeling when Speaking in English*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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<b>Yes</b>	29	48.33%
<b>No</b>	31	51.66%
<b>Total</b>	60	99,99%

As we notice from the table (14) that more than half of the participants (51.66%) feel comfortable when speaking in English language, while 48.33% of them feel uncomfortable when they speak because of several reasons. We proposed the following question in order to give possible answer.

**I.1.2.12. If yes, is it because:**

**Table 13:** *Students' Challenges when Speaking*

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>You are shy</b>	5	17.24%
<b>You are anxious</b>	3	10.34%
<b>You are afraid of making mistakes</b>	11	37.93%
<b>Lack of self-confidence</b>	4	13.79%
<b>Lack of motivation</b>	2	6.98
<b>All of them</b>	4	13.79%
<b>Total</b>	29	99,99%

In this question the participants were asked to indicate the reasons why they feel uncomfortable when speaking. Based on the results shown in table (13), 37.93% of the participants feel uncomfortable because of their fear of making mistakes, 17.24% feel uncomfortable because of shyness, and 13.79% of them feel uncomfortable because they lack

self-confidence. Furthermore, 13.79% of the participants linked their discomfort to speak to all the mentioned reasons and 10.34% are uncomfortable because of their anxiety. Besides, 6.98% feel uncomfortable because they are unmotivated.

**I.1.2.13. How much time do you take approximately in order to speak and /or respond during an immediate conversation?**

**Table 14.** *The Average Response Time in an Immediate Conversation*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Almost immediately</b>	04	6.66%
<b>Few time (10s-30s)</b>	34	56.66%
<b>No answer</b>	03	5%
<b>I do not know</b>	19	31.66%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

This question aims to gain insights into the average amount of time the students take to formulate a response or contribute to a conversation during real –time interaction. As it can be observed from table (14), more than half of the participants (56.66%) take little time to answer (from 10s to 30s). 31.66% of them do not know how long it takes to respond. As for 6.66% of them, they argued that they answer immediately, and 5% did not answer the question.

**I.1.2.14. Do you tend to use a formal or informal language in oral sessions?**

**Table 15.** *The language form used by the students in oral sessions*

**Options Frequency Percentage**

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<b>Yes</b>	51	85%
<b>No</b>	9	15%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

From table (15), we notice that most of students (85%) tend to use the formal language in their oral sessions, while (15%) of them use the informal one.

**I.1.2.15: Whatever your answer to question 14 is, please justify**

Students' Justification of their answers can be summarized as follows:

❖ The reasons behind using the formal language according to the students' responses are to show respect for the teacher and their classmates since they are studying in an academic setting. Also, for being more professional when delivering a speech in oral sessions.

❖ For the ones who tend to use the informal language, their reasons are the lack of mastery of academic language, for being more spontaneous, and because of the influence of everyday language they commonly use outside the classroom.

**I.1.2.16. When preparing for a speech, do you consider the appropriate level of formal language and accent/ voice to attract the audience's attention?**

**Table 16.** *Consideration of Formal Language and Accent/voice to attract the audience's attention*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	46	76.66%
<b>No</b>	14	23.33%
<b>Total</b>	60	99,99%

As it is shown in the above table (16), the majority of students (76.66%) mentioned that they consider the appropriate level of formal language and accent when delivering a speech to attract the audience's attention while 23.33% of them do not do so.

**I.1.2.17. whatever your answer to question 16 is, please justify**

The students' answers to this question can be summarized as follows:

❖ Based on the students' explanation, they consider the appropriate level of formality in the language they use because this allows them to deliver the speech clearly as well as to catch the audience' attention and show their self-confidence as speakers of a foreign language.

❖ Other students do not consider the level of formality in the language they use because of their anxiety and their low level in English.

**I.1.2.18. Do you tend to use a lot of descriptive language or prefer to get direct/straight to the point when speaking?**

**Table 17.** *Students' Communication Style Preference: Descriptive or Direct Language*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Descriptive Language</b>	43	71.66%
<b>Direct Language</b>	17	28.33% %
<b>Total</b>	60	99,99%

From the results of the table (20), 71.66% of the participants opted for the use of the descriptive language in their speech, whereas, 28.33% prefer to use a direct language when

speaking. The aim of this question is to determine the students' style of communication in a speech delivery regarding the use of descriptive language or adopting a direct approach.

