The Effectiveness of the Group Work Technique in Reducing EFL Students' Speaking Anxiety and in Developing their Oral Language Skill:

Case Study: License Students at Saida University

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in

Partial Fulfillment of the Master 2 Degree in Didactics

Presented by: **Supervised by:**

Mss. Soumia Hadj Djelloul   **Dr. Mokhtaria RAHMANI**

Mss. Amira Benazzouz

Academic Year: 2015/2016

DEDICATION

I have the honor to dedicate this work to my dear parents who have always been by my side. Also, to my beloved brothers and sisters; my heartful feelings go to my best classmates, especially Mokhtaria with whom I shared joyful moments in university.

Hadj Djelloul Soumia

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely mother who has encouraged me a lot from childhood till today.

Also, to my lovely father and all my uncles, antes and cousins;
I dedicate it too to my sweet friends Mokhtaria, Fatima, Talia, Sarah, Soumia, Hayat, Faiza, Karim, Amine, Mohamed, and Houssam.
I would like to dedicate this work also to my kind teachers who have supported me Mrs Adanane and Mrs Belaskri.

Benazzouz Amira

Acknowledgements

ABSTRACT

Teaching English as foreign/second has changed in recent years from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach. In this terrain, it is generally reckoned that the use of co-operative learning, particularly the group work technique, entails profound effects on teaching the English language in general, and on teaching the speaking skill in particular.

The present survey targets the exploration of the effectiveness of the group work technique in reducing students' speaking anxiety, and in promoting their oral language skill. It also aims at investigating the other strategies that teachers of oral expression use in order to alleviate their students' speaking anxiety, as well as maximize their willingness to speak in the classroom speaking activities. The English Department at Saida University constitutes the case of study. To achieve the previously mentioned objectives, the researchers have resorted to a questionnaire designed for 107 students enrolled in License degree, an interview destined to two oral expression teachers, in addition to classroom observation.

The findings of this study reveal that teaching oral expression through the group work technique reduces glaringly students' level of anxiety towards speaking, and develops their oral language skill. Moreover, some of the strategies that oral expression teachers use to create a less stressful classroom environment, and maximize their students' participation in the speaking activities include: selection of interested topics, provision of positive error-correction, and use of humour from time to time.

It is concluded from this study that oral expression teachers should make an extensive use of the group work technique in view of its positive effects. Besides, an adequate use of humour should be part of teachers' strategies to diminish their students' speaking anxiety, and to increase their motivation to speak in the classroom.

List of Abbreviations

CA= Communication Apprehension

CL= Co-operative/Collaborative Learning

CLT= Communicative Language Teaching

FL= Foreign Language

LMD= License/Master/Doctorate

SL= Second Language

TEFL= Teaching English as a Foreign Language

ZPD= Zone of Proximal Development

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Pie Charts

Table of Contents

Chapter One: An Overview about the Speaking Skill and Language Anxiety

Chapter Two: the Literature Review

Chapter Three: Field of Investigation

Chapter Four: Suggestions and Recommendations

General Introduction

English has become the most widely spoken language in the world; almost all people from many countries around the world use it to communicate. Nowadays, one among the most important changes in teaching English as a foreign/second language is the shift from a teacher-centered approach, i.e. traditional learning to a learner-centered approach in which students must have an opportunity to express themselves, and to interact with one another in the English language. This type of learning is known as co-operative learning. It requires students to work together towards achieving a shared learning goal.

The ability to communicate orally in English is a desire of most, if not all Arab students. Despite the fact that Arab university students study English for several years; they still find difficulties and deficiencies in expressing themselves, and in communicating with others in English. They do also rarely participate in the classroom. These weaknesses could be partly related to teachers. That is to say, Arab university teachers of oral expression still use the traditional methods of teaching the speaking skill, and do not provide enough opportunities for students to participate and express themselves. Further, they do not create supportive and relaxing classroom climates. In fact, many studies have indicated that the oral language is used more by teachers than by students, a situation inextricably manifested in Algeria where many English language students, particularly those at Saida University, exhibit a poor oral proficiency. They are usually too shy, and fear to use the language in communicative situations.

An extensive body of research acknowledges that the use of co-operative learning strategies such as the group work technique in teaching English as a foreign/second language has profound effects on alleviating students' speaking anxiety, and on promoting their oral skill. The group work technique refers to small groups of students who work together on specific academic tasks that are assigned by the teacher in the classroom.

The present survey aims at checking the effectiveness of the group work technique in diminishing students' speaking anxiety, and in developing their oral competency. English language students at Saida University form the case of investigation. This study aims also

at exploring the other strategies used by oral expression teachers in order to overcome students' speaking anxiety, and to maximize their participation in the classroom speaking activities.

In order to realize the purposes of the study, the researchers ask the following questions:

➤ How could teachers of oral expression reduce their students' speaking anxiety, and increase their participation in the classroom speaking activities?

➤ Does the use of the group work technique reduce students' speaking anxiety, and develop their oral competency?

The two study questions result in the following two hypotheses:

➤ Teachers of oral expression could reduce their students' speaking anxiety, and increase their participation in the classroom speaking activities through:

1. avoiding humiliating and overt error-correction manners.
2. using affective strategies such as humour.

➤ Teaching the speaking skill through the group work technique decreases students' speaking anxiety, and develops their oral language skill.

The method relied on in this survey is a descriptive method that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In order to answer the questions of the study and to test the hypotheses, the researchers have used three research tools: a questionnaire designed for License students within the department of English at Saida University, comprising both closed and open questions. The second instrument of research is an interview destined for oral expression teachers. The third research expedient is classroom observation. The samples of the study consist of 107 students enrolled in the License degree, and 2 university teachers of oral expression who are teaching at the department of Literature and English Language in Saida University.

This study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is an overview about the speaking skill, its definitions, importance, and the essential elements of a successful speaking lesson. It also encompasses a more detailed discussion about language anxiety, its definitions, effects, and its major sources. The second chapter provides a brief discussion about co-operative learning. It also sheds light on the impacts of the group work technique on diminishing students' speaking anxiety, as well as on promoting their oral skill. The

third chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the data collected from oral expression teachers' interview, License students' questionnaire, and the classroom observation. The fourth and the last chapter deals with the suggested strategies for decreasing students' anxiety towards speaking as well as maximizing their willingness to speak in the classroom speaking activities.

It is worth stating that this research is significant in the sense that:

➢ the speaking skill is among the four important skills which guarantees the attainment of oral fluency if taught through communicative and interactive strategies.

➢ most students experience different degrees of anxiety when they are speaking and expressing themselves in front of others, and this problem hinders most of them from engaging in speaking activities.

While conducting this survey, a number of problems have been encountered such as the lack of time, and the partial non-collaboration of respondents (some students did not answer the questionnaire carefully).

Chapter One: An Overview about the Speaking Skill and Language Anxiety

1. Introduction

The speaking skill is a productive skill used by many individuals in order to achieve a communicative goal. In learning this skill, many factors prevent them from developing it. Anxiety is one among these factors that affects negatively their oral performance. The present chapter provides a detailed discussion about the speaking skill: its definitions, importance, scholars' theories about it, and the essential elements of a successful speaking lesson. Furthermore, it sheds light on anxiety and its detrimental effects on foreign language learning and performance. The chapter also discusses the major sources of foreign language anxiety in the classroom, namely communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and other sources. Finally, it delves into students' behaviours resulting from language anxiety.

2. Definitions of the Speaking Skill

The speaking skill is a productive skill along with the writing skill. It refers to the ability to carry out a conversation in a verbal manner. This term has been given different definitions by a number of scholars. Tamimi and Attamimi define it in plain words as the "ability to express something in a spoken language" (31). According to Fulcher, "the speaking skill is the verbal use of language and a medium through which human beings communicate with each other" (qtd in Al-Tamimi and Attamimi 31); moreover, Pashaie and Khalaji see it as the "means through which learners and/or people can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions, intentions, hopes, and viewpoints" (45).

3. The Significance of the Speaking Skill

It is indeed extremely difficult to say that one skill is more significant than the other; in fact, the speaking skill is considered as the heart of a FL/SL because for many students mastering the speaking skill is the main goal of learning a foreign language. In this sense, McCarthy contends that "for students mastering speaking abilities is the ultimate goal of acquiring a foreign/second language" (cited in Aliakbari and Jamalvandi 15). For Ur "speaking seems the most significant skill because people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language" (quoted in Al-Hosni 23). This implies that linguistic competency should be correlated with communicative fluency. This is why;

students who do not master this skill are viewed and considered as incompetent. As a result, "speaking is seen as one of the central elements of communication in EFL teaching" (Aliakbari and Jamalvandi 15).

As it has been stated previously, the speaking skill has a paramount importance with regard to the other skills. Yet, teaching it successfully and effectively requires four essential elements that are mentioned in the section below.

4. The Essential Elements of a Successful Speaking Lesson

For a speaking lesson to be successful, it is important for teachers to take seriously into account the following essential elements. According to Ur, the first significant element of a successful speaking lesson is providing an opportunity for students to use the target language in classrooms (cited in Kusnierek 79). In other words, students should have a chance to express themselves. This can be achieved through dividing students into small groups because when students work with their peers in groups, they are more motivated to speak since their inhibition and hesitation have been lowered (79).

Participation is another important element of a successful speaking lesson. It means that all students should have an equal chance to participate and express their ideas in classrooms. Therefore, the teacher's task according to Ur is to make sure that all students have an opportunity to participate because there are few students who want to take a control over a task, and ignore the chances of other students for the sake of attracting their teacher's interest (quoted in Kusnierek 79).

Another important element of a successful speaking lesson is motivation; in order to increase students' willingness to speak, it is necessary for teachers to choose topics which are related to their students' interests and feelings. The final essential element that provides success for the speaking lesson is the level of the language used by teachers (Ur quoted in Kusnierek 79). That is to say, the teacher ought to choose tasks whose language level is similar to his students' linguistic and proficiency levels.

Generally speaking, the success of a speaking lesson is ineluctably linked with the implementation of those four elements by the teacher. In other words, teachers who divide their classes into small groups; who choose topics which are related to their students'

interests, and who use activities whose language level is similar to students' linguistic level won't suffer from students' reticence and reluctance in oral activities.

Because of the importance of the speaking skill, many theories have been written about it. These theories are different from each other in the sense that each scholar sees the speaking skill from a different angle. The following section will provide a detailed discussion about the speaking skill theories.

5. The Speaking Skill theories

The theories of Gower et al., Bygate, and Harmer provide ample information about the speaking skill. The theory of Gower et al states that the speaking skill has different aspects which are included in two main categories: accuracy and fluency. The former "involves the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation"; whereas, the latter is "the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously" (quoted in Ghaemi and Hassannejad 112); in other terms it refers to the ability of speakers to speak without too much hesitation and many pauses (112).

Bygate, on the other hand, mentions another theory about the speaking skill; he says that for a speaker to achieve a communicative goal through speaking, he should have these two main points: "knowledge of the language, and skill in using this knowledge" (112). The scholar says: "it is not enough to possess a certain amount of knowledge, but a speaker of the language should be able to use this knowledge in different situations".

A third theory was expounded by another scholar, Harmer. It contains two aspects: "knowledge of the language features, and the ability to process information on the spot" (cited in Ghaemi and Hassannejad 212). Language features according to Harmer include: "connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar, and negotiation language"; while information processing "allows retrieving the words and phrases that are stored in one's memory and then arranging them in syntactically correct sentences" (Harmer cited in Tuan and Mai 78). If the speaker possesses these two aspects, then it would be possible for him to achieve a successful communicative goal (Harmer quoted in Ghaemi and Hassannejad 212).

To sum up, the theories which are stated above are important in the sense that they provide much information about the nature of the speaking skill. It is important however to note that several factors hinder many students from learning it perfectly. One among these factors is known as "anxiety". This complex and multidimensional phenomenon maximizes particularly when students are performing an oral activity in classrooms. The sections below will provide an overview about the detrimental effects of anxiety on foreign language learning and performance.

6. Definitions of Anxiety

The term anxiety has been defined by Chastain as the feelings of nervousness, worry, uneasiness, and apprehension that are caused by the anticipation and imagination of something threatening (quoted in Riasati 32). On the other hand, Horwitz et al., offer another definition; they describe anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (125).

6.1. Types of Anxiety

There are three types of anxiety which are as follows: trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is "the tendency of a person to be nervous or feel anxious irrespective of the situation he/she is exposed to" (Pappamihiel cited in Riasati 908). From this definition, it could be possible to say that trait anxiety is permanent, stable, and impossible to eradicate. State anxiety, on the other hand, is the anxiety that arises in a particular situation (Riasati 908). More precisely, it is "the transient moment-to-moment experience of anxiety as an emotional reaction to the current situation" (Cattel and Schier cited in Khan and Zafar 118). Therefore, it is temporary, and it can diminish over time. According to MacIntyre and Gardner "state anxiety occurs when a person is exposed to a particular situation or event that is stressful to them" (quoted in Riasati 908); for instance some students may feel anxious and stressful according to the specific learning situation such as the time span before taking exams, or the teacher's designation of students and their recommendation to speak in class (Riasati 908).

The third type of anxiety, situation-specific anxiety, is the "probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation such as the following cases : "(i) during tests labeled as 'test anxiety', (ii) solving mathematic problems 'math anxiety', (iii) when speaking a SL/FL 'language anxiety'" (Khan and Zafar199). This type of anxiety occurs most commonly in learning and performing in the target language; for example some students may get stressful during the presentation of a project, or during the undertaking of an oral or written test. Hence, it can have profound and negative effects on students' performance.

It is pertinent to remark that among the three types of anxiety state and situation-specific anxiety are less harmful than trait anxiety because they can decrease and diminish over time. Let us now delve into foreign language anxiety.

7. Foreign Language Anxiety Definitions

There is no doubt that most of second/foreign language learners encounter high and different degrees of anxiety when they are asked by their teachers to express themselves in front of their classmates. The anxiety that occurs and arises specifically while learning and performing in the target language is known as "foreign language anxiety" or in short "language anxiety". This latter is defined as the state of apprehension, fear, frustration, and tension that are associated with performing in the second/foreign language.

MacIntyre and Gardner view FL anxiety as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language texts including speaking, listening, and learning" (cited in Mosaddaq 229). It is claimed that these two skills are the more anxiety-provoking for many students in FL activities (Horwitz et al., cited in Chan and Wu 293). Horwitz et al., give a more precise definition to language anxiety. They define it as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". FL anxiety is best described as a "situation-specific anxiety", and it is different from trait as well as state anxiety because it arises specifically during performing in the target language as for example public speaking, during tests/exams (Onwnegbuzic quoted in Mosaddaq 231). Anxiety can have facilitating as well as debilitating effects on language learning.

7.1. Facilitating/Helpful Anxiety

Although it is argued that anxiety is the core affective factor that hinders the majority of students from successfully learning the foreign language, but in reality there is a little body of research claiming that anxiety can have some positive effects on students' learning and performance; as for example keeping learners alert and attentive with the learning task. In this case, Oxford says: "anxious students listen to the instructions of the learning more carefully than others in order to take the necessary preparations beforehand" (cited in Subasi 31). For instance, anxious students listen more attentively to the teacher's explanation in order to obtain good grades in exams/tests than non- anxious students.

7.2. Debilitating/Harmful Anxiety

Anxiety however may also negatively and harmfully influence students' FL/SL performance in classrooms. In this regard, Zheng states that "although a certain level of anxiety may be beneficial, too much anxiety can lead to a debilitating effect, which may lead to avoidance of work or inefficient work performance" (2). In a similar way Scovel asserts that debilitating anxiety "motivates the students to assume an avoidance attitude and therefore tends to escape from the learning task to avoid the source of anxiety" (quoted in Chan and Wu 67). For instance, students with a high level of debilitating anxiety have low self-confidence and esteem, negative attitudes, poor language achievements, low participation especially in oral activities, and lower course grades.

This impediment of performance and achievement is glaringly described by MacIntyre. The scholar mentions four major effects of anxiety on SL/FL learning and performance. First, academically, language anxiety has a negative influence on language proficiency where "high levels of language anxiety are associated with low levels of academic achievement in SL/FL learning" (cited in Zheng 909). Second, socially, according to MacIntyre anxiety has a detrimental impact on the social side of the students. He claims that "students with high anxiety level are not interested to take part in interpersonal communication with others". That is to say, they avoid the interpersonal communication whenever possible.

Third, cognitively, the scholar says that "anxiety prevents certain information from entering a learner's cognitive processing system". More precisely, anxiety sometimes prevents students from acquiring new concepts and ideas, and develops their cognitive capacities. Finally, personally, the students may have an unpleasant experience during learning a target language, becoming thereby a traumatic experience for them. This unpleasant experience may dramatically affect their self-esteem and confidence (909).

