

**Investigating Some Speaking Problems Encountered by Advanced Students
in the English Department in Almarj Faculty of Education**

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Abstract

The current study is an attempt to examine the problems that face the advanced students in the English Department in the Almarj Faculty of Education in speaking. The aim of this study is to discover the difficulties that the students face when speaking in the second language. The participants of this study are 25 students from seven and eight semesters. Data were collected through interviewing the students and giving them a particular topic to talk about. Data were analyzed according to the assessment criteria posited in the study. The results of the study showed that the students demonstrated a low level of performance when speaking in the target language. Some recommendations were offered to help both the teacher and the students in the process of improving the performance of English speaking.

الملخص

البحث التالي هو محاولة لدراسة بعض المشاكل التي تواجه طلبة الفصل السابع والثامن في قسم اللغة الانجليزية في كلية التربية المرج عند التحدث باللغة الانجليزية. عينة البحث هم 25 طالب وطالبة تم جمع البيانات عن طريق امتحان مقابلة تم اجراءه لجميع الطلبة بحيث كانت لهم الفرصة للتحدث عن موضوع معين. وتم تحليل البيانات وفقا لإداء وصفية احصائية لتقييم اداء الطلبة. وظهرت نتائج الدراسة بان الطلبة ابدو مستوى ضعيف من الاداء عند التحدث باللغة الثانية وفي الجانب الأخير قدمت الباحثة بعض التوصيات لتساعد كلا من الطالب والمدرس في تحسين جودة تعلم مهارة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية .

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Learning a foreign language is not an easy process; it is a complex process that requires mastering the basic language skills that enable us to communicate with each other. The basic language skills are divided into two types: two receptive skills which are reading and listening and two productive skills which are writing and speaking. In fact, the speaking skill, as being an important part of a language, is considered to be the most challenged one for second language learners because it needs mastering the basic components of language knowledge, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Developing speaking skill is of vital importance in foreign language programs. The researcher [6] says that success in a language is measured in terms of the learners' ability to carry out the conversation in the target one.

The development of learning speaking is closely associated with the process of teaching, particularly in the area that related to context development of foreign language proficiency. Thus, the complex nature of spoken discourse must be taken into account at each stage of the learning and teaching process. [1]

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most Libyan students still cannot achieve a good level of English even though they have spent six to seven years learning English in preparatory and secondary schools. They still encounter a number of problems when speaking in English. Therefore, this study is principally devised to investigate the problems that the students face when speaking in the second language.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary goal of this study is to identify the problems of speaking encountered by the students of advanced semesters in the English Department at Almarj Faculty of Education.

1.4 Research Question

This study is based on the supposition that most of the students in the English Department at Almarj Faculty of Education have problems in the speaking skill. Thus, the research question is stated as follow: What are the problems that face the students when they speak in English?

CHAPTER TWO

THE SKILL OF SPEAKING

2.1 Introduction

In foreign language learning and teaching, the ability to speak is the most crucial skill since it is the basic for oral communication. The researcher [3] defines speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving information. They say that the language form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs that includes the participants, the physical environment, and the purpose for speaking.

“Speaking skill usually been compared to writing, both being considered “productive skills”, as opposed to the "receptive skills" of reading and listening. Speaking also is closely related to listening as two interrelated ways of accomplishing communication”. Every speaker is simultaneously a listener and every listener is at least potentially a speaker”. [9]

Speaking is principally classified to two types: monologue and dialogue. Monologue focuses on giving an interrupted oral presentation while dialogue puts emphasis on interacting with other speakers [6]. The researchers [2] indicate that speaking can also serve one of two main functions: transactional (transfer of information) that deals with factual and propositional information and deals with the transfer of that information and interactional that used to maintenance of social relationships.

