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**Investigting the Role of Small Sized Classroom in
Enhancing EFL Learners' Oral Performance
– Case of study: First Year Pupils at Belhadj
Dhaimi Middle School.**

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fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master**

Candidates

**Menouar Bilal
Haif Khaif Fares**

Board of Examiners

Ms. Laadjini	University of M'sila	Chairperson
Mrs. Abadou	University of M'sila	Supervisor
Mr. Bounaas	University of M'sila	Examiner

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Dedication

*To the most precious people our my lives
who gave us love, faith, and hope:
our beloved mothers and our
dear fathers.*

*Our lovely sisters and brothers our family
and our close friends To all who supported
us and besought God to help us
To the soul of our friend Youssef Snouci
we dedicate this work.*

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Abstract

The speaking skill is one of the important skills in studying English as a foreign language in which the student shows his/her knowledge using the oral capacities. However, there are different factors that impede them from being competent speakers; as the large classroom size. This paper investigates the relationship between small sized classrooms and students' oral performance and explores how small English classes facilitate foreign language learning especially the speaking skill by using different teaching methods and strategies special for those small sized classes. It is generally believed that smaller classes are more appropriate for teaching and learning speaking skill. A quantitative research design was used in a sample of 20 middle school teachers aging between 25 and 55. Teachers filled out a background information sheet. The data was then analyzed to reveal that most teachers strongly agreed or agreed that smaller class size increase students' achievement in a variety of areas. Basing on literature findings and data generated, most participants agreed with the theory that smaller class size do enhance students' oral performance.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- 1. CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching
- 2. CSR:** Classroom Size Reduction.
- 3.ELT:** English Language Teaching.
- 4.EFL:** English as Foreign Language.
- 5.FL:** Foreign Language.
- 6.ELT:** English Language Training
- 7.L1:** First Language
- 8.L2:** Second Language
- 9.STAR:** Student Teacher Achievement Ratio.
- 10.TESOL:** Teaching English to speakers of other languages

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INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have investigated the influence of class size on student attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes. The conventional wisdom among parents, teachers, school administrators, and policy makers is that smaller class size translates to improvements in student learning and outcomes. This conventional wisdom, however, has not been universally supported by empirical evidence. While a number of studies have found support for the importance of class size on student achievement, others strongly refute this claim concluding that class size has little to no impact on objective student outcomes. The difficulties in assessing the causal influence of class size on student outcomes, such as achievement, are (1) class size itself is often not directly observed but rather proxied by pupil-teacher ratios at the state, district, or school level, (2) many data sets used to analyse this question are cross-sectional and thus do not allow one to control for fixed student, teacher, class, or school effects, and (3) class size itself may be endogenous in a student outcome. Nowadays, one of the biggest problems faced in teaching and learning English as a foreign language is the huge number of students found within one class. In fact, the classroom size has an important role in the learning process, and a large classroom size may have negative effects on learning.

Large classes may affect the learning process negatively in terms of being a hurdle for the student to be competent in the four skills: the receptive ones, reading and listening, and the productive ones, writing and speaking. Our concern, here, is with the effects of small classes on the speaking skill that is supposed to be an important skill in which students display their oral capacities and use their oral skills to improve their ability to speak the foreign language they are studying.

Literature Review

Throughout existing years, various studies and methods have been used to investigate whether or not there is a true correlation between class size and students' academic achievement. However, the issue was revisited where the most important

findings started in the 1970's. Many scholars who tackled this issue share two distinct views on the effect of class size on the academic outcomes. Certainly, some have argued that smaller classes have a positive impact on student achievement, while others claim that there is no significant impact.

In his article, *The Tennessee study of class size in the early school Grades*, Mostellar (1995) provides a detailed description of the STAR Project reporting that “this study found that classes of fewer than 17 students to one teacher are most effective. Also, the benefits of small classes are greater for minority students or students attending inner-city schools than for White students”. Along the same lines, Blatchford et al. (2000-2003) in his contribution, results from a multi-method approach of class size effects on the teaching of pupils aged 7-11 years. “This study confirms the benefits of smaller classes showing that there was more individual attention in smaller classes, a more active role for pupils and beneficial effects on the quality of teaching”.

Whereas, Ehrenberg et al. (2001), conducted a meta-analysis study on the impact of class size on student achievement concluding that there was no significant evidence that variations in class size explain improvements in student achievement. They suggest that even if some relationship did exist between class size and student achievement, Ehrenberg suggests that the benefits are too small to warrant the implementation of expensive class size reduction programs. Another study by Hanushek (1995) review of 96 studies that attempted to link various educational inputs to student performance in developing countries. Hanushek concludes from these studies that there is little reason to believe that smaller class sizes systematically improve student educational performance. (As cited in Benbow et al. 2007)

All in all, The STAR Project study focused on the relationship between class size and students achievement while Blatchford worked on class size and teaching. Also, Ehrenberg et al studied the impact of class size on achievement and Hanushek linked educational inputs to students' performance.