It should be highlighted however, that the effects of anxiety depend on the degree of the task difficulty. In this context, MacIntyre underlines that when the task is relatively too simple, FL anxiety is facilitating. If the task is too complex and difficult, FL anxiety is debilitating (quoted in Wu 88). It means that students feel less stressful when the task is easier and simple, and more anxious when the assignments are difficult and challenging.

Generally speaking, despite the fact that anxiety has a beneficial effect on language learning and performance, but much of it may prevent and hinder students from successfully learning a FL; more precisely, it is seen as detrimental instead of facilitating and helpful to language learning. Therefore, anxious students have low self-esteem, negative attitudes, and other difficulties.

Language anxiety is attributed to several factors. Communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, students' low self-perceptions, teachers' and students' beliefs about language teaching and learning are among the major sources of language anxiety.

8. Sources of Language Anxiety

Scholars have mentioned that FL anxiety can be attributed to different factors. Horwitz claims that FL anxiety in the classroom is related to three performance anxieties including: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (quoted in Custrone 56).Young, on the other hand, speaks about six sources of language anxiety, namely personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language tests (247).

Chapter One: An Overview about the Speaking Skill and Language Anxiety

8.1. Horwitz's three Sources of Language Anxiety

8.1.1. Communication Apprehension

According to MacCroskey, CA is "an individual level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with other person or persons" (231). Besides, Horwitz et al., describe it as: "the discomfort, frustration, fear or shyness of talking to other people due to the limitation that the person has in expressing his/her thoughts and in understanding what others are saying" (cited in Mejia 2). It is possible to say that this anxiety occurs in interpersonal communication.

CA may exist outside as well as inside classrooms where the majority of students fear and feel stressful when communicating orally with other students or their teachers simply because they have inadequate knowledge in the target language, or because they worry about being negatively evaluated when committing errors and looking foolish in front of their peers (MacIntyre and Gardner cited in Mosaddaq 234). In other words, communication apprehension is associated with the fear of negative evaluation (cited in Mosaddaq 234). This anxiety is as generally referred as "social anxiety". Ansari further states that "students who exhibit communication apprehension do not feel comfortable communicating in the target language in front of others due to their limited knowledge of the language" (39). This implies that students who have insufficient and inadequate knowledge are usually experiencing a feeling of uneasiness, frustration, and tension while speaking with others. As to the reasons behind the apprehension of communication, MacIntyre and Gardner link it with the students' negative self-perceptions caused by the inability to understand others and make themselves understood(quoted in Mahmoodzadeh 467).For that reason, they are withdrawn and reticent most of the time in classroom activities.

8.1.2. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is a further contributor to students' language anxiety. The majority of students apprehend the making of mistakes while speaking. Students with fear of negative evaluation believe that learning a FL entails no mistakes. They are more concerned with the correctness of their speech and perfect pronunciation as well (Horwitz et al., cited in Mosaddaq 235). This means that they do not consider errors as a natural and

normal part of learning a FL/SL, but as a threat to their self-image, and a source for negative evaluation from their teacher as well as their peers (Ansari 39). As a result, students with fear of negative evaluation do rarely participate in classroom speaking activities. Fear of negative evaluation therefore entails "an avoidance of evaluative situations" (Walson and Friend cited in Mossaddaq 230). Scholars state that fear of negative evaluation is closely correlated to CA (MacIntyre and Gardner quoted in Rebecca 235). In other words, it causes communication apprehension.

8.1.3. Test Anxiety

The term test anxiety has been defined by Horwitz et al., as the "fear of failure especially when skills are being measured formally as in exams" (quoted in Custrone 56); whereas, Riasati simply defines it as "the apprehension towards academic evaluation" (907). In fact, no one can deny that tests/exams or in general academic evaluations cause high levels of anxiety for nearly all students. Learners feel more anxious and worry during tests and exams due to their apprehension of failing and taking bad marks.

Chastain points out that low test anxiety is related to greater success (quoted in Mosadddaq 234). This implies then when students feel comfortable and less stressful during tests, they will obtain good grades and vice versa. In this sense, Daly finds that "students experience more language anxiety in highly evaluative situations" (234). More precisely, the more ambiguous and unfamiliar the test is, the higher the language anxiety will be (234).

8.2. Young's Six Sources of Language Anxiety

Young further identifies six potential sources of language anxiety which are associated with the learner, teacher, and the instructional practice (427). According to him language anxiety arises from: "a) personal and interpersonal anxieties, b) learner beliefs about language learning, c) instructor's beliefs about language teaching, d) instructor-learner interactions, e) classroom procedures, and f) language test" (ibid).

Personal and interpersonal anxieties are among the most common sources of language anxiety; according to Young "low self-esteem and competitiveness are the two significant sources of learner anxiety" (247). Several scholars along with Young contend that competitiveness provokes much of anxiety as there are several students who compare

themselves to other students (Bailey cited in Young 247). In a similar way, Kreshen suggests that "an individual's degree of self-esteem is highly related to language anxiety" (cited in Young 247). He adds that individuals with "low self-esteem worry about what their peers think, and they are concerned with pleasing them" (247).

Learners' beliefs about language learning are a significant source of language anxiety (Young 248). Many students have unrealistic thoughts concerning language learning. Most of them consider perfect pronunciation and correctness of utterances important for successful language learning (Gynan and Horwitz quoted in Young 248). Furthermore, Horwitz mentions other unrealistic students' beliefs about language learning as for example the view that "two years is enough time to become competent in another language, or the belief that some are more able to learn a foreign language than others"(cited in Young 428). Hence, these beliefs lead to anxiety arousal because several of them are unrealistic and wrong. For more clarification we can mention the example of beginners, who though motivated find that their pronunciation is not perfect like that of a native speaker and end up frustrated and stressed because for them pronunciation is the most important aspect of a language (Horwitz cited in Young 428).

A further source of language anxiety is instructor's beliefs about language teaching. In this respect, Brandl states that the majority of the teachers think "a little bit of intimidation necessary and supportive motivator for promoting students' performance" (quoted in Young 428). Nowadays, a lot of teachers consider punishment as an effective strategy for motivating students to learn, and improving their performance as well. In fact, it heightens anxiety. Young further highlights: "instructors who believe their role is to correct students constantly when they make any error; who feel that they cannot have students working in pairs because the class may get out of control (…) may be contributing to students' language anxiety". As a result, teachers' unrealistic thoughts about language teaching have also profound effects on student's learning and performance, and aggravate their language anxiety as well.

Instructor-learner interactions represent another contributor to language anxiety. Scholars like Koch and Tarrell contend that harsh and humiliating manners of correcting students' mistakes are identified and cited as provoking anxiety (cited in Young 429). For instance, the majority of teachers all over the Arab countries correct their students' errors

in less friendly and rigid manners which intensify their language anxiety. On the other hand, Horwitz points out: "some error correction is necessary; the issue for the student, then; is not necessarily error correction but the manner of error correction, when, how often, and most importantly how errors are corrected" (429).

Classroom procedures are also cited as a source of language anxiety; according to Young "anxieties associated with classroom procedures center primarily on having to speak in the target language in front of a group" (429). There is a general consensus that oral presentations lead to anxiety in language performance (Koch and Terrell quoted in Young 429). Some examples of those oral presentations include oral quizzes and obligations to respond orally in the target language (ibid).

The final source of language anxiety is similar to what Horwitz calls test anxiety. Young is with Horwitz's perspective where he states that anxiety can generate from academic evaluation in classrooms. Moreover, the scholar asserts that "students also experience anxiety when they spend hours studying the materials that are emphasized in class only to find their tests assess different material or utilize question-types with which they have no experience" (429). This is what generally happens when during tests and exams the questions and the content of the tests are not in accordance with what the learners have studied in the classroom. In this case, Young says: "the greater the degree of student evaluation and the more unfamiliar and ambiguous the test tasks and formats, the more the learner anxiety produced" (429).

Having identified the major sources behind language anxiety, it is worth examining the impress of this psychological phenomenon on students' oral proficiency in particular.

9. Research on the Effects of Anxiety on Students' Oral Proficiency

A part from general language anxiety, most students experience high levels of anxiety when participating in oral activities in classrooms. They are stressed and worry when they are asked or called by their teachers to express themselves, and talked in front of others. So, it is arguable that anxiety is a prevalent and observable psychological phenomenon in learning English, more importantly in learning the speaking skill. Indeed, it is often suggested that "speaking is the most anxiety-provoking language skill in foreign language learning situation" (Keramida cited in Subasi 32).

Chapter One: An Overview about the Speaking Skill and Language Anxiety

It has been proven that anxiety hinders many students from improving their oral competency and successfully learning the English language in a general sense. In this regard, Onwnegbuzie et al., believe that "language learning anxiety can influence students' learning in general and their fluency of speech in particular" (cited in Riasati 909). Another scholar, Hashimoto, asserts approximately the same view: "anxiety has a strong influence on individuals' perceived competence which will in turn negatively affect their willingness to communicate in language classrooms" (quoted in Riasati 909). Hence, students' reluctance to participate and engage in speaking activities (as presenting a short talk in front of the class), low motivation, and negative attitudes towards the oral skill are due to anxiety. In other words, anxiety is the core factor behind students' poor oral proficiency.

On the other hand, Ganschow et al., have carried out a study where they found out that students' oral achievements are different from one student to another in terms of the degree of FL anxiety they suffer from (cited in Zia and Sultan 468). Furthermore, other scholars have shown that "language anxiety is linked with SL oral performance which causes SL oral achievement to suffer" (Horwitz et al; MacIntyre et al., and Kitano cited in Gkonon 17). Thus, anxiety makes several students less self-confident, unable to express themselves in the target language, and risk-undertakers in classrooms.

To sum up, anxiety has indeed detrimental effects on learning the language in general and in learning the speaking skill in particular. Many teachers complain about the reticence and unwillingness of most students to speak and express their opinions in classrooms. The above mentioned problems are mainly due to anxiety that inhibits many of them not only from participating in oral activities, but also from improving their oral communication. If teachers take the necessary steps to diminish this psychological phenomenon, not only will students' speaking ability develop, but their attitudes towards their teachers and class will also become more positive.

A question worth examining now is the students' manifestations of anxiety, in other words the behaviours they display while under the state of anxiety.

10. Student Manifestations of anxiety

When students are anxious, it is evident that they will do behaviours that express and reflect their anxiety. For the sake of coping with language anxiety, it is better for teachers to recognize students' behaviors resulting from language anxiety. In this case, different scholars have stated students' various signs and manifestations of anxiety in FL/SL classrooms. Young offers the following students' manifestations of anxiety in the FL classroom as "avoiding eye-contact, short answer responses, avoiding activities in class, coming unprepared to class, acting indifferently, cutting class, and avoiding to speak in the foreign language in class" (430).

On the other hand, Steinberg and Horwitz mention other students' behaviours resulting from language anxiety in classrooms as for example "giving more concrete rather than interpretative information in the FL"(quoted in Young 430).Hashemi and Abbasi further mention the following signs of anxious students: "poor performance in spoken activities, reading from the script while giving presentation, either too fast or too slow speed of speech, avoiding the situation that appears to be anxiety evoking" (641).

Furthermore, Leary states three categories of behaviours arising from social anxiety which are: 1) "arousal-mediated responses, 2) disaffitiative behaviours, and 3) image-protection behaviours" (429). According to the scholar, arousal-mediated responses "are the side-effects of individuals' activation of their sympathetic nervous systems" (429); in this respect, he says that people manifest anxiety "when they squirm in their seats, fidget, play with their hair, clothes, or other manipulable objects, stutter and stammer as they talk, and generally appear jittery and nervous" (429).

Disaffitiative behaviours on the other hand are characterized by "the actions that reduce social interactions" (Leary cited in Young 429). According to the scholar, disaffitiative behaviours are manifested by "fewer initiations of conversations, less participation in conversations, and shorter speaking periods when in front of an audience" (429). The last behaviours that result from social anxiety are called by Leary as 'image-protection behaviours. These behaviours are characterized by "smiling and nodding frequently, by seldom interrupting others, and by giving frequent communicative feedback such as 'uh, huh'" (429). According to the scholar "these responses may serve to protect an image of the person as friendly, polite, interested, and even sociable" (429).

Generally speaking, language anxiety impacts negatively students' performance. For that reason, it is necessary for teachers to recognize and pay a special attention to students' behaviours resulting from language anxiety which may serve as a key solution to help them cope with this psychological phenomenon. In this sense, Young states the following suggestions to teachers when they observe these signs. He says: a) "be sensitive to the signals students provide, b) recognize the behaviours for what they are, and c) work to reduce language anxiety" (quoted in Abbasi and Hashemi 461).

11. Conclusion

It could be concluded from this chapter that the speaking skill is the heart of a FL/SL, and that a sound acquisition of a foreign language invokes not only linguistic competency but communicative fluency as well. Yet, the betterment of one's oral skill can be severely undermined by language anxiety. The latter is a prominent factor behind students' poor proficiency in the second language. This psychological phenomenon increases particularly when students are talking and expressing themselves in front of others. It must be noted also that this bad and complex phenomenon makes students less self-confident when speaking with others because of their fear of making mistakes, and being negatively evaluated either from their teachers or their peers. Indeed, the problem of foreign language anxiety touches and affects negatively the oral proficiency of several students. For that reason, it needs hasty solutions from teachers and educational stakeholders as a whole. The use of group work stands as a significant expedient for countervailing this problem; this constitutes the core of the second chapter.

1. Introduction

Co-operative or collaborative learning has emerged as an approach to classroom instruction. It has received a considerable attention from several scholars because of its crucial role in enhancing and improving education. The present chapter encompasses various definitions to co-operative learning alongside its basic elements. Also, it discusses briefly the most important differences between co-operative, competitive and individualistic learning. Furthermore, it sheds light on the effects of the group work technique on reducing students' anxiety towards speaking, and on promoting their oral language proficiency. In addition, it provides the criterion of assessing group work and forming effective groups.

2. Scholars' Different Definitions for Co-operative Learning

Co-operative learning has served as one of the means of active learning. It is in sharp contrast to traditional or direct instruction since it is learner-centered. The term CL generally describes instructional techniques in which students work together to achieve shared learning goals. Although there are some differences between co-operative and collaborative learning, but sometimes they are used interchangeably. Researchers have provided different definitions to CL. Olsen and Kagan (8) give a more precise definition to CL. They define it as "a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups, and in which each learner is accountable for his/her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of other" (8).Similarly, Johnson and Johnson offer another definition to this term."Co-operative learning is the instructional use of groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (34).

3. The Basic Elements of Co-operative Learning

Johnson and Johnson have advocated that "there is a crucial difference between simply putting students in groups to learn and in structuring cooperation among students" (32). They have mentioned that cooperation is not:

a) having students sit side by side at the same table, and talk with each other as they do their individual assignments, b) having students do a task individually with instructions that the ones who finish first are to help the slower students, or c) assigning report to a group where one student does all the work and others put their name on it (32).

In order for a lesson to be cooperative, Johnson and Johnson have proposed five essential elements which include the following:

3.1. Positive Interdependence

Positive interdependence is the first important element of cooperation. It is described by Johnson and Johnson as the "heart of co-operative learning" (32). In this respect, they assert: "positive interdependence occurs when students believe that they sink or swim together" (32). In other words, group members have to realize that they are linked and related to each other in such a way that they cannot succeed unless the other members of the group succeed (and vice versa) (32). According to Al-Tamimi et al., "without the help of one member, the group will not able to achieve the desired objective" (31); it means that group members are related i.e. they are not independent from each other.

3.2. Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction

Face-to-face promotive interaction is the second essential element of cooperation. According to Johnson and Johnson "when positive interdependence is established among teammates, teachers need to maximize the opportunity for students to promote each others' success" (32).Promotive interaction is defined by Roger and Johnson as "individuals encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts to achieve, complete tasks in order to reach the group's goals" (3). In line with Roger and Johnson, Johnson and Johnson have stated that "students promote each other's success by helping, assisting, supporting, encouraging, and praising each other's efforts to learn" (33). For instance, when a small group of students work together on an academic task; they should assist and discuss together how to do the task.

3.3. Individual Accountability/Personal Responsibility

Individual accountability or personal responsibility is the third vital element of cooperation; it means that students are held individually responsible and accountable for the completion of the task and for facilitating each other's efforts to learn (Jonhson and

Jonhson 35). When for instance a small group of students work together on an academic task, each student is responsible to do his/her fair share of the group's work and for assisting, supporting each other. According to Johnson and Johnson "individual accountability exists when the performance of each individual student is assessed and the results are given back to the group and the individual" (35); there are ways that teachers use to structure individual accountability including: "a) giving an individual test to each student, b) randomly selecting one student to represent the entire group, or c) having each student explains what he/she has learned to a classmate" (35).

