

## Investigating Factors Impacting EFL Students' Speaking Ability: A study on some public Secondary Classrooms - Misurata- Libya

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### Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the speaking difficulties which encounter public secondary school students at second year in Misurata. It seeks to analyze their problems and factors that negatively affect their speaking skill in order to help them avoiding these problems. The research method adopted in this study was a descriptive one. So, it intended to describe two domains: The first one is "Affective factors related to students", and the second is the "Factors related to teachers" the role in teaching speaking skills. These factors were described in details with some helpful and useful recommendations for teacher to help their students to speak the target language. The data was gathered through two of questionnaires administrated on a sample of 100 students and 20 teachers at secondary schools. The results suggested that the students did not practice speaking skills well both in or out-side classroom due to: Lack of motivation and lack of encouragement by the surrounding environment, anxiety, fear of making mistakes and inhibition , lack of self-confidence , shortage of vocabulary. Therefore, it is primarily suggested that students need to develop their self-confidence, be aware of the role of mistakes in learning speaking skills; Secondly, the teachers should employ their maximum potential to assess and activate the students' motivation and self- confidence in speaking skills.

Key words: EFL- oral performance, public schools

دراسة تقييمية للعوامل المؤثرة سلبا على مهارة تحدث اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

بمدارس مصراتة الثانوية للتعليم العام

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قسم اللغة الإنجليزية- كلية التربية- جامعة مصراتة

الملخص: تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اختبار وتقييم العوامل المؤثرة سلبا في مهارات تحدث اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية لدى طلاب الصف الثاني الثانوي بشقيه العلمي والادبي في مدارس مصراتة الثانوية العامة. اختار

الباحث عينه تمثيلية تتكون من 100 طالب وطالبة، بالإضافة إلى 20 معلم لغة إنجليزية للصف الثاني الثانوي. لتحقيق اهداف الدراسة أيضا استخدم الباحث التصميم النوعي. حيث تم اعطاء عينة الدراسة استبانة لتعبئتها. وقد كشفت نتائج الدراسة ان الطلاب واجهوا صعوبات كثيرة أدت الى ظهور هذه العوامل منها القلق، قلة الدافعية لتعلم التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية، قلة التشجيع، الخوف من الانتقاد من قبل زملائهم، بالإضافة الى كثرة استخدام اللغة العربية في الصف. هذا وقد كشفت النتائج عن عوامل أخرى، منها ان المعلمين لهم دور مهم في إدارة حصص المحادثة والتخطيط لها حيث ان بعض المعلمين لا يعير اهتماما لأداء مهارة المحادثة داخل الصف. أضف الى ذلك ان بعض المعلمين ينقصهم التدريبات والتقنيات والاستراتيجيات اللازمة لإدارة حصة المحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية. عوامل أخرى كشفتها الدراسة، منها ما يتعلق بالبيئة التعليمية المحيطة، ومنها ما يتعلق بعدد الطالب في الصف

**كلمات مفتاحية :** تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية- مهارة المحادثة- المدارس العامة.

## I. Introduction:

### 1.1 Background of the Study:

Speaking seems to be the most important skill of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) because people who know the language are usually referred to as speakers of that language (Ur, 1996, p. 286). The major goal of English language teaching should be to give learners the ability to use English effectively and accurately in their everyday communication (Davies and Pearse, 2000: p. 286). However, not all language learners after many years of studying English can communicate fluently and accurately because they lack the necessary knowledge. In my opinion, the main reason is that learners rely on the prescribed material during their learning process of the language and that is not enough. This may result in shortage in vocabulary and make learners face difficulties in producing correct sentences. Speaking itself contains several other skills called micro skills. These micro skills include: a part of speaking should be mastered by a language learner in order to make communication become more effective and accurate. Therefore, a good speaking skill is very important and essential. Assessment of oral skills is a topic which has many interesting sides to it. First of all, final exams/exercises in courses, for instance, are normally written and not spoken, so it would imply that evaluating spoken language has to be done during lessons. Second, it is usually thought that in secondary schools the main emphasis is to get the students through the matriculation examination where oral skills are not tested. This could mean that speaking

skills are not much emphasized during studies. Moreover, speaking especially in classrooms is a public action which might cause anxiety to students. Third, assessment of speaking requires different kinds of exercises depending on whether one is assessing for instance grammar or pronunciation (Luoma, 2004: p. 5). To sum up, assessing oral skills has numerous levels which need to be taken into consideration. That is why most of teaching methods focus on writing tests more than verbal tests, therefore. These assessments must be taken into account by teachers and their application in the classrooms.