**I.1.2.19. Students' Justification**

The aim of this question is to gain a deeper understanding of the students' reasons and motivation behind their communication style preferences. Their responses can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ The reasons behind using the descriptive language according are that, it offers detailed information that are useful for the audience to understand the intended message. Also, it encourages sense of creativity through expression in different styles which catches the audience' attention.

- ❖ The direct language permits to convey a direct and clear information that help to avoid any misunderstanding. In addition, the use of the direct language reduces boredom and saves time.

**I.1.2.20. Do you engage with your audience during your speech?**

**Table 18.** *Students' Engagement Level during their speech*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	49	76.66%
<b>No</b>	11	18.33%
<b>Total</b>	60	99,99%

The results from the table (21) denote that 76.66% of the participants actively engage with the audience when they speak. These findings indicate a commendable willingness among

the students to interact, connect and communicate effectively with their audience. Whereas, 18.33% of them assured their lack of engagement. The findings suggest a potential gap in their approach to public speaking, such limited engagement can stem for various factors, including apprehension, lack of awareness of engagement techniques, or a preference for more traditional one-sided communication style.

**I.1.2.21. If yes, is it through:**

**Table 19.** *Students’ interactive engagement strategy*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Eye contact</b>	27	55.10%
<b>Asking questions</b>	08	16.32%
<b>Facial expression</b>	14	28.57%
<b>Total</b>	49	100%

The aim of this question is to inquire about and gain deeper understanding of the specific techniques that students employ to engage with their audience during speech delivery. From the results above, more than half students (55.10%) use eye contact to engage with their audience, 28.57% use their facial expression, and 16.32% use the technique of asking questions. We can notice that the majority of the students use the non-verbal communication including the eye contact and facial expressions more than the verbal one.

**I.1.2.22: Please indicate by (√) the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.**

**Table 20:** *Students’ degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements*

Statements	A	SA	D	SD
<b>1.I hesitate when I speak in front of my classmates</b>	28.33%	6.66%	50%	15%
<b>2.When I speak ,I tend to repeat words or phrases frequently</b>	48.33%	6.66%	2.66%	6.66%
<b>3.I find it easier to speak rapidly when I am familiar with the topic</b>	45%	37%	8.33%	10%
<b>4.I have troubles finding the right words to express myself</b>	58.33%	13.33%	21.66%	11.66%
<b>5. When I deliver a speech, my ideas are very well organized.</b>	43.33%	5%	32%	20%
<b>6. When I speak I consciously use transitional words to connect my ideas.</b>	58.33%	15%	26.66%	0%
<b>7. Gestures and Facial expressions enhance the learners' speaking performance.</b>	35%	45%	8.33%	11.66%

The table (20) illustrates the participants' responses to the statements based on the speaking macro- language skills features to add evidence to the kind of challenges they face.

The participants' responses are as follows:

❖ 50% of the participants disagree that they hesitate when they speak in front of their classmates and 15% of them strongly disagree. This is to say that 39 students out of 60 do not face difficulties at the level of fluency when speaking in English in the classroom. This reflects a high self-esteem of the students and practice of the speaking skills. However, 34.99% of students hesitate when they speak. In particular, 17 students (28.33%) agree that they hesitate



and 4 students (6.66%) strongly agree. This shows that these students lack self-confidence and practice.

❖ A high percentage of the participants (54.99%) tend to repeat frequently words and phrases during their speaking. In specific, 48.33% agreed with the statements while 6.66% strongly agreed. This can be explained by the students' lack of vocabulary, lack of self-esteem and fluency. These repetitions could be a result of using filler words or phrases while they gather their thoughts. As for 21.66% of the participants, they disagree with the statement and 6.66% of them strongly disagree. This percentage explains that only a minority of the participants believe themselves to be fluent speakers.

❖ In the third statement, the high majority of the participants (82%) of the participants agreed that they find it easier to speak when they are familiar with the topic. In particular, 45% of the participants agreed with the statement and 37% strongly agreed. This results show that familiarity with the topic plays a significant role in improving the students' speaking fluency. 8.33% of the participants disagree with the statement while 10% strongly disagree. These results can be linked to several factors such as anxiety, lack of practice and linguistic barriers.