Problem Statement

An effective teaching and learning process is based on the teacher, the students and the classroom. The latter is the ideal environment for improving learners' oral performance. According to the National Council of Teachers of English Guidelines (1987, P.8), the reference number of students should not exceed 25 learners per class. Unfortunately, in a country as Algeria where most middle schools have large classes, opportunities for oral practise are fewer and teachers feel that they have a lot of challenges. For instance, talking to everybody in class, ensuring that everybody is participating, reaching all students' needs, engaging all learners and monitoring the tasks. Not only that language classes also pose challenges on students' learning in a way that it hamper their language learning, and learners in such context are characterized to be low motivated by the foreign language and maybe poor achievers in terms of using this language . For these reasons, this study stresses basically on how reducing the number of students in a class can improve their oral performance.

Research questions

Observing the phenomenon of small classes and its impact on learners' speaking skill, some questions can be raised:

1. What is the relationship between a small classroom size and the learners' speaking skill proficiency?
 - a) -In what way may small classroom size affect positively the learners' oral performance?
 - b) -Are there any teaching methods and strategies to small sized classes?

Hypotheses

-Hypothesis: If students study in small classes, they will have more opportunities to speak, interact, and communicate with the teacher and even with peers; hence, their oral performance will be enhanced.

Significance of the study

This study will shed light on a phenomenon within EFL classes which is the small classroom size in which we try to show its positive impact on the learning process, mainly, the learners' oral performance or the speaking skill. We will do so through our study of the teacher's perceptions and attitudes towards the matter of small classes and at the same time observing students studying in large classes in order to know, on one hand, how teachers deal with the big number of students while teaching, and how it affects the students' oral performance; and on the other hand, how small classes assets the students learning process in terms of chances to speak, to interact, and to communicate in the classroom. This study will help teachers to know the approving impact of small classes.

Objectives of the study

Coming to this concern which is to investigate the impact of small classes on learners' oral performance within EFL classes, we aim:

- To describe the phenomenon of EFL small classes.
- To find out the difficulties students face when learning in EFL large classes, mainly, related to the speaking skill.
- To ensure that small classroom size promotes the students to be orally competent.

Research methodology design

Our present work deals with the positive impact of small classes on students' oral performance. Carrying out this research, we need to follow some steps: choosing a population and a sample, selecting an appropriate method, and using suitable tools.

Population

Our choice of population that is the case of first year English students at Belhadj Dhaimi Middle School in M'sila was based on our experience; their whole number is of 240 students divided into 6 groups between 37 as a minimum and 40 as a maximum number of students in each group.

Research methods

According to the nature of the issue about education, the most plausible method that is used in carrying out this study that can fit our topic is the descriptive one. Our main aim is to describe a known and very acute phenomenon which is small sized classes and its positive impact on learners' oral performance.

Once the data is completed, we will compile it using spread sheets. Results from the teacher's questionnaire will be calculated into percentages, responses will be displayed using various tables and graphs to be analysed. This data analyses the agreement or disagreement with the literature based on the extents of class size.

Data collection tools

Trying to collect data concerning our present work, we will have as tools a questionnaire with teachers and an observation tool with the classes of first year middle school students.

Structure of the dissertation

This research is basically divided into three chapters. Chapters, one and two, are devoted to the review of literature and the third chapter is the field of investigation.

The first chapter provides a better understanding of the classroom size phenomenon and classroom management. It includes also the notion of classroom reduction and mainly teaching English to small sized classrooms.

The second chapter outlines some issues related to the nature of the speaking skill starting by an overview about the speaking skill then mentioning the elements that constitute speaking with the needed skills. It sheds the light on the relationship between the speaking skill and the other skills, and explains the reasons behind the students' incompetence in speaking English. Several speaking activities are presented and followed by discussing the issue of speaking assessment. Teacher and students roles are also clarified.

The following section of the dissertation will briefly outline the extensive literature on the impact of class size on student achievement. This section is followed by a discussion of the data, and then investigates the relationship between small sized classes and students' oral performance. Finally, the conclusion of the dissertation discusses the implications of these results.

Introduction

Generally, Teachers meet several classes in one day; their quality of teaching is influenced by the number of students in their classes. There is no agreement upon the optimum class size for the ideal learning situation. In teaching English as a foreign language, the number of students in the class should be reasonable so that the teacher can easily communicate with his or her students.

The classroom or the physical environment plays a critical role in learning English as a foreign language, but it may become a source of hindrance for the learning process.

Nowadays, one of the biggest problems faced in teaching and learning English as a foreign language is the huge number of students found within one class that may have negative effects on learning. Thus, the classroom size has an important role in the learning process. In fact, small classes may affect the learning process positively.

Our concern, here, is with the effect of small classes on the speaking skill or the students' oral performance that is supposed to be an important skill in which students display their oral capacities and use their oral skills to improve their ability to speak the foreign language they are studying .

In this chapter, we will deal with general issues about class size and classroom management starting by defining the following concepts: what is a classroom and classroom management, then we shed light on the relationship between class size and EFL teaching. Finally, some key issues in small classes will be then identified, their implications for effective learning as well as discussing some experiences in small classes teaching.

1.1. Definition of a classroom

According to Edge and Garton (2009, p.69), a classroom is a teaching space that should be appropriate for learning under certain conditions. First, the classroom should be the right size and should have the suitable temperature. Second, the classroom should be clean, attractive, and well lit. Third, it should have an appropriate shape in order to facilitate for both students to see the board and teachers to see all the students.

1.2. What is class size? :

Class size is a popular concept in educational research defined as the average number of students per class, calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled by the number of classes. Hoffman (1980) described it as the number of students per teacher in a class.