However, speaking problems can be great in learning language. Regardless of the extent to which learners of English as a foreign language know, they still face many difficulties and factors that are obstacles to their learning of this language. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the negative factors affecting students speaking performance when they speak English Language for the academic year (2018- 2019) of Second Year Classes at secondary schools in Misurata.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The aim of this study is to assess the negative factors which affect second-year students' speaking skills at secondary schools in Misurata. Some students may be tended to retain grammar, but when it comes to communicating or speaking to others in English, they are not qualified. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors and difficulties faced by students in secondary schools and how to deal with these factors.

### 1.3 Research Questions

Based on the statement of the problem, this study is a try to focus on the factors that are supposed affecting learners' performance inside the classroom. Therefore, the study is mainly based on the following questions:

1. What are the factors that contribute to creating difficulties in speaking ability of EFL secondary students in Misurata public schools?.
2. How do English language teachers attempt to deal with the problems of speaking skills faced by EFL secondary students in Misurata public schools?.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study intends to investigate the factors that cause poor performance such as students' low ability to use English in communication during lessons. The results of the study may pave the way for the curriculum planners to review the proper use of language in teaching English at secondary schools. The study may provide a feedback on the status of teaching and learning facilities such as; textbooks and laboratory. The feedback may guide the

Ministry of Education and Learning to improve its resource allocation at secondary schools aiming at improving the quality of education in schools. The study may provide a feedback on the status of guidance and counseling as a component needed to support students' growth through effective use of time and good performance among secondary schools' students. The study expects to bring useful insights which may help in building, modifying and improving the ways of teaching/learning English language.

## II. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1 Factors Affecting Speaking Performance:

#### 2.1.1 Internal Factors:

Internal factors refer to the factors that come from the learner himself. It is included physiological aspects and learners' language competence (ability). Burns and Joyce (n.d.) as cited in Nunan (1999), Schwartz (2005), and Thombury (2005), argue that psychological factors such as anxiety or shyness, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of mistakes are the factors commonly hinder students from speaking. Furthermore, Brown (2002), claimed that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, for those activities. From the observation of classroom learning, we can find that learners with high self-esteem manifest more confidence and give more positive evaluations in themselves which will promote their language learning. Some students fail oral English learning or feel less willing and confident in speaking English in class because they have a low self-esteem. A study conducted by Sato (2003) as cited in Minghe and Yuan (2013), find that students of English are not highly competent in speaking because of their fear of making mistakes. The same finding is also shared by another research conducted by Ballard (1996) as cited in Yan (2007) who finds that students fail to join in the English discussion because of their vocabulary problems and fear of making mistakes resulting in their inability to speak English well. In addition, she says that students find speaking English a stressful activity, especially, if they have to perform something using English. Moreover, motivation is an important factor in language learning success. Brown (1980), defines motivation as an inner drive, emotion or desire that moves one to a particular action. It is known to all that proper motivation will draw learners' attention and arouse their interests to learn. Thus, they are more likely to succeed in language learning.

According to Chomsky (1965), competence is the ideal language system that enables speakers to produce and understand numbers of sentences in

their language, and to distinguish grammatical sentences and ungrammatical ones. According to Wikipedia, the performance was used by Chomsky to describe the actual use of language in concrete situations. It is used to describe both the production as well as comprehension of the language. In this study, the language factors in speaking performance refer to the ability of the speaker to master the aspects of language while communicating. These aspects included: fluency, intonation, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.

### 2.1.2 External Factors:

According to Nation and Newton (2009) as cited in Tuan and Mai (2015), students perform a speaking task under a variety of conditions, and they believe that performance conditions can affect speaking performance. They suggest four types of performance conditions including: time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support.

In their research, Minghe and Yuan (2013) stated that 'another external factor that affects students' oral English learning is the lacking of good language learning environment'. English is a language used in communication. Therefore, a good language environment can effectively promote learning. English is a foreign language that they learn at school, and outside the class or teaching/learning process. Moreover, the environment does not support the students to speak English frequently. In this study, the environment means the people outside the class. Those people may think that the students just want to show off when they speak English for daily conversation and the response that the students get makes them lose their self-confidence to improve their speaking. Since the students do not want to be rejected by the people around them, so they use their native language in daily conversation. That makes the students unable to communicate in English fluently outside the class. According to Tuan and Mai (2015), Learners' oral performance is affected by factors like performance situation, affective factors, listening skills and feedback during speaking. In the same direction. One way of overcoming problems that students encounter in learning to speak is for teachers to apprehend these factors. Adding to that, Rababah (2005), puts forwards that there are a lot of factors that cause difficulties in speaking English amongst EFL learners. A few of these factors are connected to the learners themselves, the teaching techniques, the curriculum and the environment. To exemplify, many learners stand in need of the necessary terminology to convey their meaning; therefore, they cannot maintain the interaction going. Moreover, Urrutia and Vega (2010) state that students speaking proficiency is affected by their insufficient