❖ As concerns vocabulary and word choice, 53.33% of the participants agreed that they face difficulties in choosing the appropriate words and 13.33% strongly agreed. This percentage can be explained by the students' limited vocabulary, unfamiliarity with the topic, their anxiety and their poor linguistic' background. 21.66% of the participants disagreed with the statement and 11.66% strongly disagreed.

❖ The findings show that a high majority of the participants express disagreement with the notion that their ideas are very well organized when delivering a speech. We notice that 31.66% disagree and 20% students strongly disagree. This may be caused by the lack of

preparation, nervousness, linguistic or cognitive factors. Whereas 43.33% of the participants agree and 5% strongly agree.

❖ We can notice that more than half of participants tend to use the transitional words to connect their ideas. In specific, 58.33% of the participants agree and 15% strongly agreed. The remaining students (26.66%) claimed that they do not use transitional words in their speaking. This indicates that some students are not aware of the importance of transitional words or the way to use them effectively to make their ideas connected.

❖ From the results shown in table (20), the majority of the participants admitted that they use gestures and facial expressions when they speak. Specifically, 35% of the participants agreed and 45% strongly agreed. This explains the awareness of the participants of the importance of non-verbal elements in communication. In contrast, 8.33% of the participants disagreed and 11.66% strongly disagreed. This means that there are students who are not aware of the importance of para-linguistic elements in communication

## **I.2. Analysis and Interpretation of the Teachers Interview**

The analysis of the interview, carried out with 05 teachers in the department of English at Bejaia University, shows that the teachers' experience in teaching EFL speaking varies between 2 to 15 years. This means that some teachers have a long experience in teaching speaking whereas others have started it recently.

### **Theme 01: Teachers' Evaluation of the students' Speaking Performance**

Approximately, all the interviewed teachers admitted that 1<sup>st</sup> year EFL students at Bejaia University have a level which ranges from average to good in speaking. In particular, the interviewee one said that he is lucky to have students who, to some extent, speak accurately. This interviewee mentioned that the level of his students in terms of accuracy is good. In agreement, interviewee 2, 3, 4 & 5 asserted that their students of this academic year have good

level in speaking compared students of previous academic years. Yet, for interviewee four, some students speak accurately while others do not.

As concerns fluency, it varies from one student to another. Interviewee one argued that *“Fluency varies from one student to another, fluent speech is a speech which has less hesitations, less pauses. When I say fluency parameters are pauses and hesitation, people tend to hesitate to think of what they are going to say”*. He further suggested that task repetition is one of the strategies that he encourages students to use in order to develop their fluency. He said that *“task repetition is a vital element in enhancing students’ fluency, and this is logical; the number of times you perform something, will determine how quick and easy it is going to be”*. For interviewee two, his students tend to speak somehow fluently but with many mistakes. As for interviewees three, four, and five, their students are not fluent.

Regarding the students’ use of cohesive devices, the majority of the interviewed teachers (3/5) sustained that their students tend not to care about using transitional words and expressions as they speak spontaneously. For two interviewees, they noticed that some of their students consider using transitional words as they deliver a speech.

## **Theme 02: Students’ attitudes towards Speaking**

Based on the responses provided by the teachers, learners’ motivation is not something fixed. It varies according to the classroom environment. That is to say that if the teacher is active and enthusiastic and the classroom activities are varied and interesting, the students become more motivated and vice versa. In this context interviewee, one said *“the motivation of learners depends on how the teacher conducts and manages the classroom, if the teacher or passive, students will not be motivated to speak. I believe that in oral expression the teacher should be active”*. Overall, the majority of the teachers asserted that their students are motivated and are willing to engage in speaking activities to develop their performance. Nevertheless,

students keep saying that speaking is a challenging task and they feel anxious when they are asked to speak in front of the class.