Adeyemi (2008) expressed it as an educational tool that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school. It is often simply considered as the respective population of students in each class.

The term ‘class size’ refers to the number of learners who regularly appear in a teacher’s classroom and for whom that teacher is primarily responsible and accountable. These are the learners you would count if you observed a teacher’s classroom day in and day out, the learners on the teacher’s class roster.

1.3. An optimum class size.

In general, it is probably over simplistic to talk about optimal class sizes in an exact way.

Teachers’ judgements about preferred class sizes are likely to be affected by what they have experienced and what they perceive as realistically achievable. Judgements are also likely to be affected by culturally bound views about teaching and about learning. For these reasons it would not be surprising if views differed between countries. For teachers in some countries class sizes of fewer than 20

would be virtually unimaginable. We need, therefore, to be careful about comparisons across countries and attempts to pin down an optimal class size.

1.4. Definition of classroom management.

Classroom management can be considered as an umbrella term for teachers' actions to manage classes, students' behaviours and their learning (Martin and Sass, 2010 as cited in Ali akbari, 2015). These actions encompass works like, establishing rules, carrying out disciplinary actions, maintaining effective teacher and students relationships (Marzano, 2003). Similarly, assertive discipline has been seemed as an approach to classroom management which helps teachers to prevent discipline problems (Lee Canter, 1976). What the above definitions have in common is that classroom management is seen as synonymous with classroom discipline and order.

Moreover, Pretorius and Lemmer (1998, p.55) define classroom management as: The process of working with and through individuals, groups, and other resources, whether they are learners, educators, administrative staff, parents or stakeholders, to accomplish general educational goals and specific learning outcomes (cited in Coetzee, Van Niekerk, and Wydeman, 2008).

Classroom management is defined here as a process that includes working with different people from individuals, groups, and different other sources from students or their parents, educators, administration or stakeholders for the purpose of obtaining particular learning outcomes and reaching general educational goals.

Classroom management has some characteristics:

- Classroom management contains well- planned and different lessons.
- Discipline problems and disruptive behaviour are minimized.
- A comfortable environment with respect and effective problem solving are found.

It gives space for the teacher to vary the instruction and at the same time, it fulfils all the students' needs.

- Adopting certain methods to deal with specific behaviours.
- Establishing consistency.

1.5. Core elements of classroom management

Classroom management is influenced and interrelated with both internal and external forces, however going back to the classroom setting which is the context of our study; classroom management is concerned with four main strands (Wright, 2005).

- **Space:** Physical position or change during class flow.
- **Time:** Classroom life is managed not only through pre-lesson planning but as well through improvisation and decision-making.
- **Engagement:** It refers to the way participants engage to the learning activities and to each other. Positive emotional state is conducive to learning (effective domain) which involves support for learners, encouragement, praise, challenge emotional feedback and support.
- **Participation:** Classrooms are social discourse worlds or communities of practice; it involves teacher talk, turn-taking control, classroom talk.

1.6. Classroom and student learning

According to Duke (1979) classroom management is defined as the provisions and procedures to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur. This way to approach classroom management and learning has been summarized by Doyle (1986) as follows:

The primary goal of effective classroom management is not the reduction of misbehaviour or even the creation of an “orderly” environment although; they are related issues, effective classroom management and the establishment of order are not synonymous. For instance, teaching practices that lead to passive non engagement would not threaten an orderly environment, but would reduce opportunities for learning. Thus, student learning is the primary goal of effective classroom management.

Similarly, Afolabi and Agolaby (1991) added that classroom management strategies go beyond discipline, order and control but include physical arrangement, time management, effective communication. In concordance, (Martin, N.K., & Yin, Z,1997; Martin, N. K. & Shoho;1998 as cited in Moghtadaie & Hoveida,2015) believed that : " the first responsibility of the teacher is to manage the class so that he can provide the best environment for learning and so that the students can achieve academic progress" (p.185).

The purpose of classroom management is to provide an environment so that students are willing to learn. Classroom management has been seen as a challenge for many pre-service and even in-service teachers (Balli, 2009; Quintero Corzo&Ramírez Contreras, 2011, as cited in Macias and Sanchez, 2015). The challenge is due to many possible issues involved in managing a classroom. According to Brown (2007) classroom management involves decisions about what to do when:

- You or your students digress and throw off the plan for the day.
- An unexpected but pertinent question comes up.
- Some technicality prevents you from doing an activity.
- A student is disruptive in class.
- You are asked a question to which you do not know the answer.
- There is not enough time to finish an activity that has already started.

2. Class size and teaching

The effects of class size on teaching can be seen in terms of research on effective teaching. Small classes may encourage aspects of teaching that are the same as those identified in research on effective teaching linked with the promotion of pupil achievement. The connection will not necessarily follow, and small classes will not necessarily make a bad teacher better, but small classes seem likely to make it easier for teachers to be effective.

2.1. School Outcomes and Class Size

Many other studies have looked at the implications of class size for academic outcomes. A meta-analysis on early class size studies (Glass & Smith, 1979) showed mixed conclusions regarding the impact of class size on student achievement. However, Glass and Smith reported that several problems existed in the class size studies of the past. These problems included literature searches that were often overly selective, and studies that were typically narrative and discursive.