3.4. Social Skills

Social skills are another significant element of cooperation. Crandall believes that in order for a group of students to cooperate successfully "individual members need to develop not only linguistic, but also social skills which facilitate teamwork, create trust and enhance communication, leadership, problem solving, and decision-making in group interaction" (cited in Arnold 228). In order for students to coordinate efforts to achieve their shared goals, they must: "1) get to know and trust each other, 2) communicate accurately and unambiguously, 3) accept and support each other and 4) resolve conflict constructively" (quoted in Roger and Johnson 4). Therefore, students must be taught social skills to interact effectively, and to attain quality cooperation.

3.5. Group Processing

Group processing is the final important element of cooperation. It exists when group members evaluate their efforts and contributions to the group. Johnson and Johnson have contended that students must be given time at the end of each session to: "a) describe what member actions are helpful and unhelpful and b) make decisions about what behaviours to continue or change" (34). In other words, students need time to evaluate the efforts which help them, and within the same token ameliorate or change the less helpful ones. Group processing helps students develop their learning and builds a sense of responsibility; according to Klimoviene et al., "group processing increases learning dramatically, and builds a sense of responsibility as well as helps groups work more effectively" (79).

Generally speaking, when these elements exist between small groups of students, they achieve a higher level of success and develop their social skills. Hence, it is necessary for teachers to pay a great attention to these basic elements when implementing CL; according

to Johnson and Johnson "in order to effectively use co-operative learning, teachers must understand the nature of cooperation and the essential components of well-structured cooperative lesson" (35). Group goals and individual accountability are the two essential elements of an effective CL; the section below will discuss them in details.

4. What Makes Co-operative Learning Work?

Scholars state that CL is to be effective if these two elements are presented which are "group goals" and "individual accountability" (Slavin 1995, 2009; Rohrbbeck et al., 2003; Webb 2008 quoted in Dumont et al., 170). That is, "group members have to work to achieve some goals, or to gain rewards, or recognition and the success of the group must depend on the individual learning of every group member" (Dumont et al., 170). As it has been mentioned earlier, individual accountability means that group members are held responsible for doing the task, and for explaining to each other. Sometimes some group members do not take time to explain the activity to their group members or even to ask their opinions. In other words, the more able students do not take time to explain to the less able students. In this situation, Dumont et al., assert that "in this circumstance, it may be easier for students to give each other answer than to explain concepts or skills" (170).

In contrast, Dumont et al., say that when the teammates spend time in explaining the way to solve a problem for instance, and listen to each other's opinions; every member learns something from the task (170). In fact, group members are individually accountable for providing explanations instead of simply giving or receiving answers to do a specific task. In this sense Dumont et al., point out: "group goals and individual accountability motivate students to give explanations and to take one another's learning seriously instead of giving answers" (170).

It can be concluded that CL has a great impact on the instructional process only if group goals and individual accountability are taken into account. These two elements lead to the increase students' motivation towards explaining and clarifying notions rather than giving or receiving answers. Let us now discuss briefly the main differences between co-operative learning, competitive and individualistic learning.

5. Co-operative Learning vs. Competitive and Individualistic Learning

Scholars have mentioned some differences between co-operative, competitive and individualistic learning. Achievement, interpersonal relationships, and psychological health and social competence are among these differences.

5.1. Achievement

Roger and Johnson state that "achievement is always the product of many hands and heads" (72); they point out that more than 375studies have been conducted to give an answer to the question of "how successful competitive, individualistic, and co-operative efforts are in promoting productivity and achievement?" (72)This extensive research confirms that working together towards achieving a common goal produces higher achievement and greater productivity than working alone (Johnson and Johnson 33). Moreover, CL results in process gain; that is to say, "more high-level reasoning, more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions", greater transfer of what is learnt within one situation to another, and more time on task than do competitive and individualistic efforts"(34).

5.2. Interpersonal Relationships

One of the most important goals of implementing CL in classrooms is to create kind of relationships and positive attitudes among heterogeneous students (Roger and Jonhson 33); more than 180 studies have been conducted for the sake of making comparison between the relative effects of co-operative, competitive, and individualistic experiences on interpersonal attraction (Johnson and Johnson 34). The data indicates that co-operative experiences promote greater interpersonal relationships than do competitive and individualistic ones. Furthermore, working cooperatively strengthens the relationships among group members although they initially dislike each other, or are different from each other in terms of gender, social class, level, and ethnicity (35). In the same juncture, Roger and Johnson highlight: "students who work cooperatively; they will love each other and develop positive relationships and attitudes whatever the sort of diversity and heterogeneity is between them than does learning competitively and individualistically" (73).Further, Roger and Johnson underline that "students who are isolated from their peers and who do not have friends are more likely to be at risk for violent and destructive behaviour" (73).

5.3. Psychological Health and Social Competence

A considerable amount of studies have underlined that working cooperatively with peers promotes psychological health, self-esteem, and social competencies than does working competitively or individualistically (Roger and Johnson 73). Additionally, "when individuals work together to complete assignments, they interact (improving social skills and competencies), promote each other's success (gaining self-worth), and form personal as well as professional relationships" (73). Furthermore, when a small group of students learn cooperatively they will build personal ego-strength, self-confidence and autonomy (73).

Based on the above studies, it can be said that CL has a far more paramount importance than competitive and individualistic learning. It encourages students to interact in positive manners to promote each other's success. Moreover, working together results in higher achievements, greater productivity, and positive relationships and attitudes among heterogeneous students; furthermore, students who work together are more self-confident, autonomous and see themselves as prestigious and valued. Generally speaking, CL has many strategies, the most important of which is the group work strategy.

6. Definitions of Group Work

As it has been stated previously, group work is a strategy of CL that has emerged as an important pedagogical strategy in the field of foreign language teaching. The term group work is defined by several scholars as small groups of students usually (4 or 5) who work together to complete a task that is assigned by the teacher. Doff describes group work as follows: "In group work, the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together; all the groups work at the same time" (138).Johnson et al., define it as: "a co-operative activity during which students share aims and responsibilities to complete a task assigned by the teacher in groups" (15).According to Johnson and Johnson a small group may be defined as two or more individuals who:

- ✓ Interact with each other;
- ✓ are interdependent;
- ✓ define themselves and are defined by others as belonging to the group;
- ✓ share norms concerning matters of common interest;
- ✓ participate in a system of interlocking roles and influence each other" (13).

7. Criteria for Forming Effective Groups

Teachers are sometimes uncertain about who should form groups: instructors or students themselves, the number of students in each group, and the nature of groups: heterogeneous or homogeneous groups (Nation 23). Researchers here propose some guidelines for teachers to form effective groups. The first criterion is that teachers should form teams rather than allowing students to self-select (Oakley, Brent, Felder, and Elhajj 20). It is clear that when the teacher permits students to select with whom to work; they will form groups with friends. This can lead to what is termed as "homogeneous groups" where there are certain similarities among group members as for instance, all male, all female, all strong, all weak, and so on. Scholars say that when groups are selected by the students themselves this can lead to social division and marginalization of some students (Gillies and Boyle cited in Chiriac et al., 7).

The second criterion that teachers should consider is the group size. It is asserted that the size of groups is significant for an effective group work (Davies 372). The scholar argues that groups that contain (4-5) are better than larger groups. When groups are larger, the problem of passengers appears. It is also known as (free-loading/riding). Bourner et al., describe passengers as: "students who benefit from a group project without making a sufficient contribution to the work" (quoted in Mellor 3). In other words, larger groups lead to lower contributions from individual members. Also, when groups become too large the degree of cooperation among group members decreases; besides, "too large groups can hinder participation in discussions" (quoted in Chiriac et al., 6).

Another criterion that should be taken into account by teachers in assigning groups is group formation. Some scholars claim that "students in general benefit from working in mixed-ability groups" (7). Moreover, Huss argues that "groups should contain one low-ability, two medium-ability, and one high-achieving student" (cited in Alyaseen 96). In general, group members should have the following characteristics:

- Various levels of prior achievement;
- various levels of prior experience;
- a gender mix;
- an ethnic and linguistic mix;
- various learning styles (Burnaby 4).

A great number of scholars indicate that mixed-ability groups are better than the same ability groups because "the weak students get the benefit of seeing how good students approach assignments while the strong students who do the tutoring may benefit even more" (Felder et al., 11).Other scholars point out that teachers should try also to form teams who can meet outside class (Felder and Brent 2).

Briefly speaking, it would be better for teachers to take into account the above mentioned criteria in forming teams: groups of (4 or 5) students consisting of mixed students including: sex, ethnicity, language proficiency. It is also better for teachers to assign groups by themselves rather than allowing students to self-select in order to avoid the problem of social division in classrooms and the marginalization of some students. It is argued that when students work with their peers in small groups, they may pass through five various stages. The section below provides discussion about each stage.

8. Tuckman's Five Stages of Group Development

There is strong evidence that when individuals come together in groups; they may pass through different stages. Tuckman states five stages of group development which are classified as: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (1). Forming is the initial phase of group development. At this stage, the group can hardly be considered as such, it is merely a collection of individuals who rather prefer to keep quiet than speak out until they identify their duties in the group (Naville 15). More precisely, in this stage the group members are not certain about the purpose, structure, and leadership of the group; this is why they depend on the teacher in seeking directions (Naville 15).This stage determines when group members perceive themselves as part of the group (tep.uoregon.edu/technology/black-board/…/groups.pdf).

"Storming" is the second phase of group development. As the group begins to work together; its members start developing conflicts (Naville 15). In other words, group members may compete for dominant positions in the group. They also begin to withdraw. Many groups do not develop at this stage because they lack social skills. If conflict is not resolved at this stage; it will frustrate the coming stages.

"Norming" is the third stage of the group development process during which group members become more familiar to each other, and the group starts functioning as a cohesive unit. They also accept the team, the rules of the team, and their own roles and

responsibilities. Moreover, group members are held responsible for achieving the objectives of the group. The norming stage completes when the group members are able to put a common target, of achieving group's objectives.

"Performing" is the fourth stage where the group is finally ready to start working after diagnosing and resolving their internal and personal conflicts of acceptance and sharing responsibility. Hence, group members can devote energy to achieve the group's objectives (Management Consulting Courses.Com/Lesson 24 Group and Formation of Groups). This stage is not always reached by all teams. The fifth and final stage of group development is known as "adjourning". After the group members accomplish their target for which the group is created, the group starts gradually disappear (Management Consulting Courses.Com/Lesson 24 Group and Formation of Groups).

The following diagram represents the above mentioned five stages model.

Figure 1: Tuckman's Five Stages of Group Development
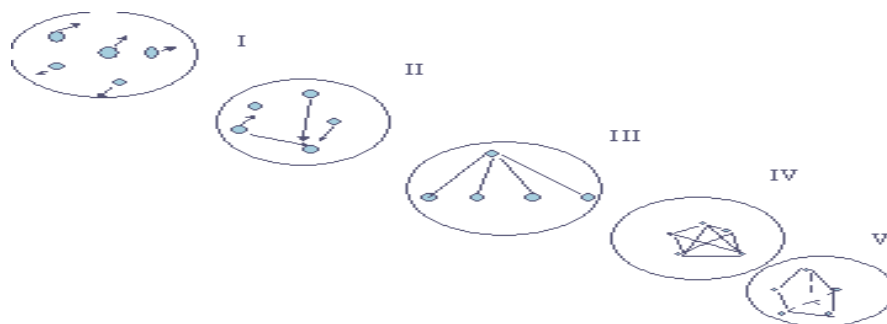
Broadly Generally speaking, group members may experience the different stages of group development. scholars state that the length of time that groups take to pass through these developmental stages will vary; they also advocate that groups have to pass at least the first three stages in order to achieve a high team performance. Having explained the five stages of group development, let us now discuss briefly the major rules of a successful group work.

9. The Seven Rules of a Successful Group Work

Many university teachers and even students have negative attitudes towards group work. According to Mintz "teachers and students regard group work as a waste of time; they are convinced that a few team members do all the work while others receive equal

credit" (1). In fact, group work is an effective way to encourage students to participate, and make them actively involved in their own learning, especially those who are shy. The scholar has suggested a variety of rules to make group work successful and beneficial (1).

The first rule that is stated by the scholar is that group work cannot be busy work. It means that group work should be meaningful, and must be directly connected to the objectives of the course (1). The second essential rule which leads to successful group work is that the task must be clear. More precisely, the group work should be "structured around a problem to solve, an argument to devise, or a project to complete" (1). Hence, it is important for teachers to avoid ambiguous tasks. The third rule for a successful group work that the scholar states is that students must feel a stake in the activity. The scholar points out that "if the objective of the group work is to solve a problem or to devise an argument; it is necessary for the teacher to ask the students to write their ideas before the group meets" (1). The fourth rule which makes group work more successful is group size. In other words, each group should consist of four or five students. The fifth rule is that group members' roles need to be clearly defined. It means that each group member has a specific role to do such as the analyst, the detective, the umpire and so on for the sake of avoiding conflicts and disagreements between group members (1). The sixth important rule that is stated by the scholar is debriefing each group. According to the scholar the teacher asks each student individually to write the decisions reached by the group, then the latter will "weave together all students' comments and ideas" (1). The seventh and final crucial rule of successful group work is that the teacher gives each student the opportunity to self-evaluation; it means that the teacher asks the students to express their views as to the effectiveness of the group and its dynamics (1).

Generally speaking, these are the most important rules of successful group work that should be taken into consideration by teachers when they are teaching through this instructional strategy. When group work is successful, it will have positive outcomes on students. It also helps them to develop interpersonal skills, interdependence, accountability, and a sense of self-esteem. This pedagogical strategy is more effective if it is implemented in the right and successful way.

10. Assessment of Group Work

How to assess group work is the central question for several teachers. The criterion of assessing students in groups is largely different from assessing students individually. Gibbs in this area has asserted that "allocating a single group mark to all members of a group rarely leads to appropriate students learning" (1). In addition, he adds that teachers who assess group product, and ignore each group member's performance entail many problems as for example freeloading and beliefs of unfair evaluation (1). In order to assess group members in a manner that makes students satisfied, and to evade the problem of some group members who contribute too little, scholars like Mclunis et al., argue that it is necessary for the teacher to give two grades: one for the group presentation of the product, and an individual mark for each student (23). Others advocate peer assessment, in other words teachers allow group members to assess their friends. In reality, peer assessment it is not reliable as tutor assessment.

On the whole, assessment and grading practices play an essential role in directing students learning in group work, and in optimizing interaction among students and the teacher as well. For the sake of preventing such problems and making teaching through group work more effective and beneficial, it is necessary for teachers to assess students along the previously mentioned criteria. It is proven that teaching the speaking skill through the group work technique minimizes students' speaking anxiety, and develops their oral competency. The following section deals with the impacts of this technique.

11. Minimizing Students' Speaking Anxiety through the Group Work Technique

Most of the university teachers of oral expression complain about students who are passive, inhibited, and anxious. It is well-known that a lot of university students suffer from anxiety towards speaking. This psychological phenomenon increases particularly when these students are required to speak the target language in front of the class. As it has been stated previously, speaking is considered as the most anxiety-provoking skill (Keramida quoted in Hashemi and Abbasi 31).

Scholars attribute learners' FL anxiety to traditional learning systems which make the classroom climate more formal and stressful for students. In this respect, Hashemi and Abbasi underline that "learners feel more and under stress in classroom environments that

follow the traditional learning systems" (641).Conversely, they add that "learners feel less anxious and stressful in the classroom environments that emphasize collaborative activities among the teachers and students" (641); for instance some Algerian university teachers of oral expression sometimes give a student a short talk or anything to present in front of the whole class; this student will feel more stressful because if he/she makes mistakes. His/her teacher and peers will evaluate him/her negatively. These scholars have emphasized that students feel at ease when they are working with their classmates in small groups.

Many scholars have identified the negative impacts of learners' speaking anxiety on their learning in general and on their oral performance in particular. This is why they have dwelt on the issue with a view to finding solutions. They advise teachers especially, teachers of oral expression, to make greater efforts and use activities where students work with their classmates in small groups. Young recommends: "the first step in reducing anxiety is to have students participate in speaking tasks because students are more eager to participate in oral activities in small groups" (cited in Iakovos and Keremida 43). In the same context, he adds: "pair and group work could contribute to a low-anxiety classroom situation" (quoted in Suwant 56). In line with Young, Brawn stresses the use of group work; he says: "group work creates a favorable climate for communication by relieving students of the anxiety of having to talk in front of the whole class" (55). It means that group work makes students less anxious when they speak, and creates positive and non-threatening atmosphere for communication.   In similar model, Kitano advocates that in case of competitiveness in classrooms, the level of anxiety will increase (quoted in Ivokos and Keramida 40). In this case, the teacher will give all his/her attention to the students who participate and speak, and neglects those who do not. The scholar advises teachers to create a "sense of community, so that students do not perceive it as competitive while pair and group work are incorporated" (40).