### **Theme 03: Learners' Difficulties in Speaking and the factors that affect their performance**

As for the factors that influence EFL learners' speaking performance, most of the interviewees focused on the teacher. They admitted that teachers' classroom practices highly affect the learners' performance in specific, the kind of activities, teachers' attitudes towards their learners, and their teaching methods and strategies affect the way learners perform. In this context, interviewee one claimed that some teachers intimidate learners in a way that makes them less motivated to speak and participate. Again, the interviewees mentioned that fear of making mistakes or fear of being corrected in front of the classmates is another reasons that hinders learners' speaking. Furthermore, they also added that the learners' psychological state is one of the factors that determines how well the learners' performance will be. More specifically, how the learners perceive their speaking ability affects their performance. The higher their self-esteem is, the better their performance would be. Again, they asserted that shyness is linked to the learners' performance. Shy students tend not to perform well since they do not feel at ease speaking in front of their teachers or their classmates. What is more, the interviewed teachers revealed that anxiety is another factor that influences the learners' performance. Anxious learners tend to have a low speaking performance since anxiety distracts them from speaking fluently and accurately.

All the teachers asserted that speaking is difficult especially when it comes to EFL context. Accordingly, learners face several challenges and difficulties in different areas especially vocabulary in which teachers always notice that their students have limited lexical repertoire. This is why they tend to repeat the same words when they speak or use words

inappropriately. Besides, grammar is another area of challenge mainly in tense use. In addition to difficulties in the linguistic side, they face difficulties in the psychological side such as shyness, anxiety, lack of self-esteem, and lack of motivation.

#### **Theme04: Speaking strategies**

The interviewed teachers suggested several techniques and strategies that may be used to improve students' speaking performance. Rehearsal and practice are among the techniques that teachers encourage students to use. In specific, when students practice a lot, they become more fluent and accurate. In addition, reading also enhances speaking. The more students read, the more enlarged their vocabulary will be and the better their performance will become. They also mentioned some activities that they use in their classes such as role-plays, debates, and games.

## **II. Discussion**

This section is devoted to the discussion of the results in accordance with previous research findings.

Based on the findings of this investigation, students have positive attitudes towards the EFL speaking and they are willing to learn and develop it. This is apparent in the high majority of the students (81.66%) asserting that they like speaking since it plays a significant role in developing their communicative competence. As far the students' level in speaking is concerned, the interviewed teachers' responses were different while some stated that their students' have good speaking skills, others argued that they have low to average level. Nevertheless, because of the complex nature of speaking, almost, all the teachers asserted that speaking is difficult, leading students to face various challenges. In agreement, 76.66% of the students declared having difficulties in speaking which makes their engagement in oral discussions less consistent. In particular, based on the results of the questionnaire, 41.30% of

the respondents revealed facing difficulties with fluency. The students tend to hesitate when they speak; their hesitation is mainly linked to their fear of making mistakes, to the fact of not knowing how to express their ideas, and to shyness and other psychological factors, these results are in line with Chaouchi & Bahloul (2022). Besides, the degree of the pauses in their speech is high which makes them less fluent. These results are in line with the ones of previous studies findings namely Juhana (2012), Hana (2022), and Zaghar (2023).

In addition to fluency, vocabulary is another area of challenge. In specific, 58.33% of the participants reported having difficulties in vocabulary. This was reflected in their inability to express their ideas and their repetitions of the same words throughout their talks. This is what Bouchareb (2016), Benchagra (2023), Chaouchi & Bahloul (2022), and Smail (2023) have already reported in their studies. The participants claimed that they find themselves unable to express their ideas; this is mainly because their lexical reservoir is limited. Thus, students' inappropriate word choice appears in the learners' speaking performance.

As far as style is concerned, the majority of the participants tend to use a formal language when they speak. This is logically since in any academic place, the formal language is the most appropriate. However, it is worthy to note that the students revealed having difficulties in organizing their ideas when they speak. In fact, this inability to organize ideas negatively affect the listeners who become unable to understand the intended meaning and the purposes of the students' speech. Besides, although students admitted that they use cohesive devices as they talk, the disorganization of their ideas makes these transitional devices useless.

Concerning non-verbal communication, the participants revealed that they are aware of the importance of mainly facial expression in their speaking performance. This is why they tend to use most often eye contact and asking questions as strategies to engage the listeners.