vocabulary, hesitation, and the worry to be judged by the others. Oxford (1990) asserts that one of the most important influences or factors of language learning success or failure is probably the affective side of the learner. Affective factors include inhibition, shyness, lack of self-confidence, pressure, family or friends support, motivation and anxiety. Speaking tasks should also provide students with a proper level of challenge. They need to force students to deploy their communication resources as extensively as possible. Accordingly, the students will experience achievement and even excitement about the task. However, if the degree of challenge is too high, it can inhibit students' use of foreign language, and make them use their first language instead. Therefore, the teachers need to be careful, and adjust the activities according to individual learners (Thornbury, 2005).

Teachers' commitment is closely connected to teacher work performance and their ability to innovate and to integrate new ideas into their own practice, absenteeism, staff turnover, as well as having an important influence on students' achievement, and attitudes towards school. Joffress et al. (2006) wrote that teachers' commitment is a crucial factor that effective school, teacher satisfaction and retention. They claim that low levels of teacher commitment result to lead student achievement tests than in areas where teachers were found not to be committed to their responsibilities, learners performed poorly.

Rosner (1985) established that the hard-to-teach child needs explicit, unambiguous instruction that is offered in limited portions and accompanied by more than the usual amount of drill and practice. The studies mentioned above established that reducing the workload of teachers can lead to better quality education provided for learners.

However, Fatai (2005) counters that only the teachers who are qualified, certificated, competent and of a good moral standing need to be employed to teach the students. They should be dedicated teachers who would serve as role models in matters of punctuality, self-discipline, accountability, integrity and sound leadership styles. Effective schools have teachers who have a strong sense of efficacy.

The knowledgeable teacher is one who knows what to teach and has some idea about how to do it. It knows that once a child learns a basic fact, this can be incorporated into a future lesson for teaching some subsequent fact. The knowledgeable teacher is constantly looking for better, more effective methods. It uses the new procedure and assesses its effects (Rosner, 1985). Teachers' subject-matter knowledge, teaching skills, dedication to teaching and openness to new ideas, all can play a significant role in determining the

success of a new curriculum (Posner, 1992). The above studies have shown that a teacher's qualification impacts directly on the quality of education imparted upon the learners.

Absenteeism among teachers contributes immensely to the learners' poor performance, a phenomenon that makes teachers not to cover the syllabus adequately (Nyabuto, 2011). The argument is that if the syllabus is not covered adequately, pupils are likely to be examined in content they did not fully cover and comprehend, which is likely to lead to poor performance. Teacher absenteeism was established by Nakhanu (2009) as one of the factors that affect syllabus coverage. These findings showed the relationship between syllabus coverage and students' performance .

## 2.2 Assessment of oral performance:

Syllabus for secondary schools currently determines that rehearsing oral skills should be included in all courses, which means that assessing oral skills need to be included in all courses as well. However, the syllabus does not give detailed guidelines for the assessment(Lukio. k, 2006). This means, the student should be able to use the language independently and be able to use the language in an argumentative way. Assessing spoken language can be divided into two main ways. (1) One can either look at language in a holistic way; (2) One can divide the language into pieces (grammar, pronunciation) and look at them separately, which is called an analytic way of assessing (Bachman 1991). Assessing spoken language can be divided into two main ways. One can look at language in a holistic way, or other can divide the language into (grammar, pronunciation) and look at them separately, which is called an analytic way of assessing (Bachman 1991).

Holistic way means assessing the situation overall, and how the subject handles and performs in a situation that is being assessed. Holistic way of assessing is based on the idea that we cannot see grammatical, or other language function that take place inside one's mind, so we cannot judge them. We have to judge the functions that able to observe the learner's ability to perform in a given task, while analytic way of assessing means looking at certain, predetermined points, for instance pronunciation. According to Knight (1992), stated that the teachers should focus on using the latter way of assessing, since it is important that the teachers know what needs to be improved in the learner speech, and that they are able to give positive feedback.

### III. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

The method applied in this study was quantitative in nature which aimed to determine the perception about speaking as well as the metacognitive strategies of English specialized students in the English Department at the Faculty of Education in Misurata through thematic analysis approach. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) "Quantitative data is numbers and statistics. The advantage here is that you can collect and analyze much more information. With good design, that means you can make general statements about what is likely to be true overall".