On the efficacy of group work, Word who maintains that a key factor in reducing students' speaking anxiety is creating a sense of community (cited in Suwant 51). He affirms that "many participants mention that working in groups or having study partners appears to reduce anxiety, and create a relaxing classroom environment". Moreover, Hilmi et al., emphasize that group work helps students to overcome their anxiety to speak up in front of the whole class (23). Hence, the best outlet to diminish the speaking anxiety is the use of group work. These scholars have also advocated that the implementation of

speaking activities through group work provides an opportunity for students to interact, and to gain self- confidence to alleviate the fear in speaking activities (ibid 24).

According to the scholars' studies, it is possible to say that group work plays an essential role in the reduction of their speaking anxiety; therefore, it is necessary for Algerian university teachers of oral expression to make interventions in the classroom, and create a sense of community where students work together rather than individually; in other words, to create a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere.

12. Group Work and its Positive Impact on Students' Oral Skill

There is a widespread agreement among many researchers on the fact that students who learn with their peers are more successful than those who learn alone. Vygostky strongly asserts that "there is a difference between what individuals could achieve by themselves, and what they could do with the help from a more experienced individual" (cited in Cohen 12). In recent years, there is a wealth of evidence that it is hard to improve and enhance students' oral communication in the traditional teaching (William quoted in Khader 204).

Many pieces of research have been conducted to find out possible strategies to improve student's oral competency. One among these strategies is group work. It has been the subject of many discussions and debates where a wide variety of scholars have emphasized that group work plays vitally an important and effective role in developing students' learning in general and their oral competency in particular. Nunan in this regard advocates that one of the core reasons of using group work is to make learners learn to speak in a foreign language (English) (cited in Jeyasala165). In the same perspective, Qu and Yang stress: "Group work is a good way to make students know how to put English in a communicative use" (776); in other words, this pedagogical strategy provides students opportunities and a full freedom to talk and express their ideas without inhibition, and more importantly it improves their ability to communicate orally in the target language (English).

The majority of the Algerian students have poor oral skill due to the fact that some university teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to talk and express their ideas. They also ignore the students who suffer from anxiety towards speaking, and do not encourage them to speak. So, in group work activities students have a chance and freedom to speak because it is considered as a student-centered approach where teacher's

talking time is less than students' talking time. In this scope, Qu and Yang mention that through group work, students develop their ability to communicate orally in English and their capabilities in solving problems (776). Moreover, this technique creates non-threatening, supportive, and pleasant learning atmosphere where students have better opportunities for freedom to speak (776). Praising the virtues of the group work strategy, Jacques states:

> "Teaching and learning in small groups has a valuable part to play in the all-round education of students. It allows them to negotiate meanings, to express themselves in the language of the subject, and to establish more intimate contact with academic staff than more formal methods permit" (quoted in Gunn 5).

On the other hand, Wu adds that "there is no denying that co-operative learning through group work embodies active communicative practice which is crucial to the development of students' oral proficiency" (32). Additionally, Custrone confirms that "group work activities have to be effective in getting students to speak more" (60). It means that working in small groups maximizes intrinsic motivation of the students particularly those who have poor attitudes towards the speaking skill. More precisely, it makes students actively involved with the learning tasks. Similarly, Holt and Kysilka maintain that "group work increases the amount of time available for oral practice, and allows more than one students to benefit from speaking time" (cited in Rahimy and Safarpour 53); they further argue that:

> "Through group work, learners develop their ability to communicate through tasks that require them within the classroom, to approximate the kinds of things they will need to be able to do to communicate in the world beyond the classroom" (84).

In other words, when students work with their peers in small groups, they will learn not only how to work with their classmates, but also how to work and interact with people of different cultures and languages beyond the classroom; on the other hand, Young claims that "group work not only addresses the effective concerns of the students; it also increases the amount of student talk" (432).

In sum, to increase students' interaction with each other and develop their oral competency, it is important for teachers of oral expression to place more emphasis on activities where students can work together in small groups rather than focusing on activities where they are isolated from one another. Hence, students who rarely talk in classrooms, and who are hesitant and embraced; will talk and interact if and only if they are working in groups with their classmates; in fact, many studies advocate that group work improves students' speaking skill, and creates a humanistic classroom. Though the group work technique helps in the construction of good attitudes and skills, not all constructivist theorists do not necessarily share the same views; scholars, for instance, like Vygotsky prefer teaching the foreign language through group work while Piaget does not.

13. Scholars who Favour and Disfavour Group Work

As previously mentioned teaching English as FL/SL in recent years has shifted from a teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach where students have opportunities to construct their own knowledge independently or in collaboration with more knowledgeable people. Piaget and Vygotsky are the main constructivist theorists whose views on learning and cognitive development are dissimilar.

Piaget's cognitive theory states that individuals construct their own knowledge independently based on their prior experiences; a child for example may construct his/her knowledge through two mental activities which are assimilation and accommodation (Seifert and Sutton 30). The scholar states the example of the child whose 'solo mind' takes in and interprets information about the world (30). That is to say, children build their own knowledge about the world apart from the assistance and help from other people as parents or teachers. According to Seifert and Sutton "Piaget does not say much about how other people assist the children in constructing their knowledge" (30). Hence, Piaget mentions that parents and teachers have few responsibilities for helping children to build their own knowledge (35).

This psychologist recognizes the importance of others, but does not reckon this aspect of constructivism (35). The theory of Piaget has also influenced teaching and learning of FL/SL processes which emphasizes that teachers should provide students with opportunities to construct their own knowledge by themselves. Salkind in this regard says that Piaget "is more interested in what children/learners could figure on their own than in

how teachers or parents might be able to help them to figure out" (quoted in Seifert and Sutton 30).

The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky is against Piaget's theory. He believes that learning takes place in a social context. More precisely, the main idea of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is that the social interaction plays a major role in the development of cognition. The socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky has also an important influence on teaching and learning processes. According to that theory "learning in FL/SL context should be a collaborative achievement and not an isolated individual's effort where the learner works unassisted and unmediated" (Vygotsky cited in Turuk 258). It means that Vygotsky's theory is in contrast to traditional learning where the teacher dictates his/her meaning to students, but the scholar states that the teacher should "collaborate with his/her students in order to create meaning in ways that students can make their own" (1). According to this psychologist, learning and development take place in the interactions a student has with peers, teachers, and other expert adults.

Vygotsky further argues that learners' learning is dependent and influenced by the social interaction, collaboration, and assistance with more experienced and expert people (1). He says that "a learner can perform a task under adult guidance or with peer collaboration that could not be achieved alone"; this is what he terms as the Zone of Proximal Development. He describes this concept as: "the gap between what learners are able to do independently, and what they may do with the assistance of an expert and in collaboration with knowledgeable peers" (60). Hence, learners work with their ZPD when they are engaged in more complex tasks that they can do if they are given some assistance from peers or teachers.

It is possible to say that Vygotsky's theory emphasizes that learning in groups is more beneficial than learning alone. More specifically, the instruction that focuses on collaborative learning rather than competitive and individualistic learning helps learners to develop their cognitive and linguistic level (60). In this respect, Wenger mentions that "students learn through structured collaboration as they participate in a shared practice or a group project in a setting that resembles a real-life situation" (130).

Therefore, since students learn through social interaction with other people; "lessons should consist of opportunities to communicate in the target language" (Nunan 50). This is called "communicative language teaching". Khan further states that CLT considers

interaction as an important element of learning a FL. The scholar argues that "the basic pedagogical principle of CLT is that successful acquisition of the target language on the part of the learners depends on the amount of interaction and negotiation of meaning that they participate in" (14557).

On the whole, Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories are inextricably dissimilar. Piaget's cognitive theory places more emphasis on individualistic learning where the learner as the learners are viewed as the "sole channel through which knowledge is gained" (Seifert and Sutton 30). Vygotsky's theory, on the other hand, acknowledges that learners construct their own knowledge through social interaction and in collaboration with expert and experienced people.

14. Conclusion

Co-operative learning is an instructional approach that enhances the process of teaching and learning. It is proven by a wide variety of scholars that CL is more beneficial and effective than competitive and individualistic learning. Group work is a momentous strategy of CL since it makes the unit of study enjoyable and funny for every student. It also improves the students' oral competency and creates less threatening classroom environments where students feel less stressful in speaking activities. Moreover, it makes students actively involved, and focused on the learning tasks. Furthermore, it provides opportunity and freedom for every student to interact and express his/her opinions without hesitation and inhibition. More important yet is the fact that teaching the speaking skill through this technique decreases teacher's talking time i.e. it decreases the teacher's dominance.

1. Introduction

The present chapter as its title indicates focuses on the practical side of the study in order to answer the questions of the study, and to test the previously mentioned hypotheses. The chapter will first shed light on the teaching of the oral expression academic subject within the department of English at Saida University, with a view to mapping the objectives of this subject, the program designed for each level within the License studies, as well as the load of hours consecrated for its instruction. It also hinges on the identification of the student community concerned with this course, as well as the instructors of the oral expression course. Secondly, the chapter will hover around the field investigation.

2. Mapping the Oral Expression Course within the Department of English at Saida University

Speaking is one among the four skills that should be taught through effective techniques. It belongs to the group of 'Fundamental Units' comprised within the LMD system. It aims basically at enabling students to use English for communicative purposes; in other words it seeks the empowerment of the learners to construct a message and transmit it; as well as to interact with other people. As far as the department of English at Saida University is concerned, this skill is taught in first, second, and third years for one hour and a half per a week as TD sessions. This means that by the end of each academic year students would have studied oral expression for only 42 hours. It is possible to say here that the time which is allocated for studying this skill is not enough for students to master it, and to develop their communicative ability. The credit of the oral expression module is 2, and the coefficient is also 2.

There are a great number of students who are studying English as a foreign language in Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida. These students study different modules in first, second, and third years. After three years of study, the students have to choose between two branches which are: "Didactics branch and Literature and Civilization branch"; the students who are specialized in the Didactics branch are concerned with Linguistics and TEFL courses; whereas students who are specialized in Literature and Civilization are concerned with literature courses only. In Master degree, students have to conduct a research paper for inst in order to graduate. The students differ in terms of language

abilities, age, styles of learning, etc. The following table presents the branches and number of the students.

Table 1: Branches and Number of the LMD Students. Source: the Department of English

First Year					Second Year			
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
61	56	64	57	46	43	37	39	20
Third Year		Master 1			Master 2			
Group 1	Group 2	Literature & Civilization	Didactics		Literature and Civilization		Didactics	
50	48	38	31		52		46	

As it is displayed in the table, there are two deficiencies: non homogeneity of groups, and the large bulk of students within groups. In first year, for instance, each group surpasses the other in number. There is a large disparity between group 5 and group 1 reaching 15 students. Besides, it is extremely incredible to develop the oral skill with such overcrowded classes. Experts advise the designing of groups not exceeding fifteen students. The same remark applies to the other groups.

The researchers five-years study within the department revealed that most of the learners are unable to communicate orally in English, and to carry a conversation; while a few speak English with correct grammar and perfect pronunciation. These deficiencies are attributed to several reasons, among which inadequate climates for teaching and learning the speaking skill, lack of materials, overcrowded classes, and poor students' attitudes towards learning this skill along with teachers' lack of encouragement.

There are 32 teachers at the department, among whom six are concerned with the teaching of oral expression courses in our department; they differ also in terms of age and teaching experiences. Also, each teacher has his/her own specific method of teaching; some of these teachers still follow the traditional system in teaching the oral expression course.

In other words, they still use the activities where students work alone for the sake of inducing them to rely on themselves. The strategies used include songs, role plays, watching videos, and discussions. In some of these activities, students may have few opportunities to speak and express themselves. One of the teachers that the researchers have observed applies frequently the technique of group work for the sake of attracting students' interest, and increasing their participation in the classroom speaking activities.

Each teacher has his/her own program for teaching the oral expression module. The program of the first year is as follows: the first semester consists of two parts. The first part is about listening to different conversations from different settings; the students here are asked to describe oneself, one's family, talking about classes, schools, shopping, and so on. The second part is about practicing what the students have learned. While, the second semester contains just one part; it is about debating, discussing, playing roles, and simulating. The second year program is as follows: introducing oneself, interpreting video stories, and talkies (monologues, debates, and free talks). Functional-situational contents, it includes: describing places, expressing opinions. Role plays and idioms. There are also courses about introducing someone.

3. Field of Investigation

3.1. Research Method

As outlined earlier, this survey aims at investigating the effectiveness of the group work technique in alleviating students' speaking anxiety, and developing their oral competency. Therefore, the research method used is a descriptive one because it describes a current situation within the department of English at Saida University. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been relied on as they enrich the analysis through numerical data and canvassing both of teachers' and students' opinions. This mixing of approaches seeks compliance with current dynamic research that relies on multiple methods.

3.2. Population of the Study

The population of the study includes the students' population of first, second, and third years, i.e. 521 students; in addition to the teachers' population of oral expression, viz 6 teachers.

3.3. Sample of the Study

The samples of the study have been selected randomly; they consist of 107 License students since it is at the level of the three years that the technique of group work is used by the teachers of oral expression. The second sample of the study consists of 2 teachers of oral expression teaching at Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida. This sample has been chosen on the basis that the technique of group work has been implemented by these teachers in teaching the oral expression module.

3.4. Research Tools

Three research tools have been used by the researchers for the sake of achieving the purposes of the study, namely a semi-structured questionnaire destined for students, a semi-structured interview designed for teachers, in addition to classroom observation. Both of the questionnaire and the interview comprise closed and open questions. The choice of the first tool lied in the fact that questionnaires provide reliable information about students' motivation and attitudes towards using a specific technique in teaching a particular module. They also help the researchers to collect various opinions and ideas about unknown and unobserved phenomena in a short period of time. The interview has been selected on the ground that interviews give an opportunity for the researchers to ask and talk with people in face-to-face situations; they also provide them with authentic data about their investigation. As to the third tool, classroom observation, it is significant in the sense that researchers can observe people's actions in real life situations; hence, the researchers have selected this research tool in order to see the real impacts of group work activities on students' motivation to speak in the classroom.

4. Research Tools Design

4.1. Questionnaire Design

In order to realize the purposes of the study, the researchers have prepared a semi structured questionnaire to License students since their oral expression instructor uses frequently the technique of group work. The questionnaire contains nine questions; each question is asked for a specific purpose. The first question is asked in order to know in which skill students feel stressed. The second question is asked to know whether students prefer individual work or group work; however, the third question is asked in order to look

for the positive impacts of group work on the students. The forth question is asked to see whether students will feel less stressful, and speak more when they work in small groups with their peers or not. While, the fifth question is asked to know whether talking and/or making a presentation in front of the class heightens their speaking anxiety or not. The sixth question is asked to see whether students experience anxiety when they are working in small groups or not; whereas the seventh question is asked to seek whether students are afraid of making mistakes while speaking in front of the whole class or not. However, the eighth question is asked to know whether students are corrected in a positive manner by their teachers when they make mistakes or not. The final question is asked in order to know whether the use of humour in teaching oral expression decreases the speaking anxiety of the students, and increases their motivation to speak.

4.2. Interview Design

The interview that the researchers have made for the teachers of oral expression consists of eight questions which can be answered in 20 minutes only. The first question is asked in order to know the activities that are frequently used by the teachers of oral expression in teaching the speaking skill. Whereas, the second question is asked to know the activity which makes students feel less stressed, and speak more. The third question is asked to identify the strategies that the teachers use to make the classroom environment less stressful and threatening. While, the fourth question is asked in order to know the techniques that the teachers of oral expression use to minimize their students' speaking anxiety, and increase their willingness to speak in classrooms. However, the fifth question is asked to see whether teaching the speaking skill through group work activities makes students feel less anxious, and develops their oral competency. The sixth question is asked to seek whether students' speaking anxiety and their reluctance to speak are caused by their fear of being negatively evaluated by their teachers when making mistakes or not. While, the seventh question is asked in order to know whether the teachers tolerate or correct their students' mistakes in a humiliating manner. The final question is asked to apperceive whether the instructors use humour in teaching oral expression or not.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Students' Questionnaire

5.1.1. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

After collecting information from License students, the data are processed using frequencies and percentages. In order to discuss the reported answers of the target respondents to question 1, table 2 is set below (See also pie chart 1).

Question 1: In which skill do you feel stressful?