Indeed, many factors can affect the students' performance in oral communication. In particular, speaking anxiety is one of reasons that prevents learners from speaking and expressing their ideas clearly and fluently. Besides, self-esteem is also linked to the learners' speaking performance. To clarify, the higher the learners' self-esteem is, the more confident they will speak, the clearer their ideas will be, and the better they will perform. Again, shyness also affects the learners' speaking performance; it makes students hesitant and neglect the body language as well. It also limits the learners' talks especially in terms of the content since the students' main wish is to finish speaking the sooner possible. These findings are similar with the findings of Hedidane (2023) who explained the relationship between shyness and classroom interaction. Moreover, fear of negative evaluation is also among the factors that effects the learners' performance. In particular, students tend to become anxious especially when they know that their performance will be evaluated mainly when they expect a negative evaluation from the teacher.

As far as classroom activities are concerned, it appears from teachers' responses that learners' motivation and engagement are highly linked to the kind of activities used in class. Besides, given the complex nature of speaking, students need to be supported and guided by their teachers to perform orally in the classroom. In specific, teachers need to design new and interesting tasks and activities each session according to students' preferences and needs to raise their engagement. Examples of these activities involve interviews, oral presentations, classroom discussions, role-plays, games, and storytelling. These activities have shown effectiveness in developing learners' oral performance. These results are in line with Bolderson (2012), Doody (2013), Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), Thornbury (2005), Littlewood (1981), Nunan (1991), and O'Malley and Pierce (1996). In addition to this, teachers asserted that students' speaking skills can be developed through practice, reading books, listening to broadcasts and watching movies. In addition, reading is a powerful tool that enhances the

learners' speaking performance in all aspects especially vocabulary. These results provide an answer to the third research question.

### **Section Three: Limitations, Implications and suggestions for Further Research**

This section is devoted to the limitations of this study, implications, and suggestions for further research.

#### **I. Limitations**

In any study, it is crucial to cite the several limitations that have been encountered. First of all, the number of the participants is limited to 60 participants only which may affect the generalization of the results. Then, the use of the questionnaire as a self-reported tool may fail to reveal the real attitudes of our participants and honesty in their answers cannot be

guaranteed since their answers depend on their moods. Moreover, many factors could not be controlled such as learners' motivation, their psychological state, their interest and their absences. Besides, the use of only a questionnaire and interview as tools to collect data is another limitation. The use of classroom observation would have helped us to gain more in depth insights about the topic.

#### **II. Implications**

The present study aimed at exploring the macro-skills difficulties faced by first year EFL students in speaking. Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be provided especially for the teachers. First, teachers need to raise the students' awareness about the importance of the speaking skill in acquiring a foreign language and achieving communicative purposes. In addition, learners should be encouraged to take part in the classroom activities since practice makes it perfect. Moreover, teachers should diagnose students' difficulties in expressing themselves in order to find effective strategies to help them overcome the linguistics



and psychological issues. Finally, they need to provide students meaningful opportunities to practice their speaking and communicate in real-life situations.

### **III. Suggestions for further Research**

The speaking macro-skill' difficulties during the oral sessions have to encourage researchers to conduct in- depth investigations pertaining to this topic. Given the fact that speaking is complex and any foreign learner is faced with several challenges, future research could be directed to investigate the role of EFL learners' autonomy in overcoming speaking difficulties during oral performance. Besides, future studies could explore the role of AI (artificial intelligence) oriented strategies in developing the speaking skill. Additionally, we suggest that further research could replicate the study by using other tools such as classroom observation and by working with other populations such as doctorate students.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we provided the readers with the findings of the study, a detailed discussion of the results as well as the limitations, implications, and suggestions for further research. We have concluded that first year EFL students face several macro-skills speaking difficulties namely fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary. Accordingly, teachers should be aware of these difficulties in order to equip the learners with the necessary skills to speak fluently and accurately.

## **General Conclusion**

Through this investigation, we explored the different macro-skills speaking difficulties faced by first year EFL students. Also, we aimed at identifying the factors that influence the learners' speaking performance, and the possible strategies to overcome the speaking difficulties. To achieve these aims and collect the necessary data, we relied on the use of an exploratory and descriptive design. Besides, we used a mixed method approach which involves collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Regarding data collection tools, a questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used.

This work was divided into two main chapters in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first chapter was devoted to the theoretical background about the speaking skills with a main focus on EFL learner's challenges in speaking. The second chapter was practical; it was divided into three sections. The first section dealt with the description of the study, namely the participants, research design and methodology, data collection tools and procedures. The second section dealt with data analysis and interpretation and discussion of the findings. Then, the third section was devoted to the limitations, implications and suggestions for future research.