2.2 Teaching speaking

Second language learners often view English speaking as the most demanding skill that most learners focus on when learning a foreign language. The majority of them start learning being motivated by the ability to speak, convey their message across and interact with other speakers of the target [4]

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The teaching and learning of English speaking are vital parts of any language education; not only does the spoken language offer for learning as the main communicative mean in classrooms, but also they are essential elements of syllabus content and learning outcomes[4]. Teaching speaking is a tough job for many none -native English teachers. This is due to not only to the language competence of teachers, but to the increased needs of learning English as a second language and to the improvement in applying effective teaching approaches that are appropriate for students. Today, we think of speaking as a process of supporting students' language development in ways that broaden the speakers' expressive possibilities, deepen their understanding of spoken language and socialize the speaker with the learner. Teaching writing is an effective factor in learning English language. Thus, more emphasis should always be given to this component and its role in facilitating the ways of conveying information. As facilitator, it is helpful for a teacher to determine the appropriate stages and techniques to speaking instructions and use them in different settings in order to achieve successful learning process.

2.3 Approaches to Teaching Speaking

For many years, there were a lot of debates about applying the most appropriate methods for teaching English as a second language. Many researchers proposed different types of approaches and directions for teaching English in classroom. However, all see speaking from two perspectives: as a process and as a product. In this research, we will put more emphasis on the most applied ones in the process of teaching.

2.3.1 The Direct Approach

According to [4], the direct approach to teach speaking emphasizes knowledge of language and discourse. Learning speaking in the foreign language requires increasing the ability to use the surface level structures that implies mastering primary the linguistic knowledge. In other words, learning to speak in second language involves increase the ability of the students to understand language components in order to help them to produce spoken language in fluent, accurate and socially appropriate way, within the constraints of speakers' cognitive process. In this modeling, lessons viewed as conceptualized not as speaking practice but as structured learning opportunities for developing the basic components of speaking competence.

2.3.2 The Indirect Approach

In teaching speaking in English language, the focus was traditionally on the end result of the product. Concerning this view, the product approach to teaching speaking views speaking as being primary about the communicative knowledge, which it is based on the principle of learning language through developing the learner's fluency of speech to communicate rather than focusing on language knowledge and accuracy.

2.4 Factors Affect Learning Speaking

Speaking is the most distinguishing features of the human beings from the other living creatures because it is the natural state that all human beings are born to speak their native language. Most of the language learners view speaking as being the most difficult skill to have a success because it needs oral communication that includes of both listening and speaking [8]. However, there are many challenges that often obstacle the process of learning in classroom, particularly if the learners are none-native speakers.

2.4.1 Motivation

Motivation is the process of encouraging students to do their best in the process of language learning. It increases the student's level of internal desire to achieve certain aims. Actually, the teachers have an essential role in motivating the students in the classroom and this can be done by providing the appropriate atmosphere for the learning process. At this point, some points should be raised by the teacher when teaching speaking.

- Make the students more optimistic in classroom.
- Create confidence in the students' performance.
- Giving the students chance to participate

Motivation has a relevant and crucial role in the process of learning a language particularly learning the productive skills. The researcher [10] states that teachers should be aware of the effect of motivation on the students' performance since "the internal desire gives behavior energy and directions". Students who are better motivated, they success to obtain their goals than those who are less motivated.

2.4.2 The Teacher's Role

In teaching English speaking, the teacher has the most efficient role in the educational and learning process. They are responsible for conveying information to the students in the classroom. There are many ways that teachers can follow when teaching in the classroom.

- Be aware of using the appropriate teaching techniques in the classroom.
- Make suitable curriculum that suite all the levels and the ages of the students.
- Using educational teaching aids in classroom.
- Applying the most effective teaching methodology in classroom.
- Using the modern ad developed methods in teaching.
- Choosing the best places to teach the students in a way that each class include a limited number of students in order to control the whole class and to better practice speaking.
- Focusing on the style of teaching in presenting information since the style of teaching affects negatively or positively on the students' performance.

2.4.3 Personality

The third type of the factors that may challenge the process of learning is the learner's personality. This aspect has a strong influence on learning oral proficiency in English language. The students have to be enjoyable and interested when learning the productive skills particularly, speaking. In other words, complexity and ambiguity should be avoided when speaking with each other. According to my experience in teaching, it was noted that there are some learners have features of weak personality, which in turn affects negatively their learning process. These features are represented in the following points:

- Lack of confidence and hesitation.
- Worrying and anxiety.
- Feeling of fear and disappointed.