These were compounded by the fact that previous authors seemed to make errors in aggregating quantitative findings. Glass and Smith's meta-analysis categorized the research on class size into four stages: the pre experimental era (1895-1920), the primitive experimental era (1920-1940), the large group technology era (1950- 1970), and the individualization era (1970-present). They suggest that at the start of each new stage, the sophistication of research methodology increased, and the effects of class size on student achievement were examined from different perspectives. Taking all findings of their meta-analysis into account, Glass and Smith concluded that earlier studies on class size showed that more was learned in smaller class sizes.

More recently, Slavin (1990) suggested that smaller classes have only moderately positive effects compared to larger class sizes. Even then, according to Slavin, these moderately positive effects were only seen in students that had experienced smaller class sizes for three or more consecutive years. In addition, Slavin argued, it would be more beneficial to hire additional teachers to provide one-to-one tutoring rather than to reduce class size, and the effects on student achievement would be just as great. However, Slavin also made the point that reduced class size had the potential to improve school tone and morale, and aid in teacher retention.

One of the most influential studies on class size was Tennessee's experiment called Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (Project STAR), (Achilles, 2003; Biddle & Berliner, 2002; Boyd-Zaharias, 1999). Project STAR was a large-scale,

randomized experiment that included 11,600 students, and 1,300 teachers in 76 schools and 42 districts (AERA, 2003). Project STAR provided some of the most substantial evidence to date that smaller class sizes yield better results in student achievement in all subject areas, as well as in classroom behaviors (AERA; Boyd-Zaharias). Students who were placed in a smaller-sized class performed better in terms of achievement. Longitudinal studies spawned from the original Project STAR experiment have followed the same students as they moved into regular sized classrooms, as well as on to high school (Achilles; AERA; Biddle & Berliner; Boyd-Zaharias; Januszka, 2008). Findings from these studies indicated that students who experienced smaller class sizes earlier on in their elementary education continued to exhibit higher school achievement levels through high school and had higher graduation rates (Boyd-Zaharias). One limitation from the STAR project was the representativeness of the student population. It did not quite match the U.S. population in that very few Hispanic, Native American, and immigrant families were living in Tennessee in the middle-1980s (Biddle & Berliner, 2002). However, it laid the groundwork for studies that followed. According to Biddle and Berliner, Wisconsin's Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) was one such study that stemmed from the results of Project STAR. SAGE confirmed the results of Project STAR, only this time the sample was more representative of the U.S. population in that a majority of the sample consisted of low-income and minority students (AERA, 2003). AERA reported that the SAGE experiment showed that the positive impact of smaller class size is greater for low-income students.

More recently, in a review of research on the relationship between class size and student engagement, Finn, Pannozzo, and Achilles (2003) looked at how small class sizes in the elementary grades have been associated with increased academic performance.

They saw a consistent, integrated explanation of "why" small classes have positive effects. In observing classes in which class sizes were reduced, major changes occurred in students' engagement in the classroom. Engagement was

comprised of "learning behavior" and a continuum of pro social and antisocial behavior. Both were highly related to academic performance.

2.2. Class Size and Student Behavior

In addition to student achievement, class size has also been found to affect student behavior. Through research review and analysis, Finn, Pannozzo, and Achilles (2003) found empirical evidence that student engagement increased when class size was reduced. Finn et al. found "teachers of small classes spend more time on instruction and less on classroom management or matters of discipline,"(p.322). When class sizes were reduced, students became more engaged academically, as well as socially. Academic engagement referred to student behaviors related directly to the learning process, such as: time on task, attentiveness, participation in learning activities, and taking initiative in the classroom (Finn et al.). The increase in engagement in the classroom is what led to an increase of learning in all subject areas.

Academic engagement and social engagement are the skills needed to learn in the classroom. According to Finn et al. (2003) students who are withdrawn or who engage in disruptive behavior in the elementary grades are associated with depressed academic performances. Moreover, when antisocial behavior disrupts the teacher or other students, learning is hindered for the whole class. In reviewing the results of several studies of learning behavior that were conducted simultaneously with Project STAR, Finn et al. (2003) found a significant difference in percentage of students definitely on-task favoring small classes in reading but not in mathematics. One study was conducted during Year 3 of Project STAR, where trained observers observed a total of 52 Grade 2 classrooms in 13 schools during reading and mathematics lessons (Finn et al.). The observers recorded teacher-to-student and student-to-teacher contacts in behavioral, academic, or procedural contexts and took descriptive notes to gather information in both small and regular classes. Finn et al. found that students were likely to get a turn more often during lessons, and students initiated more contacts with teachers in small classes. This supports the premise that class size affects student behavior.

2.3. Reducing Class Size:

“The research confirms that class size reduction does provide the environment in which teachers can teach differently. In smaller classes, they interact with individual students more frequently and use a greater variety of instructional strategies. They can create more opportunities for higher-order co-construction of meaning by students. They also may spend out-of-classroom work time on more creative planning (and less on routine marking), and they may interact more frequently with other teachers and adults in support of classroom teaching. Bascia (2010).

The research on student outcomes and behaviour tends to support teachers' beliefs that they can teach more competently and effectively in smaller classes. In smaller classes, students learn more academically and socially; they are more engaged and less disruptive. Even when it is not evident that teachers have significantly changed their instructional activities, student learning may improve, engagement may increase, and "behavioral problems" may decrease. These improvements may be partially explained by an increase in physical classroom space per student, providing more opportunities for movement, different grouping strategies, and interaction among students and between students and teachers.