Table 2: Skills where Students Feel Stressful

Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
58	28	8	13
54%	26,16%	7,47%	12,14%

Pie chart 1: Percentages of the Skill where Students Feel Stressful
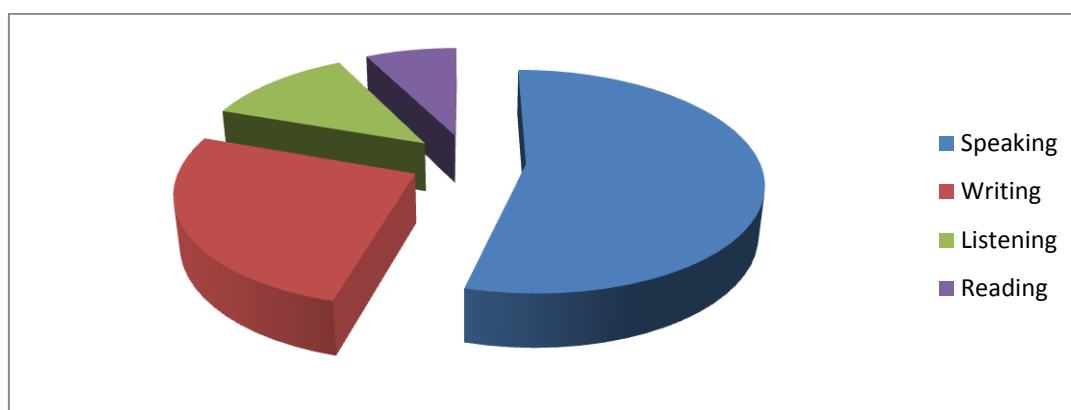
With regard to the table and pie chart above, the results show that more than half of the respondents 54% have advocated that they feel stressed in the speaking skill. While 16% have mentioned writing as a stressful skill for them; however, about 12,14% of them have said that they feel stressed in the listening skill. Only 7,47% have stated that they feel stressed in the reading skill.

It is noted while processing the data that about fifteen copies contain clumsy answers, so they have been rolled out from analysis. In order to discuss the reported answers of the target respondents to question 2, table 3 is set below (See also pie chart 2).

Question 2: In oral expression sessions, do you prefer to work alone or to work with your classmates in small groups?

Table 3: Students' Preferences for Individual or Group Work

To work alone	To work with classmates in small groups	No answer	The rolled out copies
21	59	12	15
19,62%	55,1%	11,21%	14,01%

Pie chart 2: Percentages of Students' Preferences for Individual and Group Work
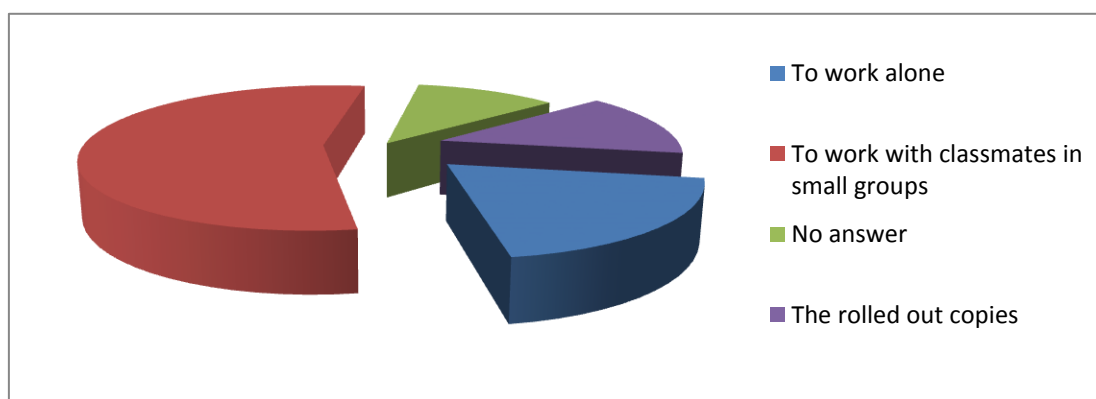
According to the table and pie chart above, the results show that more than half of the respondents 55, 1% prefer to work with their peers in small groups. They have justified their answers as follows "working in small groups is more interesting because we share and exchange more ideas. Also, we feel comfortable, and we speak freely". 19,62% of the respondents prefer to work alone, explaining their choice as such: "in group work, the students will speak in the L1. Also, when we work alone, our skills and abilities will be developed".11,21% of the students refused to answer this question; while 14,01% of the respondents' answers were rolled out from analysis.

In order to discuss the reported answers of the target respondents to question 3, table 4 is set below (See also pie chart 3).

Question 3: According to you, group work impacts you positively through:

Table 4: Identification of the Nature of the Positive Impacts of Group Work on the Students

Gaining self-confidence	Enlarging your vocabulary stock	Sharing ideas	Promoting your responsibility to talk more	Others
24	22	44	16	0
22,42%	20,56%	41,12%	14,95%	0%

Pie chart 3: Percentages of the Positive Impacts of Group Work on the Students

According to the results obtained in the table and pie chart above, nearly half of the respondents 41,12% have stated that group work impacts them positively through sharing ideas, and 22,42% of them have stated gaining self-confidence as a positive impact of group work. 20,56% have claimed that group work enlarges their vocabulary stock; while, 14,95% have stated that it promotes their responsibility to talk more. No other respondent claims other impacts of group work.

In order to discuss the reported answers of the target respondents to question 4, table 5 is set below (See also pie chart 4).

Question 4: When you work with your classmates in small groups, do you speak more and feel less anxious in expressing your ideas than when you work alone?

Table 5: **Students' Attitudes as to their Opportunities of Speaking with Easiness within Group Work and Individual Work**

Yes	No
76	31
71,02%	28,97%

Pie chart 4: Percentages of Students' Opportunities of Speaking and Easiness within Group Work and Individual Work
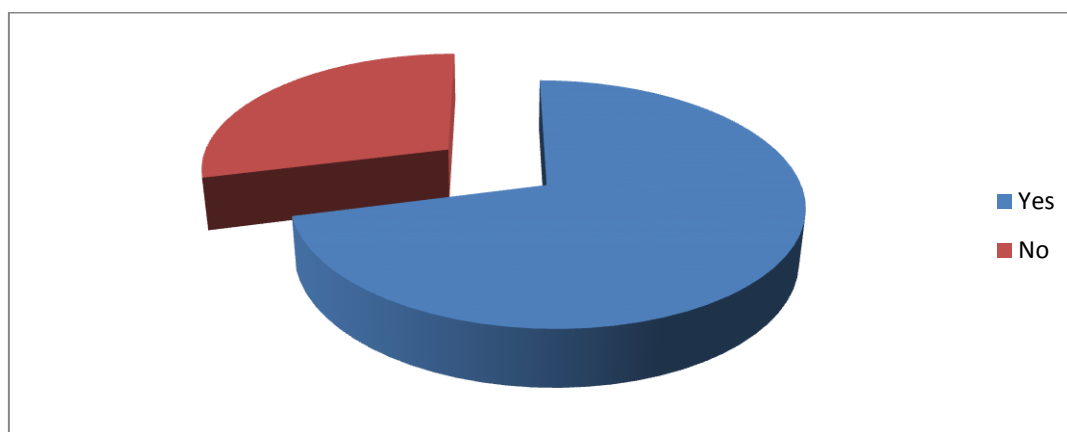
As seen in the table and pie chart above, the majority of the respondents 71,02% have said that when they work with their classmates in small groups, they speak more and feel less anxious in expressing their ideas than when they work alone. Whereas, 28,97% disagree with the claim above.

After collecting information from License students, the data are processed using frequencies and percentages. Only eleven copies we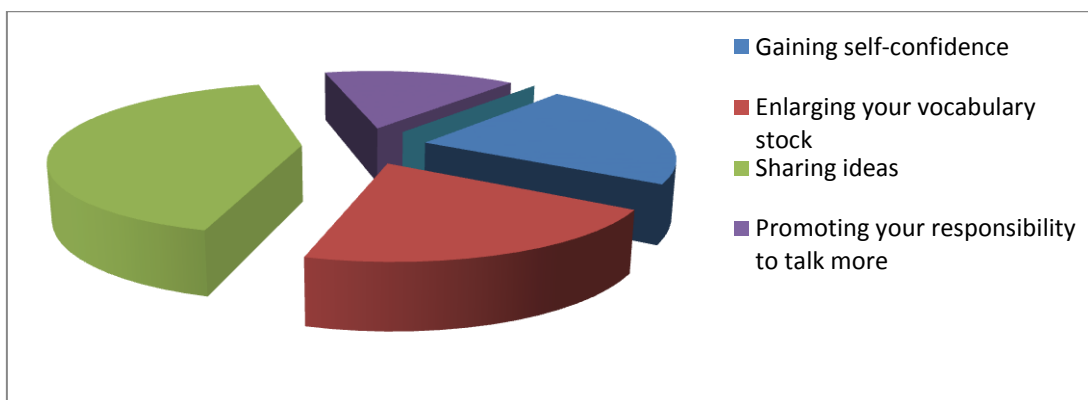re rolled out from analysis because they contain clumsy answers. In order to discuss the reported answers of the target respondents to question 5, table 6 is set below (See also pie chart 5).

Question 5: Do you feel anxious when you are talking and making a presentation in front of your peers and teacher?

Table 6: Frequencies of Students' Stress when Speaking in Front of the Class

Always	Sometimes	Never	No answer	The rolled out copies
19	41	9	27	11
17,75%	38,31%	8,41%	25,23%	10,28%

Pie chart 5: Percentages of Students' Feeling of Stress when talking and Presenting in Front of the Whole Class
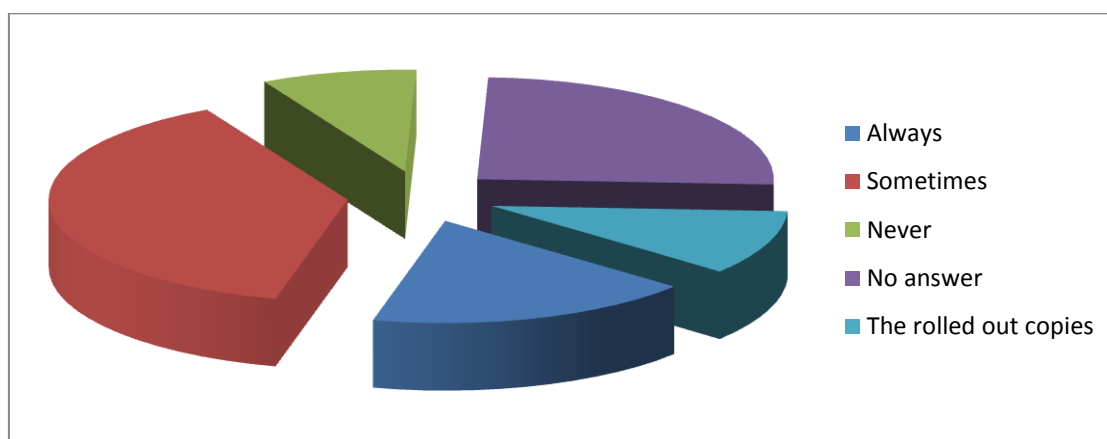
According to the obtained results, 38,31% of the respondents have stated that they sometimes feel anxious when they are talking and making a presentation in front of the class. They have justified their answer as follows: "speaking and presenting in front of the class increases our anxiety simply because we are speaking in front of the whole class, and we are not trained to speak in public". Whereas, 17,75% have advocated that they always sense anxiety when they speak in front of the class; they have explained their answer as "talking in front of the class makes us more stressful because our teacher and classmates are looking at us, we are not self- confident, and we are caring about others' points of views". However, about 8,41% have claimed that they never feel anxious when they are speaking in front of the class; they have justified their answer as: "we do not feel anxious when we speak in front of the whole class because we are sure about what we are saying". Others about 25,23% refused to answer this question; also, 10,28% of the respondents' answers were rolled out from analysis.

It is noted while processing data that about seven copies contain unclear answer, so they have been rolled out from analysis. In order to discuss the reported answers of the target respondents to question 6, table 7 is set below (See also pie chart 6).

Question 6: Do you experience the same emotion when you are speaking and working with your classmates in small groups?

Table 7: Students' Non-Feeling of Stress When Working in Small Groups

Yes	No	No answer	The rolled out copies
21	56	22	7
19,68%	52,33%	20,56%	6,54%

Pie chart 6: Percentages of Students' Non-Feeling of Stress when Working in Small Groups
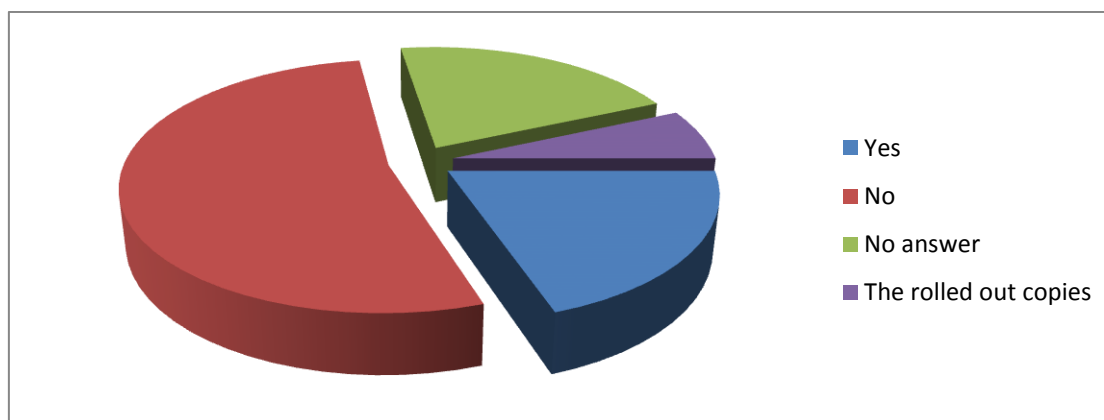
With regard to the table and pie chart above, the results show that more than half of the respondents 52,33% have said that they do not feel anxious when they are working and speaking with their peers in small groups; they have explained their answers as "working with peers in small groups makes us feel comfortable because we know each other, we have the same proficiency level, and we are not afraid of making mistakes". It should be stated also that 21% do not believe with the above claim; they have explained: "we feel also stressed when we work in small groups because we are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at by our peers". However, 20,56% did not give any answer to this question; also, 6,54% of respondents' answers were rolled out from analysis.

It is noted while processing data related to question 7 that about twelve copies contain unclear answers, so they have been rolled out from analysis (see table 8 and pie chart 7).

Question 7: When you speak in English in front of your classmates, are you afraid of making mistakes?

Table 8: Students' Fear of Making Mistakes

Yes	No	No answer	The rolled out copies
34	51	10	12
31,77%	47,66%	9,34%	11,21%

Pie chart 7: Percentages of Students' Non-Fear of Making Errors when Speaking in Front of their Peers
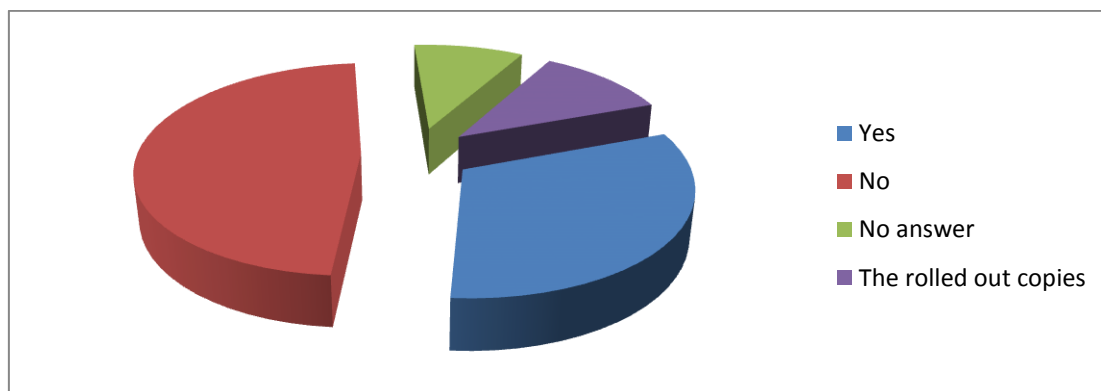
As seen in the table and pie chart above, nearly half of the respondents 47,66% have advocated that they do not feel afraid of making mistakes when they speak in front of their classmates. They have justified their answer as follows: "mistakes are considered as a part of the learning process because from mistakes we can learn the foreign language. Also, no one is perfect and everybody makes mistakes even teachers". Whereas, 31,77% stated that they were afraid of making mistakes when they spoke in front of the class; they have said: "making mistakes while speaking is not good because we will be laughed at, and we will also be negatively evaluated by our teacher and classmates too". 9,34% of respondents did not answer this question; while 11,21% of the respondents' answers were rolled out from analysis.

As to the eight question, only three copies were rolled out from analysis because they contained clumsy answers. In order to discuss the reported answers of the target respondents to question 8, table 9 is set below (See also pie chart 8).

Question 8: If you make mistakes when speaking; does your teacher correct you in positive and friendly manners?