All the previous points are effective factors that usually obstacle the learning process. They badly affect the learners' performance. In this respect, there are some learners who are good at certain language skills like reading and grammar but they seem to be weak when they

speak because they often get worry and fear to speak in the class. In addition, there are other learners who get shy, particularly when there are intelligent students in the class; the students here feel to be disappointed, particularly when they asked to speak without preparation. They would thought that making mistakes allow the rest of the class to laugh at them, so they prefer to be not active. It was clear that students who have a strong personality, they are more successful and interested to practice speaking than those who have a lower level of personality.

2.5 Classroom Speaking Activities

As a result of the increase in learning English as a second language, many teachers found themselves working with ESL students in speaking classes that are designed primary for monolingual native speakers. Due to this increase, there was a need to develop ESL speaking classroom instructions that teachers have to adopt to be familiar with in speaking classes of all levels and types Speaking instructions are important in second language learning because they help students to acquire EFL speaking skills. Thus, they converse spontaneously and naturally with native speakers. Furthermore, if the right speaking activities are taught in the classroom, speaking can raise general learners' motivation and make the English language classroom a fun and dynamic place to be [7]. The researcher [5] states that the function of language when learning L2 is seen as a medium through which teachers and learners demonstrate what they have learned. Actually, in classroom, the target language is used by the teachers in order to control both the form and the content of classroom interaction, and the learners try to communicate and respond to the teachers' usage of the language. However, the overall communication of the classroom depends on the types of relationships established between teachers and the students and the actual patterns of communication established and maintained during regular lessons in the classroom. "Speaking in foreign language requires a real time exposure; in other words, it needs a set of activities, which have to be developed in a dynamic interactive atmosphere where both teachers and learners cooperate with each other to create suitable environment for perfect productive speaking"[5]. Through using classroom techniques and activities, the teacher can create connection among the students by expressing and exchanging ideas and information. In fact, there are many activities that a teacher can use when he/she is teaching in classroom:

- Discussion
- Information gap
- Interview
- Role play
- Presentation

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Research Strategies

Methodology is the specific step that the researcher follows in collecting the data from the sample of the study. The data are analyzed according to the type of data collected. After analyzing the data collected from the sample, the researcher draws conclusion and summarizes the results of the study. This study depends on quantitative results. Thus, it is regarded a quantitative study.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The participants in this study were 25 students enrolled in the Department of English in the Faculty of Education in Almarj during the academic year 2019, 2020. They were all native speakers of Arabic. They were all in the seven and eight semesters. There were 3 males and 22 females aged between 21-22 years of age. All 25 participants had studied English for more than three years.

3.3 Instrument and Procedure

The instrument used to collect data in this study was an interview test. The researcher interviewed all the participants. They were asked to talk about a particular topic which was 'the use of the internet'. The topic was chosen on the based of its appeal and interest to the faculty students. Each student was given 25 minutes to talk the topic.

3.4 Data Analysis

After interviewing the students and collecting the data, the researcher began to analyze the data by listening to every cassette and marking the test items. Notes were made about the kinds of problems that the students faced when they were speaking. Errors were identified

and classified into their types. The range of scores for each item on the scoring protocol were calculated as percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research is to discover the challenges that face the students when speaking in the second language. Thus, the current chapter presents and discusses the results of the study collected from the participants. Evaluation of correct and incorrect speaking skills were noted. The scores were calculated using the tool of descriptive statistic. The data were presented in table form which is divided into two main sections. The first section begin with the evaluation of the subjects speaking according to the assessment criteria and the second section presents overall performance in percentage form.

4.2 Assessment Criteria

Students were directed to the same topic and all the students had equal amounts of time to speak. Students were asked to talk about "the use of the internet". A scoring protocol was devised to mark the students' speech. It appears in table 1. Data were collected by a mean of interview to 25 students who enrolled in seven and eight semesters. Data were analyzed linguistically and statistically based on the responses of the students.