But the research also suggests that the full gains of class size reduction cannot be achieved if it is implemented without paying attention to other factors that support innovative practice. Some of the most important factors include the ways in which teachers and students work together; the curriculum in use; and teachers' opportunities to learn new teaching strategies.

2.4. Changes reduction has brought to the classroom

Class size reduction has been advocated as a tool for enhancing student achievement by increasing the opportunities that teachers and students have to interact around relevant content, reducing disciplinary disruptions, and enriching teacher knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses (Biddle & Berliner, 2002). The literature on class size reduction has generally supported these suppositions, but there is some disagreement about the degree to which the considerable investment merits the costs (Hanushek, 1999; Harris, 2006).

Class size reduction has been implemented and studied in a number of contexts and through a range of strategies. It has been found to have positive effects on student achievement.

class size has indicated that in smaller classes students, who have more access to teacher time, are taught in smaller groups, and have their learning disrupted less frequently by disciplinary issues. Smaller classes provide opportunities for teachers to spend more time per student for all teaching's complex interactions— instruction, assessment, management, and social and emotional connection. These opportunities are realized in contexts where structural commitments facilitate teacher action that is responsive to the needs of their students. Classroom spaces must be sufficient, teacher workloads reasonable, intellectual and material resources available to the task at hand, and shared commitments among colleagues perceptible.

2.5. Teaching English to Small Classes

Most teachers would agree that teaching a small class rather than a large class comes with many benefits. Teachers can offer one-on-one assistance at times and are more likely to meet the individual needs of their students. Some teachers, however, find it quite challenging to keep their students interested and excited about learning in a small class. Depending on the location you are teaching in, small classes range from about three to seven students. In countries where large classes are the norm, classes of twenty may still be considered small. There are numerous

coping strategies and activities that teachers can use to deal with the challenges of timing and student engagement.

2.5.1 Effectiveness of Teaching and Learning English Language in a Small Class size:

Having considered the concept of class-size and views of educationists on its influence of Teaching and Learning English Language in relation to students' performance, the effectiveness of teaching in both class sizes need to be looked into. To determine the effectiveness of any teaching such as English, the outcome or performance of the students need to be ascertained. In terms of output, Simkins (1981) reported that output represents the immediate results of the systems activities. According to him, the main outputs in education are expressed in terms of learning that is changes in the knowledge, skills and attitude of individuals as a result of their experiences within the educational system. Tsang (1988) remarked that output consists of educational effects such as cognitive and non-cognitive skills which are learned by students. In agreement to this, Lord (1984) enumerated four major areas in which the measurement of output in education could be analysed.

2.5.2 Advantages of Teaching Small Classes

- **Comfort:** Teachers and students often feel more comfortable when the class size is smaller; Students generally feel more comfortable voicing their questions and opinions.
- **Students' needs met:** Teachers can design customized lessons to meet the needs and interests of all of the class members.
- **Student centred:** Teaching is student centred and often more communicative than is possible in large classes. Students also have more opportunity to speak.
- **Space:** Students have plenty of space to move around in the classroom. Teachers can also arrange excursions (or suggest spontaneous ones) outside of the classroom where students can be exposed to real world English.

- **Attendance:** Class attendance is usually high because students know they will be missed if they are absent. They also feel like they belong to the group.
- **Tasks Completed:** Assignments and homework are more likely to be completed because the teacher is more likely to check.
- **Preparation time:** Less preparation time is required for photocopying. There are generally enough textbooks to go around so photocopying is limited to extra activities.
- **Detailed Feedback:** Teachers have time to provide detailed feedback when marking assignments and tests, so students get a better sense of how they are improving and where they need to work harder. Teachers also have more time to answer questions before, during, and after class. (Lucy Pollard)

2.5.3. The relationship between class size and method of instruction:

Method of instruction is one of the many variables that should be taken into account in research on class size. Ebel (1969) offers the opinion that:

Any criterion employed to assess the effect of class size is in actuality assessing the accomplishments of some method -- the method of teaching which was used in the study in question. Whether it appears to better advantage in large classes or in small classes depends upon the compatibility of the method with the size of the groups being investigated. One either is at a loss to know, with respect to virtually all the class-size literature, whether the research design specifies a method for or both of the class-size categories and whether the method specified was actually consistently employed (P.142)

It is unlikely that the same teaching method is best for all situations. If the same teaching techniques are used in both groups, it is likely that no difference would be found in large and small classes. McKenna and Pugh (1964) suggest that teachers have been taught and have developed skills and techniques of teaching that are applicable only to large classes of pupils. When the opportunity arises to work with a small class, they are not equipped to make the most of this opportunity.

McKenna and Pugh feel that special training must be provided for teachers so that they will be able to fully capitalize on the opportunities afforded in small classes.