#### 3.2 Participants and Setting

The sample of this study is randomly selected and it consists of (120) participants includes (20) English language teachers and (100) secondary students aged between 16- 17, all of them are currently under the 2nd year classes for both of its sections (scientific & literary section) for the year 2021-2022. The teachers are teaching English language at different classes of the 2nd year. This study will be applied at some public secondary schools in Misurata, Libya.

#### 3.3 Data-collection and Procedures

The current study utilized one basic instrument which was a questionnaire. The purpose of using the questionnaire is to allow the respondents to answer questions freely as they fill the questionnaire forms. Questionnaires help in gathering data more quickly, and they take much less effort than interviews from the part of the participants. A questionnaire also makes data processing faster and more straightforward. Furthermore, the level of anonymity in questionnaire is a lot higher than in interviews, which contributes to find the participants easier (Dörnyei, 2007).

This instrument is necessary for this study as the teachers had time to provide well taught information. Questionnaire is used as the main tool for collecting data. The selections of this tool is guided by the nature of data to be collected and the time available as well as the objectives of the study.

However, in the present work just two questionnaires have been used, one for teachers and the other for students. The students' questionnaire aimed to explore how some affective factors could really influence their desire to speak English, especially, in classrooms and the teachers' questionnaire intended to investigate teachers' opinion about the effect of learners' emotions on their oral performance. The questionnaires contain 23 questions administered to teachers and students at secondary schools. These questionnaires were divided into two domains: The first one was "Affective



factors related to students " which consisted of (12) questions, the second one was "Factors related to teachers " the role in teaching speaking skills which consisted of (11) questions, in order to gather information about the affective factors and their relation with developing speaking (see appendices A & B).

### 3.3.1 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought the willingness of the participants to join this study. The participants were also informed of the purpose of the study through written consent. Confidentiality of the information especially personal as well as individual responses were considered significant.

## IV. Results and Discussions of the study.

### 4.1 Results of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Q1- On which skill do you focus more on in teaching English?

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
45% (9)	30% (6)	20% (4)	5% (1)

The results in the items of this table revealed that 45% of teachers focus on listening skill when teaching English. While 30% only of them depended on speaking. However, only 5% of them focus on writing. So, in this table each skill would be analyzed out of hundred. Based on these results, it could be clearly seen that more time was given to listening than speaking, although the teachers believed that speaking is the most important skill for helping learners to communicate with others and be able to correct their mistakes.

Q2- Which of the following criteria matches your students' speaking level best in the use of the target language?

High	Average	Low
5% (1)	60% (12)	35% (7)

When teachers have been asked to describe their students' level in speaking, the majority of teachers' answers were average as it appears in the table above. It was said that it was up to 60%. However, according to this data, about 35% of students were not motivated and interested in practicing and developing their level in speaking.

Q3- In which part of the following your students find more difficulty when they speak?

Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation
10% (2)	10% (2)	80% (16)

The above table showed that the most of teachers believed that 80% of students found more difficulty in pronunciation when they spoke, while 50% of other students found more difficulty in vocabulary and grammar. So, in this table each skill has been analyzed out of hundred.

Q4- Which of the following techniques do you use more to motivate students to speak?

Role play	Discussions	Communicative activities
10% (2)	40% (8)	50% (10)

This question explained that 50% of teachers use communicative activities and discussion techniques to motivate students to speak. However, teachers should use different techniques when they teach according to what may fit to lectures and students.

Q5- How often do your students participate in speaking activities?

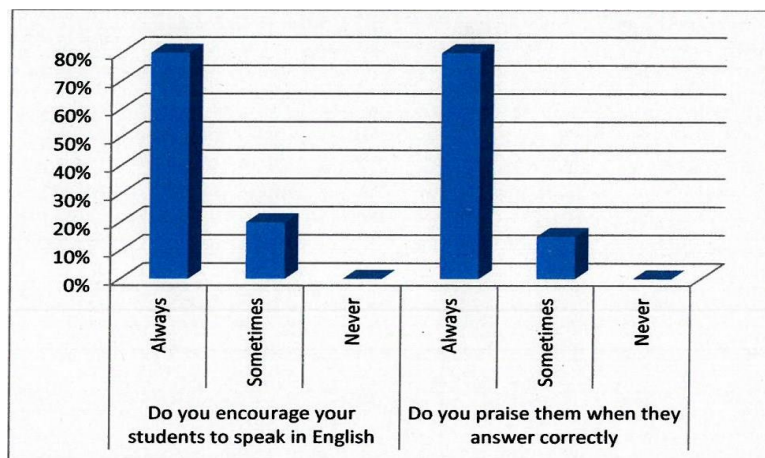
Frequently	Sometimes	Never
10% (2)	90% (18)	0% (0)

The table revealed that 90% of teachers sometimes participate with their students, while 10% were frequently. So, this may due to the fact that teachers had their own ways in the classroom.