4.3 Analysis of the Assessment Criteria

This section presents the analysis of data collected from the participants. The analysis of data was based on the students' responses when they spoke in the second language. Students' performance was assessed according to their level of performance when they spoke.

Through the analysis of data, it was noted that some students followed certain strategy when speaking in the second language. They spoke without focusing on the basic items that needed when speaking in the second language. The majority of the students demonstrated poor information structures during their speaking that appear in the incorrect use of grammatical rules. In other words, they tended to use grammatical rules incorrectly. They suffered challenges in using pronouns, articles, prepositions, singular and plural forms, verbs to be, to have, and past and present tenses. They are talking without focusing on the tense or the type

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of pronoun they are using. In addition, they tended to misuse the right references and singular and plural forms. Actually, they neglected the importance of these aspects and their role in creating an affective speech.

In addition, some participants seemed to give a very short speech; they seemed to lack confidence and hesitate to speak in which they were unable to provide enough evidence and information to support their opinions. It was noted that the students lack training in speaking. This may be due to the fact that the students don't practice speaking unless they are forced to, mostly for exams. Moreover, students may have thought that doing this activity would take a lot of time, so they could not finish quickly and thus they ignored it. Another possible reason is that some students may be considered lazy and careless.

Another challenge that the participants faced is language interference. Some of them began to speak as they speak in their mother tongue. They tended to use Arabic style while they were speaking. In other words, the participants resorted to the strategy of rendering their words and ideas without taking into account the difference in the rhetorical patterns between the two languages.

Vocabulary was another problem that faced some students; they used wrong vocabulary that do not suit the context of their speaking which cause their speaking to be confused.

Another observation was the deficiency in pronunciation that considered to be the most important element of speaking. This deficiency cause the whole text to be confused and ambiguous.

In my opinion, it was clear that some of the challenges that faced the students due to certain points of weakness that are related either the students due to certain points of weakness that are related either to the teacher or the students.

In fact, some teachers still use old techniques when teaching the skill of speaking in classroom. They usually tend to put more emphasis on the theoretical part and neglecting the most important one, which is applying practice in the classrooms.

Part of the participants' deficiency can also be due to lack of techniques that help to develop the process of teaching speaking like laps and modern instruments relating to both the skills of listening and speaking.

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Another important point is neglecting speaking in English with the staff and the students in the classes and in the faculty in general.

In addition, there are some students who tend to be lazy and careless about the skill of speaking; in other words, they prefer to be silent in the classrooms. Others tend to be shy and lack confidence to speak among the students in the classes. In other words, they often get afraid of making mistakes, so they do not prefer to participate. Other students are disappointed to communicate with the rest of the students in the class. They think that they will not reach to the suitable results and they will make mistakes among the students who are better than them.

In fact, the nature of some students also affect the process of learning. Some of them are unsociable and often get lonely and quite. These features affect negatively the process of learning speaking.

Table 1: Scoring Protocol

Aspects of Speaking	Points
Grammar	15
Vocabulary	15
Pronunciation	20
Style	10

TABLE 2: Overall Scores

CASE	TOTAL SCORE=60	PERCENTAGE
1	30	50%
2	20	33%
3	15	25%
4	19	32%
5	25	42%
6	33	55%
7	25	42%
8	35	58%

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9	30	50%
10	20	33%
11	25	42%
12	30	50%
13	15	25%
14	20	33%
15	25	42%
16	27	45%
17	33	55%
18	29	48%
19	31	52%
20	36	60%
21	39	65%
22	28	47%
23	23	38%
24	25	42%
25	15	25%

Table3: Overall Grades and Percentages

Evaluation	Percentages
Excellent	0 - 0%
Very good	0 - 0%
Good	1 - 4%
Weak	8 - 13%
Poor	16 - 64%

4.4 Statistical Analysis

The use of statistical analysis clarify the process of data analysis in quantitative research. For this reason, the data collected have been subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to test the research question posited in the study. The percentages of errors for each aspect in the scoring protocol were calculated and the results were taken as an indication of the students speaking quality.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that English Speaking is an interactive process in which the speakers can communicate with their audience. However, Speaking in the second language may appear to be a challenge to many learners particularly, those who lack language competence to communicate their knowledge effectively. Therefore, the importance of speaking in faculty syllabus and its role in developing language proficiency and communication needs to be recognized. In fact, this study demonstrated that Libyan Students who are enrolled in the English Department at the Faculty of Education in Almarj experienced a variety of challenge when speaking in the second language.