2.5.4. Methods and strategies of teaching in small sized classrooms:

Designing a small group teaching session with variety in mind allows learners to work in their comfort zones for some of the time and provides them with new challenges at others. The name of the small group teaching session will provide some clarity on the overall teaching approach expected. These fundamentally vary in how directive the teacher is expected to be:

- **Tutorials (academic):** small groups of students discuss an issue, their essays or a topical problem.
- **Personal tutorials:** as above but also has a pastoral role in supporting students more widely if they have academic and personal difficulties.
- **Problem classes:** focused specifically on working through a set of given problems these are frequently mathematical, statistical or computational.
- **Seminars:** groups discuss journal papers and/or other learning materials.
- **Workshops:** a mixture of small inputs by the tutor interspersed by work on group or individual tasks, followed by feedback to the whole group and discussion.
- **Problem-based learning:** A group of students work through a given scenario or problem to diagnose a solution. The group is likely to meet 2 or 3 times on each problem, gaining further information each time from a non-specialist facilitator.
- **Student-led groups:** students decide on the topic and how it will be discussed; tutor merely observes or may intervene if necessary.
- **Self-help groups:** run by students using the tutor as a resource.
- **Action Learning Sets:** tutor acts as a facilitator to the set, each student present issues in turn with others asking questions and suggesting ways forward – the presenting student then decides which points to act on.

In some classes it is expected that the teacher will be very knowledgeable and be prepared to lead on a specific subject or topic. The teacher is in the class to share their expertise and to ‘present’ information and their views to the group.

However, in many small groups teaching sessions this is definitely not the role of the teacher. A more common situation is that the teacher is there to help manage the process of learning, by facilitating discussion and supporting the students to work through learning activities and tasks. Tasks that have been designed to encourage the students to think for themselves share their ideas with each other and help them to develop a set of, much valued, academic and communication skill. (Lucy Pollard)

2.5.5. Activities to Use in Small Classes

- **Use English newspapers:** Ask students to bring in a daily paper. Assign one story to each student to read and present.
- **Use music in the classroom:** Have students listen to English songs. Use cloze exercises and teach vocabulary and idioms.
- **Storytelling:** Have students tell stories from their own cultures or childhoods. It is fun to take students to a new location to do this, such as a park or a coffee shop.
- **Chain writing:** Each student writes one sentence on a piece of paper and then passes it on until each story is complete.
- **Role-playing:** Give students lots of opportunity to use the language they are learning in mock-style everyday settings.
- **Board games:** Small groups are great for playing board games such as Word Up. Card games are a great way for students to practice asking questions. Make sure that they speak in English rather than speaking with gestures or in their own native language.
- **Online lessons:** Besides our own Learning Centre, English Club offers many links to other online sites. Small classes can make use of computer labs easily. If your class does not have a computer lab, take students to the local library regularly to introduce them to the online learning sites.

- **Films:** There are numerous lessons online for incorporating film into your class lessons. This can be done at all levels with great success, especially in a small class. Stop the film often in order to check comprehension and keep students focused.
- **Class Excursions:** Take advantage of the class size, by getting out of the school as often as possible. Exposing your students to real English outside of the classroom is one of the most important things you can do if they are visiting from foreign countries.
- **Guest speakers:** Invite people into your classroom to speak or participate in a lesson. This can be other students who have a special interest or understanding about a topic you are working with, or other people from the community who would be willing to come into your class. Your students will appreciate a new face from time to time in a class that has limited numbers.(Lucy Pollard)

2.5.6. Benefits of Small Classes.

The mechanisms at work linking small classes to higher achievement include a mixture of higher levels of student engagement, increased time on task, and the opportunity small classes provide for high-quality teachers to better tailor their instruction to the students in the class. For example, observations of STAR classrooms found that in small classes students spent more time on task, and teachers spent more time on instruction and less on classroom management. Similar results have been found in other settings. However, qualitative research from the pupil-teacher ratio reduction in Wisconsin’s SAGE program indicates that such beneficial adaptations in teachers’ practices will not necessarily occur.

It is important to provide professional-development support to instruct teachers on how to adapt their teaching practices to smaller classes.

In addition, small classes may have a positive impact on student “engagement behaviors,” which include the amount of effort put forth, initiative taken, and participation by a student. Not surprisingly, these characteristics have been

shown to be important to classroom learning. Finn finds that students who were in small classes in STAR continued to have higher engagement ratings in subsequent grades.

It is sometimes argued that class size only matters for inexperienced or low-quality teachers because more effective teachers are better able to adapt their teaching styles to accommodate larger classrooms. The evidence suggests that the opposite is true. In STAR, the positive impacts of small classes were found to be larger for experienced teachers. Experienced teachers are better able to take advantage of smaller class sizes to make pedagogical changes.

2.5.7. Challenges of Teaching Small Classes

- **Timing:** Activities finish quickly, so teachers may need to prepare more lessons and games.
- **Distractions:** Pairs can get distracted easily since they can hear what each other are saying.
- **Attendance:** If a few students do miss a class, planned lessons can occasionally flop. For example, you may plan a lesson that requires pair work, and then find that only three of your six students come to class.
- **Fillers:** Teachers must always have plenty of fillers on hand for times when lessons or activities get completed quickly.
- **Boredom:** Students may become bored working with the same pairs or groupings all of the time. There may also be less energy in the room in a small class.
- **Anxiety:** While you will likely feel more comfortable teaching in a small class, shy students who are used to blending into a large class may be uncomfortable participating. You will have to take special measures to help them gain confidence.
- **Activities not always suitable:** Some activities in textbooks, such as debates or role-playing, may not be possible if a class is very small. You will have to spend some preparation time adapting textbook activities.