Q6- Do you encourage your students to communicate in English?

Q7- Do you praise them when they answer correctly?

Always	Sometimes	Never
80% (16)	20% (4)	0% (0)

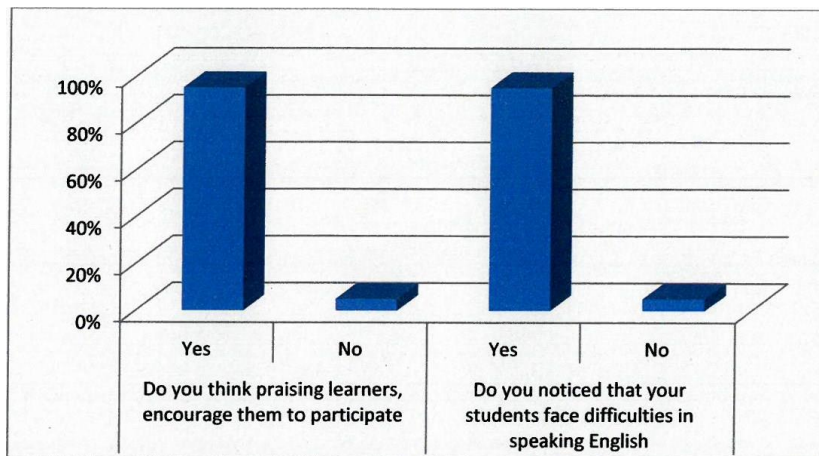


The analysis of the results above revealed that 80% of the teachers affirmed that they always encouraged their students to speak and praised them when they answer correctly; whereas, 20% of them declared that they sometimes did, so, none of the teachers opted for "never".

Q8- Do you think praising learners, encourage them to participate?

Q9- Have you noticed that your students face difficulties in speaking English?

Yes	No
95% (19)	5% (1)



These questions explained that 95% of teachers' praise, encourage their students to speak, and showed that 95% of the teachers noticed that their students are facing difficulties in speaking English. The majority of students refrained from speaking in the classroom when they were asked individually and even if they knew the answer.

Q10- Do you think that it is due to ...

Shyness	Poor vocabulary	Lack of interest
15% (3)	80% (16)	5% (1)

From the table, it could be seen that 80 % of the teachers believed that in the classroom, one of the most difficulties that students faced and suffered a lot from was the lack of vocabulary when they speak; while 15% pointed out that the problem refers to students' shyness.

Q11- In speaking classes, how learners generally feel?

Bored	Anxious	Motivated
25% (5)	35% (7)	40% (8)

From the table above, 40% of the students felt more motivated in speaking classes while 25% of students believed it was boring. As it could be seen, 35% of students when speaking English in the class they felt anxious. This considered as a negative indicator on students' English learning.

In summary, the results indicated that there were a variety of factors that affect the students' speaking performance. A majority of the teachers said that the students' speaking performance was affected by poor vocabulary, low students motivation, fear and inhibition, lack of confidence and speaking anxiety.

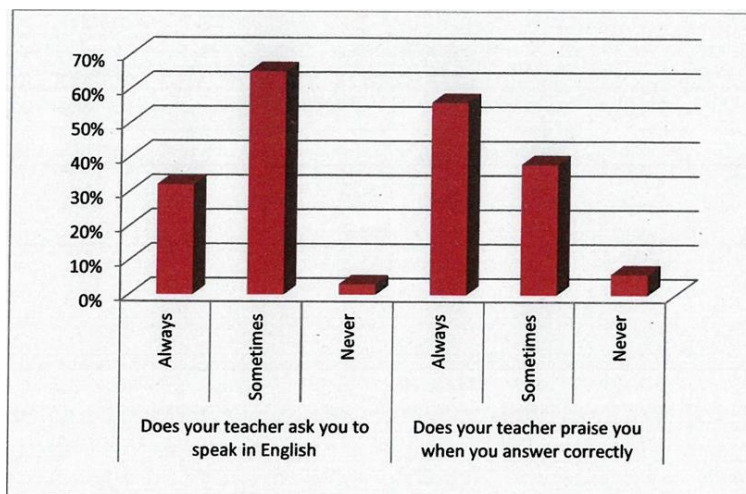
#### 4.2 Results of the Students' Questionnaire:

Q1: Does your teacher ask you to speak in English?

Always	Sometimes	Never
32% (32)	65% (65)	3% (3)

Q2: Does your teacher praise you when you answer correctly?