The data obtained from the students' questionnaire and teachers' semi-structured interview indicated that the participants encounter various difficulties in the speaking skills. Mainly, they struggle with fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and grammar. Second, the main reasons of learners' difficulties are linguistic such as limited vocabulary and psychological such as anxiety, shyness, and fear of making mistakes.

Last and not least, to benefit from this study, some suggestions are provided and to overcome its limitations.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 01: Students Questionnaire

*Dear students,*

In our research work, we are exploring the speaking difficulties faced by EFL learners. Your anonymous contribution throughout this questionnaire will certainly be of great help to gather the needed data to accomplish our research. As students of English, you are kindly invited to answer as thoughtfully and honestly as possible these questions to guarantee the success of our investigation. This is not a test, so there is no “right” or “wrong” answer.

*Thank you very much for your collaboration and help*

### Section One: General Information

1. Gender: Female  Male

2. Age: .....

3. How long have you been studying English at the university?.....

4. Was studying English your first choice? Yes No

5. Why?

.....  
.....

### Section Two: EFL Speaking

1. Among the four language skills, which one do you prefer the most?

- Listening

- Reading

- Speaking

- Writing

2. Please, justify your answer

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Among the four language skills, which one (s) do you find difficult

-Listening

- Reading

- Speaking

- Writing

**4. Why?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**5.**Do you like speaking? Yes  No

**6.** Whatever you answer to **question 5** is, why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**7. How often do you speak in front of your classmates?**

Never  Rarely  sometimes  Often  Always

**8. How do you measure your level in speaking?**

Very Good  Good  Average  Poor

9. Do you encounter difficulties in speaking? Yes  No

10. If yes, what kind of difficulties do you encounter?

11. I cannot think of anything to say

12. I pause suddenly and inappropriately while speaking English

13. I hesitate to speak English because I am not sure whether I use English appropriately or not.

14. I do not know how to express the ideas in my mind

15. I cannot reply because I do not understand what my partner is saying in the conversation

16. All of them

11. Do you feel uncomfortable when you speak in English? Yes  No

12. If yes, is it because:

- You are shy

- You are anxious

- You are afraid of making mistakes

-Lack of self-confidence

-Lack of motivation

-All of them

**13.**How much time do you take approximately in order to speak and/or respond during an immediate conversation?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**14.** Do you tend to use a formal or informal language in your oral sessions

Yes

No

**15.**Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**16.** When preparing for a speech do you consider the appropriate level of formal language and accent /voice to match the audience your purpose of communication?

Yes

No

**17.**Why?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
**18.** Do you tend to use a lot of descriptive language or prefer to get direct/straight to the point when speaking? Yes  No

**19.** Why?

.....  
 .....

**20.** Do you engage with your audience during your speech? Yes  No

**21.** If yes, is it through:

**17.** Eye contact

**18.** Asking questions

**19.** Facial expressions

**22.** Please indicate by a (√) the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

Statements	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>1.</b> I hesitate when I speak in front of my classmates				



2. When I speak, I tend to repeat words or phrases frequently				
3. I find it easier to speak rapidly when I am familiar with the topic				
4. I have troubles finding the right words to express myself				
5. When I deliver a speech, my ideas are very well organized				
6. When I speak, I consciously use transitional words to connect my ideas				
7. Gestures and Facial expressions enhance the learners' speaking performance				

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## **Appendix 02: Teachers Interview**

*Dear Teachers,*

This interview questions aim at collecting information about the EFL learners' difficulties in the Speaking Skills during the Oral sessions. I would be very grateful if you answer the following questions which will help us in our research. Your point of view is very important.

*Thank you for your contribution.*

1. How long have you been teaching English?
2. How long have you been teaching Oral Expression course?
3. Are students motivated to speak in class?
4. Based on your experience, what can be the reasons preventing your students from speaking in class?
5. How do you evaluate EFL students' level in speaking?
6. Do you notice that students are uncomfortable when they speak in English? If yes, why
7. Students claim that speaking is difficult, do you agree or disagree? Why?
8. What kind of difficulties that EFL students most often face? To what sources do you attribute these difficulties?
9. Based on your experience, do students show a consistent fluency when speaking in class?
10. How can students' fluency be developed?
11. How would you describe the overall quality of discourse among your students during class discussion?
12. Do students use cohesive devices such as transition words, referring and discourse markers effectively in their spoken language?