Table 9: Teacher's Error-Correction Manner

Yes	No	No answer	The rolled out copies
90	9	5	3
84,11%	8,41%	4,67%	2,80%

Pie chart 8: Percentages of Teachers' Positive Error-Correction Manner
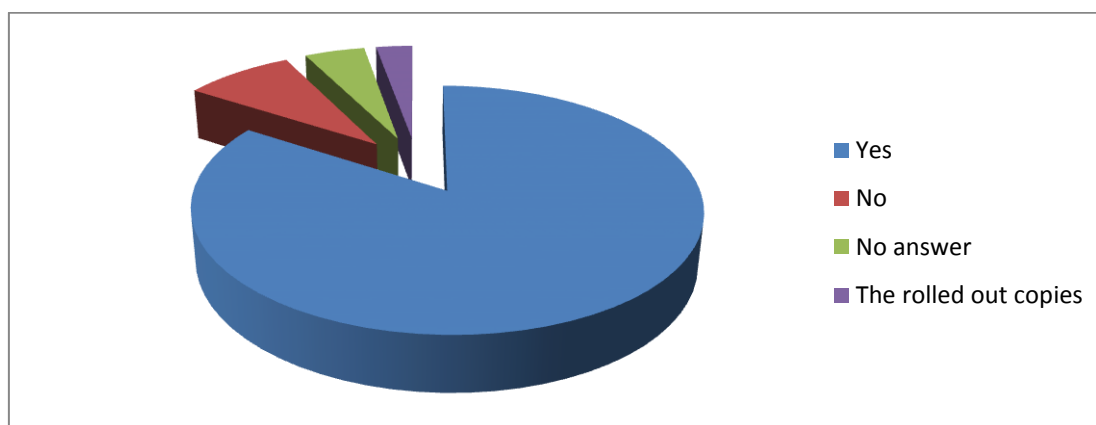
With regard to the table and pie chart above, the majority of the respondents 84,11% stated that their teacher corrected them in a positive and friendly manners. 8,41% of the respondents disagreed with the stated claim. They have explained: "the teacher always corrects the mistakes in humiliating and rigid manners". Only 4,67% refused to give answers to this question, and about 2,80% of the respondents' answers were rolled out from analysis.

In order to discuss the reported answers of target respondents to question 9, table 10 is set below (See also pie chart 9).

Question 9: Do you believe that the use of humour in teaching oral expression decreases your speaking anxiety, and makes you more motivated to speak?

Table 10: Students' Attitudes towards the Use of Humor in Teaching the Speaking Skill

Yes	No	No answer
97	7	3
90, 65%	6, 54%	2,80%

Pie chart 9: Percentages of Students' Positive Attitudes towards the Use of Humour in Teaching the Speaking Skill
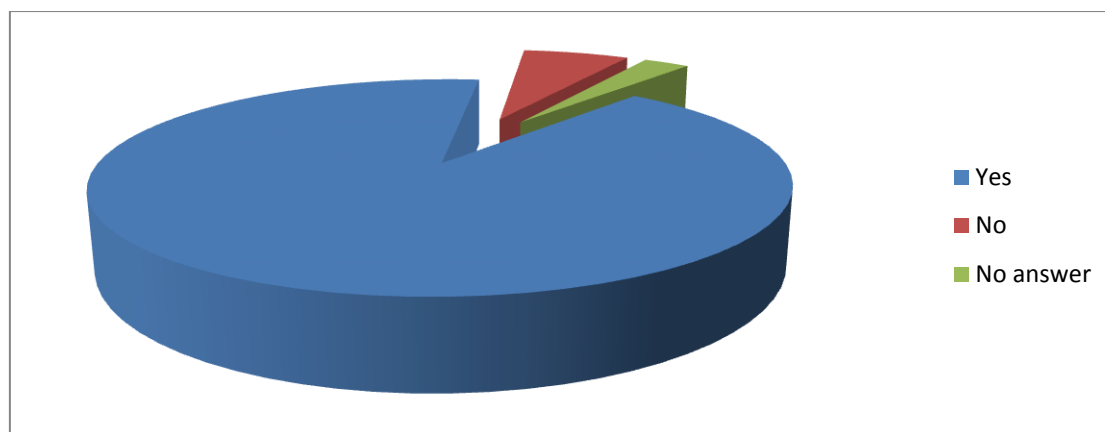
As noted in the table and pie chart above, the majority of the respondents 90,65% have advocated that the use of humour in teaching oral expression decreases their speaking anxiety, and makes them more motivated to speak. On the contrary, only 6,54% disagreed with the above claim. Others about 2,80% have refused to answer this question.

5.1.2. The Discussion of the Results of the Students' Questionnaire

According to the respondents' answers, it has been found that the speaking skill is the most anxiety-provoking. This finding is consistent with that of Horwitz et al., who have found that "for students, speaking is a highly anxiety-provoking situation" (quoted in Ansari 38).It should be stated that more than half of the respondents have positive attitudes towards group work due to the fact that it makes them feel less stressful, share different ideas, gain self-confidence, and more importantly it promotes their responsibility to talk

more than when they work alone. This finding is consistent with that of Delucchi who has found that "students seem to work better in groups because they can exchange more opinions and ideas. This is because they will feel less anxious than when they work alone" (quoted in Osman et al., 118). However, the minority of the respondents prefer to work alone probably they are not sociable.

Moreover, according to the majority of the respondents' answers, it is found that speaking and/or making a presentation in front of the whole class heightens anxiety. This finding is similar to that reached by Young who asserts that "most students feel more anxious when they speak in front of their peers" (cited in Phillips 125).

Besides, more than half of the respondents mention that they feel at ease when they work and speak with their peers in small groups as they represent a source of inspiration. Similarly, Abebe and Deneke emphasize that "students are more willing to speak in pairs and groups rather than individually because they feel more comfortable speaking with their peers rather than their teacher" (86). In contrast, the minority of the respondents who say that they feel anxious when they work with their peers in small groups belong probably to the category of people who have a trait anxiety, or suffer from fear of negative evaluation from their peers.

It can also be understood from the respondents' answers (nearly half) that mistakes are considered as a part of the learning process. Biryonten et al., indicate that "teachers can reduce students' stress simply by continually reminding them that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process" (138). However, the minority of the respondents who are afraid of making mistakes while speaking suffer probably from fear of negative evaluation, and their teachers do certainly not build their self-confidence.

Concerning the manner in which the teachers correct their students' errors; the majority of the respondents advocate that their teacher corrects their errors in positive and friendly manners, displaying clearly the teacher's awareness about the importance of raising learners' self-confidence. In this context, Tuan and Mai argue that "teachers should always correct the students' mistakes positively and with encouragement" (10). Concerning the respondents who say that their teachers correct their mistakes in a rigid manner perhaps they mean that these teachers are not friendly and are strict in correcting the errors. Also,

they probably mean that these teachers do not consider mistakes as a part of the learning process.

Finally, according to the answers of the last question, the majority of the respondents affirmed the effectiveness of humour in decreasing their speaking anxiety, and increasing their willingness to speaking, displaying thereby students' preferences for relaxing learning atmospheres. Sharing the same view, Berk points out that "the positive psychological effects of humour/laughter include reduced anxiety and stress (…), and increased self-motivation" (quoted in Deiter11). Concerning the respondents who said that humour did not minimize their speaking anxiety, and did not as well increase their participation; it indicates probably that the teacher does not use it in the appropriate way.

5.2. Teachers' Interview

5.2.1. Analysis of the Teachers' Interview

Games, role plays, songs, discussions, watching videos, telling fun stories and jokes are the most frequent activities that are used in teaching oral expression. The interviewees have also stated that students feel less anxious, and participate more in performance activities as role plays, and also during free topics. Moreover, the most important techniques that are used by the interviewees for creating a less stressful classroom environment are humour and communication with the students. Besides, the interviewees have mentioned that in order to minimize the speaking anxiety of their students, and increase their willingness to speak in the classroom they choose the most interesting topics.

Furthermore, the interviewees have asserted that teaching the speaking skill through group work activities makes students feel less anxious, and develops their ability to communicate orally in the English language; they have justified their answers as follows; "we always urge our students to work in groups because working in groups makes the students less stressful, and increases their interaction with one another". Additionally, the interviewees affirmed that students' speaking anxiety and their unwillingness to speak are caused by their fear of being negatively evaluated by their teachers when making errors.

The interviewees also have maintained that they correct their students' errors but in a positive manner, and sometimes they tolerate them. They justified their answer in the following terms: "we correct our students' mistakes but not in a humiliating manner

because if we correct their errors directly we will embarrass them, and they will dislike the entire module. We let students finish, and then we correct them indirectly". Finally, the interviewees have mentioned that they use humour from time to time. They declared: "we always use humour because it is part of our job. Humour is very important in the learning process because it makes the classroom environment less formal and stressful".

5.2.2. Discussion of the Results of the Teachers' Interview

Based on the results of the interview, it could be said that the teachers' large use of group work activities in teaching oral expression denotes their competency and their awareness as to the high efficacy of this strategy. Also, their resort to individual work is certainly related to the necessity of making students rely on themselves. On the other hand, their use of role play activities is no doubt linked to the fact that students feel less stressful, and participate more. This finding is consistent with that of Harmer, who finds that "role play is fun and motivating. It provides the chance for quieter students to express themselves in a more forthright way" (quoted in Aliakbari and Jamalvandi 17).

It should be stated that selecting topics/activities which are related to the students' daily life and humour from time to time create a less formal classroom environment, and maximize students' talking time. In this respect, Ansari advocates that "the activities should be centered on students' interests, and be appropriate for their proficiency level" (43). The interviewees also suggest that in order to lessen students' speaking anxiety and to maximize their participation, teachers should avoid discrimination between students. In this context, Dornyei asserts that "teachers should avoid social comparison" (quoted in Ansari 42).

As to the issue of whether teaching the speaking skill through group work activities make students less stressed, and develop their ability to communicate orally in the English language; teachers themselves have advocated that they use this technique mainly to help students cope with their speaking anxiety. Sharing the same view, Ansari, states that "activities conducted in cooperation with peers may lessen tension, and increase attendance to tasks because collaborating rather than competing with others makes anxious students feel less threatened"(43).

Besides, teachers believe that fear of negative evaluation is the major cause behind students' speaking anxiety and their reticence in the classroom speaking activities. Sharing

the same view, Abebe and Deneke, argue: "fear of negative evaluation is a factor that causes anxiety while speaking which will in turn discourage learners from speaking" (86).

It can be clearly understood from the latter results that teachers are friendly in correcting their students' errors, and sometimes tolerate them. It means that these teachers consider errors as a natural part of the learning process. Therefore, they build their students' self-confidence. Lightborn and Spada point out that "teachers need to avoid the spot correction in speaking activities, since it can undermine students' confidence, and because it discourages students who are anxious about 'sounding silly'" (cited in Ansari 43).

With regard to the use of humour in teaching the speaking skill; teachers have advocated that they use humour in order to create a less threatening classroom atmosphere for students. This finding is consistent with that reached by Christophel where he asserts: "another strategy a teacher can employ to reduce the tension of the class, and hence create a friendly environment is to use humour from time to time" (cited in Abebe and Deneke 86).

5.3. Classroom Observation

5.3.1. Analysis of the Classroom Observation

In order to collect reliable data, the researchers have made an observation in classrooms. They have attended two sessions with second and third year university students where they have observed teachers' as well as students' actions. The teacher who teaches the third year students has used the group work technique in teaching the speaking skill. Before the teacher started the lesson; he asked his students if they had anything to say, but no one spoke. When the teacher started explaining the lesson, just two or three students participated. The teacher also gave his students an opportunity to speak, and asked them questions from time to time. After the teacher had explained the activity, he divided the classroom into small groups, each group containing four to five students.

The teacher gave each group a list of idiomatic expressions where the group members had to choose three idioms only, and then role played them. It means that the teacher used group work through the role play activity. When the students were performing their work, they spoke without embarrassment and anxiety. All the students spoke and performed well. Despite the fact that some students made a few mistakes, but the teacher did not correct

them, and let them continue their speaking. When the students finished their playing, the teacher talked about their errors. Nearly all the students said that they learned from their mistakes.

5.3.2. Discussion of the Results of the Classroom Observation

According to the results of the classroom observation, it is found that teaching the speaking skill through the group work technique makes the students feel at ease as they participate more, and feel more self-confident. In this juncture,   Omaggio   says: "language anxiety is alleviated when students work in small groups" (47). He adds that group work not only addresses the affective concerns of the students; it also increases the amount of students talk" (47). It must be noted also that although some students made some mistakes while speaking; the teacher did not correct them. It means that the teacher considered errors as a part of the learning process. More specifically, the teacher made the classroom atmosphere less stressful where the students' errors were not corrected. In this regard,   Young's subjects suggest that "instructors can reduce language anxiety by adopting an attitude that mistakes are part of the language learning process, and that mistakes will be made by everyone" (Young 432).

6. Discussion of the Results of the Research Tools

Based on the data that is gathered from the teachers' interview, the students' questionnaire, and classroom observation, it has been found that teachers do frequently use group work activities in teaching oral expression because through this technique students can cope with their speaking anxiety, and be able to communicate orally in English. Similarly, students themselves have mentioned that they feel less stressful, share different ideas, and speak more when they work with their peers in small groups than when they work alone. That is to say, students have a positive attitude towards group work.

Moreover, teachers have asserted that fear of negative evaluation is the core reason behind students' speaking anxiety, and their unwillingness to speak in classrooms. For this reason, they correct their students' mistakes in positive and friendly manners, and sometimes tolerate them. Students also advocate that their teachers correct their errors in a

positive manner. It is possible to say that errors are considered as a part of the learning process both by teachers and students.

Additionally, teachers have stated that humour is one among the strategies that are used in creating a friendly classroom environment. Sharing the same view, students have maintained that using humour in teaching oral expression decreases their speaking anxiety, and makes them actively involved in the classroom speaking activities.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an insight about the teaching of oral expression in the department of Literature and English language, as well as the sample of the study. Also, it has discussed the findings sought from the target respondents. From the results and the discussions mentioned previously, it is obvious that group work activities alleviate students' speaking anxiety as well as promote their oral language skill. Moreover, mistakes are considered as a normal part of the learning process both by teachers and students. Additionally, the appropriate use of humour in teaching the speaking skill creates friendly and supportive classroom atmospheres, and maximizes students' motivation to express themselves and engage in the speaking activities. The next chapter will offer a number of suggestions related to the reduction of anxiety, and the development of students' oral skill.

1. Introduction

Foreign language anxiety is a sensitive issue that touches many Arab students. This psychological problem hinders the majority of them from successfully learning the foreign language in general and the speaking skill in particular. The present chapter focuses on the basic strategies that could aid English language students cope with their speaking anxiety in the classroom activities. Providing a positive correction, using humour in teaching the speaking skill, avoiding activities that heighten students' speaking anxiety and so on create friendly and supportive classroom atmospheres where students feel at ease, and speak more. Moreover, this chapter encompasses some suggested techniques for students in order to get rid of or at least to reduce the anxiety they feel, particularly when they are communicating orally in the target language.

2. Strategies for Diminishing Students' Speaking Anxiety and for Increasing their Willingness to Speak

To alleviate foreign language anxiety in oral sessions, scholars generally advise oral expression teachers to use a number of strategies, including the creation of low-anxiety classroom atmospheres feasible through less humiliating and rigid correction manners, and the resort to humour. They also recommend the avoiding of short talks, or presentations in front of the whole class, the promotion of a sense of relationship amongst students. In this juncture, it is worth elucidating those strategies.

2.1. Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Environment

As it has been stated previously, anxiety is the core factor behind students' reticence and relinquishment in the classroom speaking activities. Fear of negative evaluation, speaking in front of the class, low self-confidence, and the like have been mentioned as the essential sources of students' speaking anxiety. Recently, different scholars have carried out several studies where they have found that teachers themselves play a crucial role in provoking students' speaking anxiety. More precisely, teachers' rigid and formal manners of correction, along with their ways of teaching and communicating with their students in classrooms are considered among the main sources of their students' speaking anxiety. It has been proven that students feel uncomfortable, and do not participate in stressful and threatening classroom environments.

Tanveer finds that the subjects that are involved in his study blame namely the "strict and formal classroom environment as a significant cause of their language anxiety" (quoted in Haron 307). On the other hand, Lisa strongly asserts that students are more motivated, self-confident, and less stressful in speaking activities in supportive and informal learning environment (cited in Chan and Wu 89). In order for teachers to help their students cope with their anxiety towards speaking, and to get rid of their reticence in speaking activities; it is necessary for them to create less threatening and formal classroom environments. To achieve this, a variety of strategies have been provided by different scholars to English language teachers, especially teachers of oral expression. They are stated herewith:

2.1.1. Less Humiliating and Rigid Error-Correction

Generally speaking, most of the Arab students, if not all of them fear their teachers' humiliating and overt error-correction manners. When students are corrected frequently and directly by their teachers especially in front of the class; their speaking anxiety as well as their relinquishment from speaking will maximize. In this context, Custrone contends: "overt error-correction often inhibits students from expressing themselves freely, and leads to high levels of anxiety" (60). Similarly, Abebe and Deneke have emphasized that "if a teacher repeatedly pinpoints the students' mistakes and humiliates them in front of others such behaviour will have a negative impact on the students" (85). It means that teachers play a crucial role in maximizing the speaking anxiety of their students, and in creating a non-friendly learning environment.