Always	Sometimes	Never
56% (56)	38% (38)	6% (6)



Both of the tables and the chart revealed that 65% of the students claimed that their teachers sometimes asked them to speak, participate or communicate in English. Whereas 32% of students argued that their teachers always asked them to speak in English. However, results showed that 56% of the students thought that their teachers praised them when they answered correctly. This was a positive reinforce to help the students and increase their self-confidence, whereas 38 % of students their teachers sometimes praised them to speak.

Q3: Which activities do you like most?

Discussions	Role-play	Language game
30% (30)	30% (30)	40% (40)

This table summarized that most of teachers could use different techniques in classroom activities, 40% of students preferred game language activities, 30% would like discussion and 30% preferred role play. Thus, the teachers' role should be adapted with techniques that encouraged students' to participate more activities.

Q4: How your teacher behaved in the class?

As a controller	As a guide
40% (40)	60% (60)

This table affirmed that 60 % of students described their teachers as a guide, while 40% described them as a controller and consequently, this made teachers less confident and more anxious in the class. Teachers were expected to act as facilitators in order to make learners feel more confident and relax in order to create a communicative weather between learners inside the classroom.

Q5: Do you feel more comfortable when you participate in speaking activities?

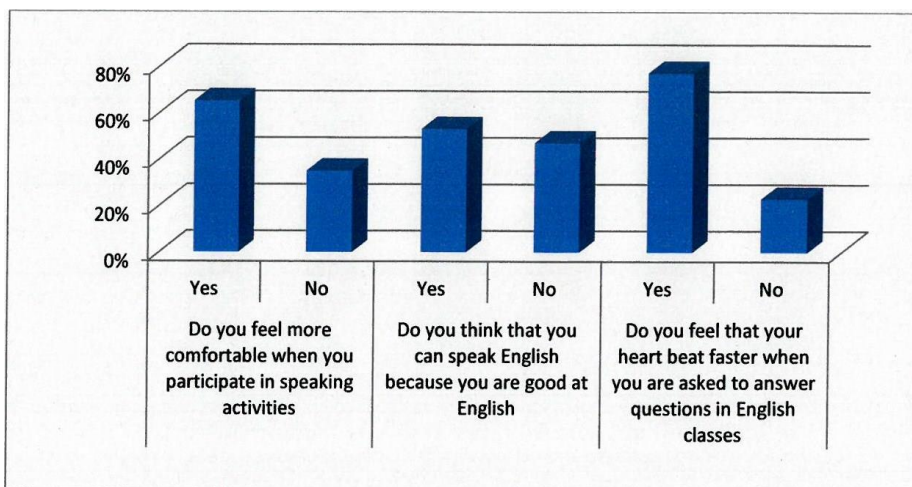
Yes	No
65% (65)	35% (35)

Q6: Do you think that you can speak English because you are good at English?

Yes	No
53% (53)	47% (47)

Q7: Do you feel that your heart beat faster when you are asked to answer questions in English classes?

Yes	No
77% (77)	23% (23)



These questions showed that 65% of students felt comfortable when they participated in speaking activities, while 35% of students felt uncomfortable inside the class. It was shown that 53% of students could speak English because they were good at English, and 47% of students needed to practice more in order to master to speak the target language. However, one could notice that 77 % of students felt anxious and confused in the class before answering questions. This might due to poor English knowledge and pronunciation problem. Being worry and feeling with pressure may lead to such result.

Q8: What do you think that the atmosphere in the classroom is like?

Relaxing	Motivating	Boring
41% (41)	33% (33)	26% (26)

This results indicated that 41% of students found the atmosphere in oral exercises as to be more relaxing. However, 26% of students felt boring. This might due to lack of interesting or the method followed by teachers.

Q9: How much do you feel you are motivated to speak in English?

Very much	Little	Not at all
34% (34)	60% (60)	6% (6)

Percentages above revealed that 60% of students appeared to be less motivated to express themselves orally in the classroom, while 34% of learners felt strongly motivated. Generally, it could be concluded that learners were ranging from one to another in their motivation in lessons.

Q10: I am ashamed to raise my hand in English class if I have got an answer.