13. On what aspects of speaking style do you focus in your teaching process?

14. How do you manage to keep your students interested each oral session?

15. Would you provide some activities (you use) to improve your students' speaking skills

**Thank you for your collaboration**

## Le résumé

Cette étude vise à explorer les difficultés en matière de compétences macro-linguistiques orales auxquelles sont confrontés les apprenants de première année de l'Anglais comme langue étrangère à l'Université de Bejaia. En outre, cette étude a également exploré les facteurs qui influencent les performances orales des apprenants ainsi que les différentes stratégies mises en œuvre par les enseignants pour améliorer les compétences orales de leurs apprenants. Pour atteindre cet objectif, un modèle exploratoire a été utilisé. En particulier, pour collecter les données nécessaires, deux instruments principaux à savoir le questionnaire et l'entretien semi-structuré ont été utilisés. Ces instruments servent à répondre aux questions de recherche suivantes : 1) Quels sont les défis rencontrés par les apprenants de l'anglais comme langue étrangère lors de la présentation orale ? 2) Quels sont les principaux facteurs qui influencent la performance orale des apprenants EFL ?? 3) Quelles sont les stratégies mises en œuvre par les enseignants de l'anglais comme langue étrangère pour surmonter les difficultés d'expression orale des apprenants ? Les résultats obtenus ont révélé que les étudiants de première année à l'Université de Bejaia rencontrent plusieurs difficultés à l'oral notamment en termes de vocabulaire, d'aisance et d'exactitude. De plus, les résultats ont indiqué que des facteurs psychologiques tels que la timidité, l'anxiété, la motivation et la peur de faire des erreurs font partie des facteurs qui influencent la performance orale des apprenants. En outre, les pratiques des enseignants en classe affectent également les performances des apprenants. Concernant les stratégies que les enseignants mettent en œuvre, il s'agit de répétitions, utilisant différentes activités telles que des jeux de rôle, des discussions, des débats et des jeux éducatifs. Enfin, quelques recommandations pédagogiques ont été proposées pour améliorer la compétence orale des étudiants.

**Mots clés :** difficultés, apprenants de l'Anglais comme langue étrangère, macro-compétences, expression orale macro-compétences

## المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الصعوبات في المهارات اللغوية الكلية الشفهية التي يواجهها متعلمو السنة الأولى للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة بجاية. علاوة على ذلك، استكشفت هذه الدراسة أيضًا العوامل التي تؤثر على أداء التحدث لدى المتعلمين بالإضافة إلى الاستراتيجيات المختلفة التي ينفذها المعلمون لتحسين مهارات التحدث لدى المتعلمين. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم استخدام النموذج الاستكشافي. وعلى وجه الخصوص، لجمع البيانات اللازمة، تم استخدام أداتين رئيسيتين هما الاستبيان والمقابلة شبه المنظمة. تُستخدم هذه الأدوات للإجابة على أسئلة البحث التالية: (1) ما هي العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر على أداء التحدث لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؟ (2) ما هي التحديات التي يواجهها متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أثناء العرض الشفهي؟ (3) ما هي الاستراتيجيات التي ينفذها معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للتغلب على صعوبات التعبير الشفهي لدى المتعلمين؟ أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب السنة الأولى بجامعة بجاية يواجهون عدة صعوبات في التحدث، خاصة من حيث المفردات والطلاقة والدقة. علاوة على ذلك، أشارت النتائج إلى أن العوامل النفسية مثل الخجل والقلق والتحفيز والخوف من ارتكاب الأخطاء هي من العوامل التي تؤثر على أداء التحدث لدى المتعلمين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تؤثر ممارسات المعلمين في الفصول الدراسية أيضًا على أداء المتعلمين. أما الاستراتيجيات التي ينفذها المعلمون فهي التكرارات باستخدام أنشطة مختلفة مثل لعب الأدوار والمناقشات والمناظرات والألعاب التعليمية. وأخيراً تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات التربوية لتحسين الكفاءة الشفهية لدى الطلاب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** صعوبات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، صعوبات، مهارات التعبير الشفهي الكلية