2.5.8. Strategies for Coping with Small Classes:

- **Fillers:** Always have plenty of fillers (such as puzzles and games) ready in case activities finish quickly. Keep a list of games or warm ups on hand to use when energy gets low. Some may need to be adapted slightly if the class is very small.
- **Review often:** Take the time to make sure that your students understand the lessons and material.
- **Encourage confidence:** Help shy students to feel more comfortable by trying not to put them on the spot. Let them get comfortable with you and their classmates before you start calling on them to speak up more. Remember to praise them often and save criticism for private interviews.
- **Change the dynamics:** Invite students from other classes in once in a while. Prearrange pair group and getting to know you activities with other teachers who have small classes. If you have high level students pair them with lower level students and give them the opportunity to teach.(Lucy Pollard)

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, our focus is on the issue of class size classroom and its management and all the elements that are included in it or related to it; its aims and how teachers should work effectively to realize these aims. Then, we refer to its main advantages and effectiveness until we reach the major methods, strategies and activities used in small sized classrooms and last but not least the challenges of teaching small classes.

The next chapter will be devoted for one of the four skills in EFL that is the speaking skill and all its components focusing on the nature of the oral performance within EFL classes.

Introduction

Speaking is a skill that deserves attention as the rest of the other skills in a foreign language.

Students need to be able to speak. With confidence and success; it is their prior aim as the teacher's one. In this chapter, we will start by an overview about the speaking skill and its importance moving to classroom elements and skills which are both required to speak English accurately and fluently.

We will discuss some of the factors that hinder students to speak. The discussion will be followed by speaking activities that improve the students' level and involve them in much more speaking situation with the help of the teacher ending with how to assess the speaking skill.

1.1. Overview about the speaking skill

In order to give an overview about the nature of speaking skill, the following elements give a clear overview about it starting by defining speaking, classroom speaking, showing its importance, and the value of oral communication.

1.1.1 Definition of speaking

It is crucial for students, learning English as a foreign language, to speak English and use it competently when communicating. Speaking can be defined as a productive skill in which language is produced orally.

When coming to define speaking as communicating in the classroom, Davies and Pearse(2000) state that". Speaking ability should partly be the natural result of using English as the main means of communication in the classroom." (p. 82). Studying English, students have to use English as the main tool to speak inside the classroom because they need to use the foreign language they are studying in order to communicate.

1.1.2 Teaching Speaking

Listening is needed more than speaking which is required more than reading and writing outside the classroom (Rivers, 1981). Moreover, Brown thinks that speaking and listening are the most often used skills inside the schoolroom (Cited by Florez, 1999, p.1). Both teachers and learners are considering them as critical for functioning in English language teaching/learning. Furthermore, oral communication which is used while using ESL (English as a second language) or EFL (English as a foreign language) is one of the most common and complex activities. Oral communication must be considered during teaching English language since people nowadays have to speak English fluently, especially for those who want to improve that language in some fields of humanities (Al-Sibai, 2004, p.3 .Cited by Al Hosni, 2014, p.22).

According to Bygate (1987, p. 4), training students to use the language is one of the main problems in foreign language teaching. Apparently, knowing basic rules of grammar and certain amount of vocabulary is important in order to be able to acquire the language. Also, there are things in speaking are worthy to be included in teaching the foreign language. For examples, teachers should evaluate their learners' ability to speak by encouraging them to say something through giving them 'speaking practise' and 'oral exams'.

Richards (2008, p. 19) indicates that, "the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners. Consequently, learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel that they have improved in their spoken language proficiency."

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He also states that oral skills have nowadays been in EFL/ESL courses though the best way of teaching of speaking skill is to focus on the methodological debate. Teachers should take advantage of different approaches of teaching a language by focusing on characteristics of oral interaction including, turn taking, topic management, and questioning strategies In addition, they have to use indirect approaches such as group work, task work, and other strategies.

According to Al Hosni (2014, p.23), Ur (1996) speaking is the most important skill among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because people who know a language are the speakers of that language. That is, it is not useful to know a lot about certain language if a person has not the ability to use it.

Communication can happen between two or more interlocutors through discussion. Bashir et al. (2011, p.38-39) claim that large numbers of language learners agree that speaking ability is the measure whether or not the speaker knows a language. Those learners explain fluency that it is the ability to speak with others more than the ability to read, write, or understand what they hear. For them, speaking is the most important skill that they need to have, and their advancement in learning a language is assessed by their accomplishments in spoken communication. They add that speaking involves three areas of knowledge that have to be known by language;

- Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): The right words, the proper order, and the correct pronunciation are what are used.
- Functions (transaction and interaction): Language learners need to know when the message should be clear (transaction/information exchange) and when they do not need to comprehend every single word (interaction/relationship building).
- Social and cultural rules and norms (turns, speed of speech, length of pauses between speakers, and roles of participants): Learners should pay attention to the speaker, to whom he/she is speaking, in what context, about what, and for what reason.

Malamah (1987, p.12) states that pair-work, group-work, and informal chat are some interaction activities that would help students to be engaged in the classes. Malamah suggests that the teacher has the ability to stimulate the learners by using the pair work which makes students free and enjoy asking questions and giving answers on certain task that is involved in the curriculum. Moreover, Evans and John (1998, p.199) state, “in communication practice, it is better {that} the students are divided into pair and group for the big size of the class, and then making some questions and responding is obtained from the other groups” They also indicate, “Based on the some experts, oral communication practice will be better if the interaction is involved in pair and group work. The students will be free to express

their own ideas and build the sentences. ” That is, oral interaction involves turn-taking and questioning strategy.