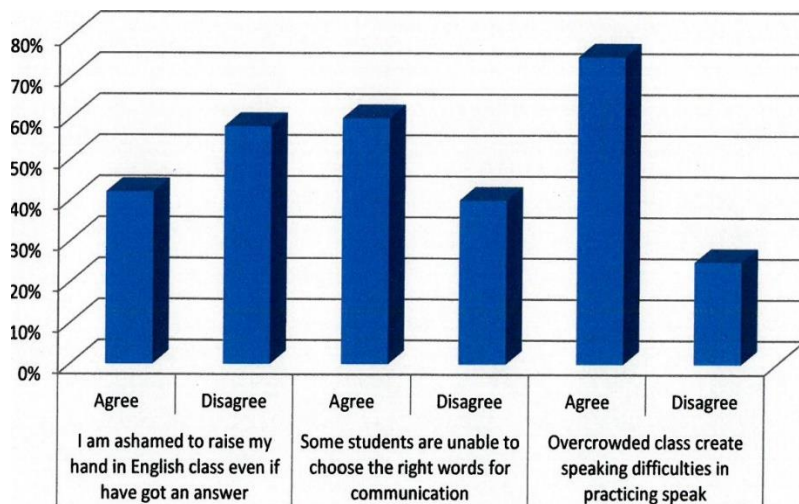
Agree	Disagree
42% (42)	58% (58)

Q11: Some students are unable to choose the right words for communication.

Agree	Disagree
60% (60)	40% (40)

Q12: Overcrowded classes create speaking difficulties in practicing speaking.

Agree	Disagree
75% (75)	25% (25)



As one could see, the highest percentage of the students' responses was that of 75%. The majority of the students had difficulties when they spoke English in overcrowded classes, while 25% of them did not feel with difficulty when they speak in front of the class. This might be due to the fact that they had an experience in practicing English language. Tables and the chart explained also that 58 % of students did not keep silent inside the class when they had the answer, and 42 % of them agreed to be silent even if they knew the answer, and this might be in so many times due to students' shyness in front of the whole class. In this regard 60% of the students could not choose the correct words when they are communicating. It means that they did not have a lot of English knowledge and vocabulary; whereas, 40% of them were able to choose the right words for communication.

In brief, the results from students' questionnaire were quite similar to those of the teachers, most of the students thought that their speaking performance was affected by the role of the teacher in motivating them to speak the target language and reducing their anxiety in order to enhance their oral performance. In addition, the students thought that they needed to be confident to perform well. The findings in tables above all indicated the relationship between affective dominance and the level of oral achievement.

### **4.3 Discussions of the Study:**

#### **4.3.1 Discussions related to the findings of the first question of the study**

*- what are the factors that contribute to creating difficulties in speaking ability of EFL secondary students in Misurata public schools?*

In the light of the findings of the study, results expose to view, that the statistical data and analysis of teachers and students' point of views indicate that there are notable similarities in their Responses in terms of the factors that negatively affect EFL secondary students' speaking skills. Results proved that the majority of the students agree that fear of making mistakes, inhibition, lack of vocabulary, and shyness are strong factors that hinder their speaking proficiency.

Moreover, these results are consistent with Tsiplakids & Areiti (2021), who investigated the anxiety, fear and inhibition in their studies that were caused to ESL Greek students, and found out that they were feeling anxious and not good enough, when it comes to speaking English in or out of class. However; the results related to teachers' role in teaching English, proved inconsistency with the findings of AL Nakhleh et al (2016) who conducted a study on the problems of



speaking that encounter English Language students. His results unveiled that students do not get enough support to practice speaking English from their teachers and their surrounding environment. Whereas this study showed that a high number of students do receive sufficient support from their teachers.

#### **4.3.2 Discussions related to the findings of the second question of the study**

*- How do English language teachers attempt to deal with the problems of speaking skills faced by EFL secondary students in Misurata public schools?.*

According to the teachers' responses that fear, anxiety and lack of confidence in being able to converse in English, would not answer a certain question tackled in class because they are afraid of answering incorrectly or using incorrect vocabulary and then tend to use Arabic to express their ideas in English. These results are consistent with the findings of Al Hosni study, (2018) that anxiety, fear, inhibition and shortage of vocabulary lead to speaking difficulties and affecting students' speaking fluency. It is suggested then that using efficient technique or strategy of teaching have a high effect and demonstrate a huge improvement in students' speaking skill. This in agreement with the findings of AlZayed, (2019) who investigated the effect of a proposed instructional program based on the communicative approach on developing speaking skills.

Furthermore, results showed that teachers attempt to encourage students to practice speaking English, using strategies such as listening and other interactive techniques, this would be effective than concentrating on grammar and vocabulary only.

Finally, responses of the teacher revealed that lack of motivation from the students' side, highly affects their speaking proficiency. Since motivation is what pushes students to be able to speak English. And this is consistent with Al Nakhleh's findings (2016) . students should be supported from the teacher's side.