Moreover, another study conducted by Custrone reveals that the students' feelings of anxiety "become more threatening when the language instructor's manner of error-correction is rigid and humiliating" (644). Based on the scholar's quote, it is possible to say that the ways used by oral expression teachers in correcting their students' errors are the main source of students' speaking anxiety, and not the correction itself. According to Custrone, some teachers consider the classroom as a performance place instead of a learning one. Hence, when teachers correct their students' mistakes badly, overtly, and directly, they make the classroom environment more stressful. On the other hand, other scholars state that teachers' overt and humiliating error-correction manners "discourage students from speaking, and create anxiety in classroom" (Abebe and Deneke 86).

For these reasons, scholars advise teachers of English language to correct their students' mistakes in positive and indirect manners. It is also preferable for the instructors to make students believe that learning to speak a target language entails making mistakes, and that everybody makes mistakes. Besides, instructors can build their students' self-confidence by continuing to remind them that it is rational to make mistakes because it is a new language for them, and that no one is perfect. In this respect, Tanveer emphasizes that "students' confidence should be developed to make mistakes while using the language. Teachers should also talk about the role of mistakes to the language learners in the class" (quoted in Haron 642). Flowers, on the other hand, claims that instructors can reduce their students' anxiety simply by "encouraging them to make mistakes in the class" (461). It means that teachers should build their students' self-confidence by making mistakes instead of interrupting them and correcting their mistakes in front of the class.

Another study that has been carried out by Young finds out that "the students feel at ease when the instructor's manner of error- correction is not harsh, and when they are friendly, patient, and has a good sense of humour" (cited in Haron 643). Therefore, when teachers correct their students' mistakes while speaking in non-friendly ways; their speaking anxiety will increase, and their willingness to express themselves will lower.

Furthermore, other scholars suggest that overt error-correction is not an effective technique; instead oral expression teachers should accept and consider their students' mistakes as a normal part of the learning process because through making errors they can acquire communication skills. In this situation, Abebe and Deneke underline: "students should be informed that making mistakes is a part of the learning process; teachers should also encourage students to have the confidence to make mistakes in order to acquire communication skills" (88). Hence, providing positive error-correction or considering students' mistakes as part of the learning process creates friendly and informal classroom atmospheres.

This is why Gregersen recommends the creation of: "a supportive classroom atmosphere in which language errors are considered as natural in the process of language acquisition, without overt correction which can draw students' attention away from communication and towards focus on form and accuracy" (quoted in Tsiplakides and Keramida 42). Therefore, it is preferable for Arab teachers of oral expression to pay a

special attention to their methods of correcting students' mistakes. It is better for them also to let students continue their speech even if they make lot of errors.

It is possible to say that teachers play a significant role in creating anxiety in classrooms as well as in minimizing students' participation in the speaking activities; hence, teachers who correct directly their students' errors, and humiliate them in front of their peers; teachers who also do not consider students' language errors as a part of the learning process; will certainly make the classroom environment stressful for many students.

2.1.2. Humour

2.1.2.1. What is Humour?

The term humour is defined as funny utterances or actions that people say or do in order to make others laugh and amused. This term is defined in different ways: according to Melisa (27) "humour is a communication that elicits laughter or leads to a feeling of amusement"; while, the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes it as "the quality of something that makes it funny or amusing. Humour is anything which is perceived by parties as humorous in any communication act". The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines humour as "something that is or is designed to be comical or amusing". According to Melisa humour is not restricted only to jokes or funny stories, but it can also include puns, anecdotes, riddles, cartoons, humorous comments, and other humorous items (27).

2.1.2.2. Theories of Humour

It is rational that people laugh due to something, for instance they laugh when they hear a joke, proverb, wisdom, and so on. People may also laugh about others' misfortunes, when they are surprised, and when they feel that their tensions are released and removed out. There are three main theories of humour which are "the superiority theory, the relief theory, and the incongruity theory".

The superiority theory is also known as the "self-esteem humour theory". This theory argues that "laughter arises out of the sense of superiority experienced from disparagement of others" (Gruner et al., cited in Banas et al., 118). More specifically, people laugh at others because they perceive themselves as superior and the object of amusement as inferior; according to Bardon: "the humour we find in comedy and in life is based on

ridicule where we regard the object of amusement as inferior and/or ourselves as superior" (2).

Feinberg et al., further state that "people laugh at others because they feel some sort of triumph over them, or feel superior in some way to them" (cited in Meyer 314). For instance, in the classroom there exist a lot of students who laugh and ridicule at other students when they make grammatical mistakes and/or faulty pronunciation. It means that the students who laugh feel superior over those they laugh at. Briefly speaking, humour generates from satire and ridicule.

The incongruity theory is different from the previous one. From the perspective of this theory, humour is generated when "there is conflict or incongruity between what we expect to occur and what actually occurs" (Jensen 3). That is to say, people laugh and make fun when their expectation is incongruous with what actually happens. Meyer, on the other hand, says that "the incongruity theory maintains that the object of amusement consists in some kind of incongruity, and that laughter is an expression that of our enjoyment of the incongruous" (321). For example, in the classroom when the teacher tells a story; the students will laugh if there is incongruity between what they anticipate to happen and what actually happens in the story.

Also, students laugh because they are surprised with what happens in the story. In this sense, Berlyne asserts: "surprise or contradiction is essential for humour" (quoted in Banas et al., 118). Other scholars point out that "people laugh at what surprises them, is unexpected, or is odd in a non-threatening way" (Berger, Deckers and Divine, and McGhee quote from Meyer 312); according to these scholars, "people may laugh when at a comedian responding to criticism with a loud 'Excuse me' because what is not normally how one is expected to respond to criticism, so his response is surprising" (312).

The relief theory is also called "the release theory". This theory is different from the theories mentioned previously. The theory says that people laugh because they feel that stress has been decreased. In this case, the theory states that humour "stems from the relief that is experienced when tensions are removed from an individual" (312). For instance, people laugh and experience humour when their tensions are removed out. In SL/FL classrooms, "relief theory explains how the frustration and anxiety produced due to

unfamiliarity of the learners with SL rules can be released through the use of instructor humour" (Ziyaeemehr et al., 112).

To sum up, the three theories which are discussed above are the most important theories of humour. The superiority theory says that people laugh at others' misfortunes, and when they perceive themselves as superior, and the others whom they laugh at as inferior. The incongruity theory mentions that people laugh when they are surprised, and their expectation is dissonant with what happens actually. Finally, the relief theory states that people laugh because they sense that stress and tension are removed out. Let us now examine why teachers are reluctant in using humour.

2.1.2.3. Berk's Reasons behind Teachers' Reluctance to Use Humour in Classrooms

Using humour as a pedagogical tool has lot of benefits. It can alleviate students' anxiety and boredom; build a positive relationship among teachers and their students; increase students' creativity; relieve students' embarrassment, etc. Despite all these benefits, the majority of teachers do not use it as a teaching strategy. Berk states three main reasons behind teachers' negative attitudes and their reluctance to use humour in classrooms which include the following:

➢ Teachers are not trained enough in the use of humour as it is not part of any curriculum;

➢ Teachers often believe that they need to have the skills of a professional comedian in order to use humour;

➢ Teachers frequently contend that teaching is a serious business, and that they are not supposed to be entertainers or use humour which they view as frivolous, undignified, and demeaning to the profession (quoted in Deiter 10).

Generally speaking, although humour plays a significant role in the teaching and the learning processes, teachers do not implement it in their classrooms simply because they are not qualified enough to use it. The guidelines below might alter such beliefs.

2.1.2.4. Guidelines for Using Humour in Classrooms

For humour to be beneficial and effective, it is necessary for teachers who use it in the classroom to take into consideration the following essential six ways which are put and suggested by Rareshide. According to the scholar:

- ✓ Humour should never be used to ridicule or embarrass a student.
- ✓ Humour should never be aimless; it should serve a specific purpose; even if it is used spontaneously.
- ✓ Humour should be made appropriate to the students' ability level.
- ✓ Teachers should recognize the uses of spontaneous as well as planned humour; they should incorporate both of them into their teaching.
- ✓ Teachers should laugh at themselves occasionally to show their students that they are real people.
- ✓ Teachers should sarcasm only if it is of the playful kind (quoted in Flowers 11).

2.1.2.5. Humour as a Strategy for Reducing Students' Speaking Anxiety

Teachers who rarely laugh and tell fun stories or jokes to their students; who use rigid and strict teaching methods are making the classroom atmosphere more formal and stressful for students. Humour here is an important technique in altering this situation, and creating supportive and less stressful learning environments. In this regard, scholars contend that the use of humorous materials as for example anecdotes, jokes, fun stories, and the like create relaxed and less stressful classroom atmospheres (Stroud 73).

It is widely known that the inclusion of humour as a teaching tool in the classroom can have profound effects on students' learning in general. According to many scholars, "the use of humour in the classroom has been suggested to increase instructional effectiveness" (Wanzer; Deiter; Khen et al; cited in Ziyaeemehr et al., 111). Hickman and Crossland further highlight: "positive connections between teachers' use of humour and academic achievement even follow students into colleges and beyond" (quoted in Makewa et al., 3). Therefore, teachers who use humour in the appropriate way from time to time not only will create a relaxed classroom environment, but will also build a good rapport and bond with students.

In this respect, a number of researchers say that humour creates immediacy between teachers and students as well; the term 'immediacy' is defined by Richmond as "the degree of perceived physical or psychological closeness between people" (cited in BallEster 10); according to Martin the "value of humour in the classroom may be particularly related to its role in promoting a sense of immediacy" (quoted in Goebel 2). Flowers further adds: "humour is one method by which professors can make their relationships with students

closer" (23). It must be noted also that when there is a kind of positive bond between teachers and their students; students are less embarrassed and inhibited about asking questions and making comments (Deiter 22).

Additionally, "the use of humour does away with anxiety and fear among students" (Verma, cited in Makewa 5). Neuliep on the other hand conducted a study for the sake of finding out teachers' perceptions for their employment of humour and its effects on the students' learning. The scholar has questioned 388 Wisconsin high school teachers. The results of the Neuliep's study show that the main reasons behind implementing humour in classrooms are: "its effect as a relaxing, comforting, and tension reducing device, its effect of increasing student interest and enjoyment" (quoted in Makewa et al., 3).

It is possible to say that when teachers use humour in teaching the speaking skill, all students will participate and take part in the classroom discussion because they feel less anxious and inhibited; according to Sujathat et al., "humour can help some students who are shy or embarrassed to talk in the class; once students reduce their anxiety; their communication ability enhances better" (460). Moreover, Flowers points out that play and humour reduce students' anxiety and increase their participation (10). Additionally, Tuncay is in line with these scholars; he mentions that "humour can help reduce anxiety in class, and encourage students' desire to take part in what is being said in the class" (3). From what is said by the previous scholars, it is obvious that the use of humour as an instructional technique in the classroom helps students reduce their speaking anxiety along with increasing their motivation to express themselves.

To sum up, using humour appropriately by teachers in the classroom can have significant educational impacts on students. Anxiety reduction, willingness to speak, and sharing others' opinions are all results of humour. In addition to that, the use of humour can create positive relationship and rapport between the teacher and the students. Hence, through this pedagogical strategy, teachers can help students to cope with their speaking anxiety as well as create relaxing and comfortable learning environments; in view of that it is advisable for oral expression English teachers to use some humorous materials in teaching the English language.

2.1.3. Avoiding Giving Students Short Talks or Presentations in Front of the Whole Class

Another further source of students' speaking anxiety in the classroom is talking in front of an audience; in this sense, Abebe and Deneke underline that "different activities in the classroom procedure, particularly ones that demand students to speak in front of the whole class, have been found to be the most anxiety provoking" (80). Oral presentation activities are reported as anxiety provoking. When students are asked by their teachers to speak and present something in front of the whole class, they become stressed and they panic. There is a general consensus among several scholars that these kinds of speaking activities make the classroom atmosphere more formal, uncomfortable, and even stressful. In this regard, Abebe and Deneke emphasize that "giving a short talk or presentation in the classroom has been reported to be highly anxiety (sic) including one which makes the classroom environment more formal and stressful for the students" (82).

Various scholars have carried out many studies concerning students' attitudes and feelings towards speaking and presenting in front of the class. Koch and Terrel among others have found that a big number of their subjects consider "oral presentation as the most anxiety-provoking activity in the class" (quoted in Abebe and Deneke 82). This finding is similar to that reached by Mejia who has found that presentation or speaking in front of the entire class intensifies much of anxiety. Similarly, Young conducted another study where she affirms that students become anxious not because they speak in FL, but because they speak in front of the whole class (cited in Zia and Sultan 468). From what is stated above, it is possible to say that speaking in front of the entire class heightens students' anxiety.

For the purpose of reducing students' speaking anxiety along with increasing their talking time; it is better for teachers to avoid making students to speak and/or to present something in front of the whole class. In this case, Koch, Terrel, and Young have found that "more than 68% of their subjects have reported feeling more comfortable when they do not have to get in front of the class to speak" (quoted in Abebe and Deneke 80). In other words, students feel at ease and better when they are not called by their teachers to speak and face the entire class. Similarly, Abebe and Deneke point out that "students feel a lot better when they are not required to face the whole class" (80).

Generally speaking, when students are required to face the whole class, their speaking anxiety will maximize and their willingness to speak will decrease and diminish over time. For eradicating or at least reducing students' speaking anxiety, it is important for teachers to avoid making students to speak in front of the whole class. It is also better for teachers of oral expression to place much emphasis on activities where students feel at ease, and speak more.

2.2. Other Suggestions

It would be better for oral expression teachers to create a sense of relationship among the students; sharing the same view Tanveer, underlines that "teachers should specifically make greater efforts to create a sense of relationship and cooperation among the students. This will help them to speak more confidently and with less anxiety in the class" (cited in Hashemi and Abbasi 644). It is also suggested that equal status between the teacher and the students is a significant aspect for anxiety alleviation; according to Pica "unequal status between students and teachers can also be a source of anxiety for the students" (quoted in Hashemi and Abbasi 642). Hence, teachers should be "more like a friend helping students to learn, and less like an authority figure making them perform" (Young 432).

Moreover, it is advisable for teachers of oral expression to use drama activities as role plays where students "take on a new persona with pseudo names" (Ansari 44). This type of activities diminishes students' speaking anxiety, and makes them more motivated to speak. Besides, it would be better for teachers of oral expression to avoid activities that enhance students' frustration. In this regard, Hashemi and Abbasi advocate that "teachers should create situations where students can feel successful in using English, and avoid setting up the activities that increase the chances for the students to fail" (644). Therefore, teachers of oral expression ought to choose topics which are related to their students' interest and background.

Furthermore, it is necessary for teachers of oral expression to make private talks outside classrooms with the students who feel more anxious than the others in order to know the specific reasons behind their anxiety and their reticence in classroom oral activities. In this respect, Stevin suggests some strategies for teachers to reduce students' speaking anxiety which are: "creating a friendly rapport with the students, mingling with them in their small talks, and speaking to them from time to time" (cited in Abebe and Deneke 88).

It is also important for teachers of oral expression to pay special and great attention to those students, and make greater efforts to engage them in the classroom oral activities rather than ignoring them and attributing their unwillingness to speak to factors as lack of motivation and negative attitudes. In this regard, Gregersen points out that "teachers should not consider withdrawn students as lazy, lacking in motivation, or having poor attitude, but they suffer from anxiety" (cited in Tsiplakides and Keramida 43).

Finally, language anxiety is really a very sensitive issue that needs hasty solutions because it touches nearly all the students. For that reason, it is better for the teachers of oral expression to cooperate with each other and take the necessary solutions to eradicate or at least to reduce students' FL anxiety, and bring about higher levels of educational achievement; above all, to develop their students' communicative competence.

3. Suggestions for Students to Cope with Language Anxiety

Research on language anxiety suggests a variety of techniques for students to successfully cope with their speaking anxiety. Students can reduce this problem simply by taking into consideration the following strategies that are stated by Hauck and Hurd:

- Use positive self-talk (for example, I can do it; it does not matter if I make mistakes, etc).
- Actively encourage yourself to take risks in language learning, such as try to speak even though you might make some errors.
- Imagine that when you are speaking in front of others; it is just a friendly informal chat.
- Tell yourself when you speak that it won't take long.
- Give yourself a reward or treat when you do well.
- Be aware of physical signs of stress that might affect your language learning.
- Write down your feelings in a notebook.
- Share your worries with other students.
- Let your teacher know that you are anxious.
- Use relaxation techniques as for example deep breathing, consciously speak more slowly, etc (quoted in Hashemi and Abbasi 645).

Generally speaking, the above stated strategies may help students reduce their language anxiety. Students who use self talk share their worries with their classmates, encourage themselves to take risks in language learning, use relaxation techniques, and so on they successfully cope with their language anxiety.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded from this chapter that creating a low-anxiety classroom environment through providing indirect rather than direct correction, minimizing students' fear of making mistakes, telling fun stories and jokes, requiring less presentation in the classroom, etc can reduce students' speaking anxiety and increase their willingness to express themselves and take risks. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers of oral expression to bear much responsibility and create less threatening and formal classroom environments simply by using the above stated strategies. It is preferable also for them to make greater use of activities where students can work with their peers in groups instead of activities that increase competition in the classroom.