5.2 Recommendations

The results of the present research emphasize the urgent need to inset a solid basis for English speaking in the early levels of the curriculum in order to create better results in mastering the skill of speaking.

In academic English, it is difficult for the teachers to bring the students to the stage of mastering the skill of speaking. Consequently, there are some points that both the teacher and the students should follow in order to improve practicing English speaking. Teachers should raise the students' awareness of speaking and its vital importance in learning the second language. With regard to speaking, some learners like to learn about the technical side of the language while others like to practice speaking as a mean of expressing what they want to say and feel. Therefore, teachers should try to use a variety of approaches; helping students to engage in the process of learning speaking in different ways.

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Great consideration should be given to the course design, teaching approaches and methods. In this respect, textbooks should have an ample amount of knowledge and instructions about all the aspects that are required when teaching and learning speaking. Moreover, it is of extreme importance that the speaking patterns and their applications be taught by specialist teachers with experience in the field of speaking. Teachers should also choose the best methods and techniques to teach speaking with great focus on applying the four main steps needed in the teaching process that are revision, presentation, practice and evaluation.

Actually, practicing speaking needs suitable environment for both the teacher and the students in order to help them to create successful learning and teaching process. In other words, there should be well-equipped labs with modern instruments for practicing both the skills of listening and speaking in an effective way.

Without doubt, English teachers have an important role in both the process of teaching and learning the productive skills particularly, speaking. In a similar meaning, the teacher's responsibility is to change the students' attitude toward speaking by motivating them to do their best to practice speaking, helping them to build their confidence and avoiding them to feel worry and fear; since learners with positive attitude and motivation are more interested in learning how to speak. Moreover, teachers have to help the learners to build good personality in order to create good English speaker.

Generally speaking, speaking skill should be introduced to students as early as possible; this would help them to avoid the wrong accentual habits and build a strong foundation for language learning. In addition, Teachers should choose the appropriate topics that suite the level of the students and stimulate the interest of the students. Students should also be given a chance to prepare their topic in advance and be provided by enough input pre task activities through listening or through reading texts that are more authentic.

Students should be given more opportunities to reflect their abilities on how to speak English in the classrooms in that they should be provided by enough time to practice since that is helpful in improving and highlighting the process of learning speaking.

Teachers should encourage the students to speak in the target language with each other and with the teachers in and outside the classrooms. In more academic way, students should be divided into groups and helping them to work together and speak English in groups'

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discussion. This way will help them to better improve their English speaking in an efficient way.

More importantly, there are two aspects are essential when teaching the skill of speaking that are "time and place". Speaking classes in timetable should be given more and extra time in order to do better practice of speaking. In addition, it is good for the students to be well distributed, in that each class should include a limited number of students in which the teacher can control the whole class and can do all the issues relating to practice conversation. Another important point is that the department and the faculty should have a role in developing English conversation by helping the students to visit places outside the faculty in order to more practice English in real situations like visiting hospitals and schools.

The evaluation of students' speaking from time to time is of vital importance in enhancing the ability to practice speaking since assessment of students' performance help to understand the area of weakness in the process of learning and teaching. Thus, some remedial work can be suggested as a solution to the challenges that a teacher or student face.

Emphasizing the continues contact with all the staff in the department is an essential part of the process of learning since it leads to know the challenges that face the students and the teachers when learning English language particularly the productive skills; also, to ensure the necessity of preventing the students to speak in the Arabic language in the classrooms.

Indeed, self-activities can enable learners to discover their own words and information and acquire more vocabulary and structures that lead to facilitate the students' practice. Thus, Teachers should encourage students to extend their knowledge by reading English stories, listening to music, watching TV programs and films and joining them with English net conversation of English club and English laps.

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