#### **V. Conclusion:**

This study investigated the negative factors which affect EFL students' speaking ability at public secondary schools. The findings showed that some students at public secondary schools of all levels and ages face a lot of problems and challenges when they speak English basically in the classroom. This study has dealt with some speaking difficulties that encounter some secondary-school students. The results revealed many problems such as: (1) Many students have lack in vocabulary and difficulty to communicate with others effectively and fluently. (2) Some teachers do not encourage their students to speak the language inside the classroom. (3) There is no clear strategy of teaching English language which can help students to use the target language properly. The results also showed that the

most important factors that had a negative effect on students' performance were: (1) The environment for not giving a support to the students to speak English frequently. (2) Lack of practicing and devising activities which enhance learners to use the language in the classroom either as student-student, teacher-student, or student-teacher interaction.

### 5.1 Recommendations

This investigation suggests that public secondary schools should be provided with some teaching aids in order to introduce classroom activities in good and appropriate ways. Based on the results of this study some recommendations can be given to be adapted by the teachers:

1. They should select the appropriate teaching methods to keep their students involved.
2. They should enhance the students' self-confidence.
3. They can set good examples to the students to raise their motivation to learn English language.
4. Teachers should give students chance to practice speaking fluently.
5. Teachers should move around the classroom and help the students during their work in groups.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Misurata University - Faculty of Education, English Department

#### Teachers' Questionnaire

**Dear teachers:**

This study is an attempt to collect information about the teaching / learning process of the productive skills (speaking, writing). In this questionnaire, we'd like to identify the problems encountered by second year classes in secondary schools in Misurata, mainly in speaking skills. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions that focus on difficulties encountered by learners in speaking skills. Your collaboration is very important because the completion of our work is based on the data will be collected from this questionnaire. Please put a tick (√) next to the statement that you feel suitable. Sometimes, more than one answer is possible.

**Section one: Personal information. (optional)**

1-Gender.      a- male (      )      b- female (      )

2-Age (      )

3-Degree(s) you have achieved: a- BA (License) b- MA (Master)

4-How long have you been teaching English? -----

-----

5- Do you like teaching?      a- Yes      b- No

Why? -----

**Section Two: Affective factors related to teachers.**

Question	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
1.On which skill you focus more in teaching English to students?				

Why?.....

(option).

Question	High	Average	Low
2. Which of the following criteria, matches your students' peaking level best in the use of the target Ian age?			

Question	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation
3. In which part of the follow your students find more difficult when they speak?			

If there are others, please, specify?.....  
 .....

Question	Role play	Discussions	Communicative activities
4. Which of the following techniques do you use most to motivate students to speak?			

If there are others, please, identify?  
 .....

Question	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
5. How often do your students participate in speaking activities?			

Questions	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. Do you encourage our students to speak in English?			
7. Do You praise them when the answer correctly ?			

Questions	Yes	No
8. Do you think raising learners, encourage them to participate?		
9. Have you noticed that your students face difficulties in speaking English?		

Question	Shyness	Poor vocabulary	Lack of interest
10. do you think that it is due to -----			

Question	bored	Anxious	Motivated
11.			

## Appendix B

Misurata University- Faculty of Education, English Department

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear students:

This study is an attempt to collect information about the teaching / learning process of the productive skills (speaking, writing). In this questionnaire, we'd like to identify the problems encountered by second year classes in secondary schools in Misurata, mainly in speaking skills. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions that focus on difficulties encountered by learners in speaking skills. Your collaboration is very important because the completion of our work is based on the data will be collected from this questionnaire. Please put a tick (√) next to the statement that you feel suitable. Sometimes, more than one answer is possible.

*Section One: General Information. (optional)*

1-Gender. a- Male ( ) b- female ( )

2-The level in English is: a- Good ( ) b- Average ( ) c- Bad( )

3- Do you like English language? a- Yes ( ) b-No( )

*Section Two(questions: Affective factors related to students)*

Questions	Always	Sometimes	Never
1 . Does our teacher ask you to speak in English?			
2. Does our teacher raise you when you answer correctly ?			

Question	Role- play	Language games
3. Which activities do you like most?		

If there are Others, please, specify?

.....

Question	A controller	A guide
4. How our teacher behave in class?		

Questions	Yes	No
5. Do you feel comfortable when you participate in speaking activities?		
6. Do you think that you can speak English because you are good at English?		
7. Do you feel that your heart beat faster when you are asked to answer questions in English classes?		

Question	Relaxing	Motivating	Boring
8. What do you think that the atmosphere in the classroom is like?			

9. How much do you feel motivated to speak in English?	Very much	little	Not at all
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10. I am ashamed to raise my hand in English class if have got an answer.	agree	dis- agree
11. Some students are unable to choose the right words for communication		
12. Overcrowded classes create speaking difficulties in practicing speaking.		