General Conclusion

Based on the previous chapters, it is possible to say that teaching a foreign language through co-operative learning strategies leads to higher levels of educational achievement because it is considered as a student-centered model. Group work is one among these strategies that gives an opportunity for the students to express themselves and increase their willingness to engage in the classroom activities. This technique has gained much attention from scholars due to the fact that it reduces students' foreign language anxiety and promotes their oral competency.

The researchers have tried through this survey to check the effectiveness of this technique in alleviating students' speaking anxiety, and stimulating the development of their oral competency, taking English language students at Saida University as a case study. To pursue that, an overview about speaking has been presented for the sake of elucidating its importance. Additionally, the researchers have provided a detailed discussion about foreign language anxiety, its definitions, effects, and its main sources in order to unravel its harmful impacts on learning the English language, more specifically on learning the speaking skill.

The results of the study display that the technique of group work is not largely used by English oral expression teachers at Saida University. Yet, its efficacy is glaringly testified with the instructor who relied on it heavily in teaching the speaking skill. Indeed, working in small groups better reduces students' speaking anxiety, and develops more their oral language skill than working individually. Moreover, speaking in front of the whole class provokes students' speaking anxiety. The survey also drew attention on the necessity of correcting students' errors in positive and friendly manners by teachers. Furthermore, both instructors and students ought to consider errors as a natural part of learning a FL in order to evade the ingraining of negative feeling, basically lack of self confidence. With regard to figuring out language speaking anxiety, the findings put into evidence the momentum of humour in creating less stressful and formal classroom environments, and increasing students' willingness to speak in the classroom.

On the whole, it can be argued that the group work technique is by all standards a momentous strategy that Algerian university teachers of the oral expression academic subject should resort to if they want really to achieve the objectives of the course. In fact, the small scale practice of the target language outside the classroom makes such a recommendation an urgent necessity. It has been proved that through this technique, students gain more in enriching their vocabulary stock, ameliorating their pronunciation, increasing their motivation, and enriching their ideas. Such a kind of interaction builds effectively, on a steady process, active and ambitious students who desire to perfect their level, above all their oral competency.

It is also suggested that oral expression teachers can use other strategies for developing their students' oral competency such as requiring less presentation in the classroom, creating equal status between the teacher and the students, selecting topics which are related to their students' interest and background, using spontaneous as well as planned humour subject to the condition that it won't destabilize students and embarrass them. A final recommendation brings to the fore the significance of collaboration among oral expression teachers for the elaboration of strategies that fit the needs of their learners.

Works Cited

Abebe, D. T. and Deneke, D. T. "Causes of Students' Limited Participation in EFL Classroom: Ethiopian Public Universities in Focus". *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology.*Vol 6.N 1. 2015.

Al-Hosni, S. "Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners". *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature.*Vol 2.N 6. 2014.

Aliakbari, M. and Jamalvandi, B. "The Impact of Role-Play on Fostering EFL Learners' Speaking Ability: A task-Based Approach". *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics.*Vol 14.N 1. 1997.

Al-Tamimi, M. N, and Attammi, R. A. "Effectiveness of Co-operative Learning in Enhancing Speaking Skills and Attitudes towards Learning English".*International Journal of Linguistics.*Vol 6.N 4. 2014.

Al-Yassen, W. S. *Co-operative Learning in the EFL Classroom.* Vienna: Kuwait university, 2014.

Ansari, M. S. "Speaking Anxiety in ESL/EFL Classrooms: A Holistic Approach and Practical Study". *International Journal of Educational Investigations.*Vol 2.N 4. 2015.

Arathip, O. S. "The Impacts of Co-operative Learning on Anxiety and Proficiency in an EFL Class". *Journal of College Teaching and Learning.*Vol 7.N 11. 2010.

Arnold, J. *Effect in Language Learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1999.

BallEster, E. P. *Verbal and non-Verbal Teacher Immediacy and Foreign Language Anxiety in an EFL University Course.*Barcelona:Autonoma University. 2915.

Banas, J. A., Dunbar, N. Rodriguez, D., and Liu, S. *A Review of Humour in Educational Settings: Four Decades of Research.* 2011.

Bardon, A.*The Philosophy of Humour.*Wake Forest University. 2005.

Biryonten, I. and Bedir, H. "Strategies-Based Instruction: A Means of Improving Adult EFL Learners' Speaking Skills". *International Journal of Language Academy.*Vol 2.N 3. 2014.

Blake, B. and Pope, T. "Developmental Psychology: Incorporating Piaget's and Vygotsky's Theories in Classrooms". Vol 1.N 1. 2008.

Brooks, G. and Wilson, J. "Using Oral Presentations to Improve Students' English Language Skills". *Humanities Review.*Vol 19. 2014.

Burnaby, B.C. "Effective Use of Group Work". Retrieved from: http://Creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/.

Chan, D. Y. and Wu, G. C. "A Study of Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Elementary School Students in Taipei Country".*Journal of National Taipei Teachers College.*Vol 17.N 2. 2004.

Chiriac, E. H. and Granstron, K. *Teachers' Leadership and Students' Experience of Group Work.* Linkoping University Electronic Press. 2012.

Cohen, E. G. "Restructuring the Classroom: Conditions for Productive Small Groups". *Review of Educational Research.*Vol 64.N 1. 1994.

Custrone, P. "Overcoming Japanese EFL Learners' Fear of Speaking". *Language Studies Working Papers.*Vol 1. 2009.

Davies, M. W. *Group Work as a Form of Assessment: Common Problems and Recommended Solutions*. 2009.

Deiter, R. *The Use of Humour as a Teaching Tool in the College Classroom.* Ames: Ipwa State University. 2000.

Doff, A. *Teach English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991.

Felder, M. F. and Brent, R. *Effective Strategies for Co-operative Learning*. Northern Carolina State University, 2001.

Felder, R. M., Oakley, B., Elhadjj, I. and Brent, R. "Turning Student Groups into Effective Teams".*Journal of Student Centered Learning.*Vol 2.N 1. 2004.

Flowers, J.*The Value of Humour in Technology Education*. 2001.

Ghaemi, F. and Hassannejad, E. "Developing EFL Students' Speaking: Brainstorming vs. Role-Play". *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World.*Vol 8.N 4. 2015.

Gibbs, G. The Assessment of Group Work: Lessons from the Literature. Assessment Standards Knowledge Exchange.Retrieved from: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/.../Brookes%20groupwork…G Gibbs.

Gkonou, C. *The Sociolinguistic Parameters of L2 Speaking Anxiety*. Essex: University of Essex. 2014.

Goebel, B. A. *Activities for the English Classroom*. 1958.

Gunn, V. *Approaches to Small Group Learning and Teaching*.University of Glasgow. 2007.

Hashemi, M. and Abbasi, M. "The Role of the Teacher in Alleviating Anxiety in Language Classes".*International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences.*Vol 4.N 3. 2013.

Haron, S. C., Ahmad, I. S., Mamat, A., and Hassanien, I. A. M. "Strategies to Develop Speaking Skills among Malay Learners of Arabic".*International Journal of Humanities and Social Science.*Vol 2.N 17. 2012.

Humphrics, R. *Language Anxiety in International Students: How can it be Overcome?*2011.

Jensen, K. E. AlmenEngelsk *Humour*. 2009.

Johnson, D. W., and Johnson, R. *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and Research*. Edina. 1989.

Khader, F. "The Effect of Co-operative Learning Strategy in the Reduction of Oral Communication Apprehension".*International Journal of Humanities and Social Science.*Vol 1.N 14. 2011.

Khan, Z. A. and Zafar, S. "The Effects of Anxiety on Cognitive Processing in English Language Learning". *English Language Teaching.*Vol 3.N 2. 2010.

Klimoviene, G. and Statkeviciene, S. *Using Co-operative Learning to Develop Language Competence and Social Skills*. Kalbu Studios. 2008.

Kusnierek, A. *Developing Students' Skills through Role-Play. 2015.*

Lam, B. and Li, M. P. *Co-operative Learning: The Active Classroom.* The Hong Hong Institute of Education. 2005.

MahmoodZadeh, M. "Investigating Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety within the EFL Learner's Interlanguage System: The Case Study of Iranian Learners".*Journal of Language Teaching and Reseach.*Vol 3.N 3. 2012.

Makewa, L., N., Role, E., and Ayiemba, J. "Teachers' Use of Humour in Teaching and Students' Rating of their Effectiveness".*International Journal of Education.*Vol 3.N 2. 2011.

Mclunis, J. R. and Derlin, M. *Assessing Group Work*. 2002.

Mejia, G. "A Case Study of Anxiety in the Spanish Classroom in Australia". *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice.*Vol 11.N 3. 2014.

Melisa, K. S. *The Role of Humour in Enhancing the Classroom Climate.*College of Mount of Student. 2010.

Mellor, A. *Group Work Assessment: Benefits, Problems and Implications for Good Practice*. British: British Library. 2009.

Meyer, J. C. *Humour as a Double-Edged Sword: Four Functions of Humor in Communication*. 2000.

Mintz, S."Making Group Work Work".Retrieved from: www. Columbia. ed/ cultat/ pdfs/ group% 20 work.

Mosaddaq, Y. "Measuring Speaking Anxiety among Speech Communication Course Students at the Arab American University of Jenin". *European Social Sciences Research Journal.*Vol.1.N 3. 2013.

Mthenbu, GPI. Chapter three: Group Work. https://ujdigispace.uj.ac.za/bitstream/.../Grace3.pdf.

Nahir, G. K. S. and Alwee, U. *Group Work in the Secondary ESL Classroom*. 2012.

Neville, C. "Making Group Work Works". Learn higher. ac.uk/…/Group%20work/group work.

Nunan, D.*Second Language Teaching*.Bosten: Heinle and Heinle. 1998.

Nunan, D.*Speaking*. USA. 1991.

Nation, P. *Group Work and Language Learning*.Victoria: Wellington University. 1989.

Olajoke, A. S. "Students' Perception on the Use of Humour in the Teaching of English as a Second Language in Nigeria". *International Education Research.*Vol.1.N 2. 2013.

Olsen, R. and Kagan, S. *Co-operative Learning*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 1992.

Osman, N. Nayan, S. and Mansor, M. "Spoken Skills, Communication Apprehension, and Collaborative Learning". *Cross-Cultural Communication.*Vol 6.N 2. 2010.

Pashie, S. and Hkalaj, H. "The Effect of Task Outcome on Speaking Improvement of Pre-Intermediate High School Students in Malayer".*International Journal of Educational Investigations.*Vol 1.N 1. 2014.

Phillips, E. M. *Decreasing Language Anxiety: Practical Techniques for Oral Activities*. McGraw-Hill: McGraw-Hill College. 1999.

Qu, W. and Yang, S. "Peer and self-Assessment Project Implemented in Practical Group Work".*Journal of Language Teaching and Research.*Vol 1.N 6. 2010.

Rahimy, R. and Safarpour, S. "The Effect of Using Role-Play on Iranian EFL Learners' Speaking Skill". Department of English Language.Vol 1.N 3. 2012.

Riasati, M. J. "Language Learning Anxiety from EFL Learners' Perspective". *Middle East Journal of Scientific Research.*Vol 7.N 6. 2011.

Subasi, G. "What are the Main Sources of Turkish EFL Students' Anxiety in Oral Practice?".*Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*.Vol 1.N 2. 2010.

Sujatha, M. P. "Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow". *Language India.*Vol 12.N 4. 2012.

Robyn, M. Gillies, M. B. *Teachers' Reflections on Co-operative Learning: Issues of Implementation*. Australia: The University of Queensland Bristane. 2010.

Seifert, K. and Sutton, R. *Educational Psychology*. Switzerland: Zurich. 2009.

Slavin, R. E. *Co-operative Learning: Theory Research and Practice*. London: Allya and Bacon. 1995.

Stroud, R. "The Laughting EFL Classroom: Potential Benefits and Barriers". *English Language Teaching*.Vol.6.N 10. 2013.

Subani, G. "What are the Main Sources of Turkish EFL Students' Anxiety in Oral Practice?".*Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*. 2010.

Tsiplakdes, I. and Kiramida, A. "Helping Students Overcome FL Anxiety in the Classroom: Theoretical Issues and Practical Recommendations*". International Education Studies*.Vol 2.N 4. 2009.

Tuan, N. H. and Mai, T. N. "Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Performance at Le ThanhHieh high School".*Asian Journal of Educational Research*.Vol 3.N 2. 2015.

Tuncy, H. *Welcome to HELL: Humour in English Language Learning*. Istanbul Arel University. 2007.

Turuk, M. C. "The Relevance and Implications of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory in the Second Language Classroom". *Arecls*.Vol 5. 2008.

Jeyasala, V. R., "A Prelude to Practice: Interactive Activities for Effective Communication in English". www. nus. sg/celc/research/…/22%20Jejasala.pdf.

Young, D. J. "Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Environment: What Does Language Anxiety Research Suggest?".*Modern Language Journal*.Vol 75.N 4. 1991.

Young, D. J. *Affect in Foreign and Second Language Learning: A Practical Guide to Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Atmosphere*. New York: The University of Tennesse. 1999.

Zheng, Y. "Anxiety and Second/Foreign Language Learning". *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*.Vol 1.N 1. 2008.

Zia, Z. and Sultan, N. "EFL Learners' Levels of Classroom Performance Anxieties and their Causes in Classroom Speaking Activities in Afghanistan".*International Journal of English and Education*.Vol4.N 1. 2015.

Ziyaeemehr, A. "Use and non-Use of Humour in Academic ESL Classrooms".*EnglishTeaching*.Vol 4.N 3. 2011.

Appendices

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of a survey that attempts to collect data about "The Effectiveness of Group Work Technique in Reducing students' Anxiety towards Speaking and in Developing their Oral Skill". We would be very grateful to you if you answer the questions the most honestly possible. Your views are extremely significant for the completion of this survey.

1. In which skill do you feel stressful?

a. speaking ☐   b. writing ☐   c. reading ☐   d. listening ☐

2. In oral expression sessions, do you prefer?

a. to work alone ☐

b. to work with your classmates in small groups ☐

Why?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

3. According to you, group work impacts you positively through:

-gaining self-confidence ☐

-enlarging your vocabulary stock ☐

-sharing ideas ☐

-promoting your responsibility to talk more ☐

Others:……………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. When you work with your classmates in small groups, do you speak more and feel less anxious in expressing your ideas than when you work alone?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

5. Do you feel anxious when you are talking and making a presentation in front of your peers and teacher?

a. always ☐   b. sometimes ☐   c. never ☐

Why?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Do you experience the same emotion when you are speaking and working with your classmates in small groups?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

Why?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. When you speak in English in front of your classmates, are you afraid of making mistakes?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

Why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. If you make mistakes when speaking; does your teacher correct you in positive and friendly manners?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

If no, how does he/she correct you?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Do you believe that the use of humour in teaching oral expression decreases the speaking anxiety, and makes students more motivated to speak?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

Teachers' Interview

1. What are the activities that you use most in teaching the speaking skill?

2. In which activity do your students feel less anxious, and participate more?

3. How do you make the classroom environment less stressful and threatening?

4. How do you minimize the speaking anxiety of your students, and increase their willingness to speak in the classroom?

5. Do you believe that teaching the speaking skill through group work activities make students feel less stressful, and develop their ability to communicate orally in the English language? Why?

6. Do you believe that students' speaking anxiety and their unwillingness to speak are caused by their fear of being negatively evaluated by their teachers when making mistakes? If no, what are the reasons behind their speaking anxiety and their unwillingness to speak?

7. When your students make mistakes while speaking, do you tolerate or correct them in humiliating and rigid manners? Why?

8. Do you use affective strategies such as humour from time to time? Why?

Glossary

Accommodation

It is the revision or modification of pre-existing concepts in terms of new information or experience (Seifert and Sutton132).

Anecdote

It is a short amusing or interesting story about a real incident, a person (Oxford Dictionary of English).

Assimilation

It is the interpretation of new information in terms of pre-existing concepts, information, or ideas (Seifert and Sutton132).

Competitive learning

It is a type of learning in which "students work individually, and their grades reflect comparisons among the students" (Seifert and Sutton132). For further reading see also Johnson and Johnson, 1989 *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and research.*

Individualistic Learning

It is a type of learning in which "students work by themselves, but their grades are unrelated to the performance of classmates" (Seifert and Sutton, 2009:132). See also Johnson and Johnson, 1989 and Khader, 2011 *The Effect of Cooperative Learning in the Reduction of Communication Apprehension.*

Joke

It is a thing that someone says to cause amusement or laughter, especially story with a funny punchline (Oxford Dictionary of English).