Richards and Rogers (2001) state that communicative language teaching (CLT) needs a practice in the real communication where the learners involve the authentic and purposeful language. Cole in Forum Journal (1975, p.150) states that foreign language teaching, and especially in teaching English to speakers of other languages TESOL has emphasized on the base of language habits instead of the improvement in communication skill. Besides, he correlates mastery of a language with the acquisition through repetition techniques of an utterance of a language.

However, he states that the acquisition of language habits is insufficient for the mastery of language.

Richmond et al. (2009, p.32) claim that in order to make the student keeps talking, asking questions and responses is the good way to achieve that. But, instructors need to not make answering questions as a threatening experience. Children who are suffering from a high level of communication apprehension will probably answer "I don't know" to avoid any embarrassment.

Any student will be embarrassed if he/she was asked some question he/she cannot answer. Hence, teachers should not force students who do not want to participate. However, giving chances to participate only for those who volunteer may limit interaction to the more extroverted students.

Hence, the teacher should consider for what reason he/she insists forcing students to answer questions when they do not want to.

Therefore, Richmond et al. propose that learning through small groups and exchanging questions and responses among them will give sufficient opportunities for the students to express their ideas without fear. Classroom discussion can often be increased by the use of "buzzgroups" which are small groups of students who discuss a question among themselves, and then they give their response to the class as a whole Richmond et al. (2009, p.32).

Hence, the teacher has the big responsibility in creating a proper atmosphere and suitable techniques for communicative language teaching (CLT) class to make the learners have fun while involving their speaking activities.

Actually, In CLT model, instructors help their students in improving their knowledge for real-life communication through practice. Later, the students would have the capacity to produce correct and logically connected sentences in particular contexts with acceptable and comprehensible) pronunciation.

1.1.3. Classroom speaking

Generally, in most classrooms, speaking is considered to be just the student's repetition of words and sentences. In fact, this is not the only way to speak English, but it is useful for students to use the language they are studying in situations that are similar to their living situations outside the classroom for the reason that they will have the chance to use English to express themselves, talk about their live and beliefs, and have a chance to discuss and debate.

A good example is compared with a real situation. When students are asked to talk about a particular topic, they will have space to generate ideas and to speak using their own style, not repeating what they heard. As in real life, people do not repeat one another speech; they construct their own speech and conversations. So, teachers should specify time for his/her students to talk by suggesting topics and situations similar to their lives in order to speak, and not just parroting words and sentences for a whole lesson (Baker and Westrup,2003, p. 7).

1.1.4. The importance of speaking

Both teachers and learners are concerned with: teachers to teach mainly grammar and vocabulary, and students to master grammar tasks and memorize a wide vocabulary. Besides, students will use this knowledge only in examinations in which they will be tested. As a result, students will find themselves unable to use English outside the classroom though they have enough knowledge of grammar and

vocabulary. So, an important question will be asked, why should students speak English, and teachers teach speaking?

At the level of education, educators and ministries of education need people who speak very good English. Companies and organizations need a staff able to speak English, to communicate with international companies. Thus, students speaking English very well will have great opportunity for further education.

Speaking good English helps students also to get and understand information in scientific, economic, and social fields. As a result, speaking English well make students, indirectly, efficient elements in their community and country.

At the level of the classroom, speaking activities give the students more chances to learn new vocabulary, grammar, or functional language. They push students to use their language that is English. In addition, these activities give a chance for advanced students to compare the new language with their previous language in different situations and topics (Baker and Westrup, 2003, pp.5-6).

For different reasons, students often need to use the language they are studying that is English or they need to practice speaking inside the classroom. Hedge (2000, p. 261) says that one initial reason is that most of the students consider speaking English competently as a priority even if it is a difficult task to do. One other reason is that students speak because they need this skill; for example, to keep up rapport in relationships, impress people, and win or lose negotiations.

2.1. The value of oral communication

When learning, students most of the time think of communication as “one way”, but teachers conversely, they think about the feedback in order to assess students. This latter, generally, takes the form of written tasks. But, an oral feedback asking questions in which the student ought to answer. Thus, to speak is not only the teacher's role to ask questions, it is “two-way” communication. The students should ask for more explanation or clarification in case of misunderstanding and

answer at the same time. So, it becomes an oral communication without being afraid of making mistakes because making mistakes is learning indirectly.

Sometimes, students may attend more formal lectures in which an opportunity of speaking and asking questions may not be available, or they have at least one chance to speak. This latter, for sure, needs some degree of self-confidence (Robertson and Smith, 1987, p. 53).

Being a process of an oral communication, Brown and Yule (1983, p. 13) state that the spoken language may have two distinctive functions that are transactional and interactional functions.

The former is concerned with a main purpose which is to convey messages that should be understood by the listener, so the main focus in a transactional function is the transference of information and it is message-oriented. The latter is a listener-oriented and it is based on the exchange of information between a speaker and a listener.

2.2. Speaking skills

In order to speak and interact, students need the following skills (Hadfield and Hadfield, 2008, p. 105):

- Students have to think always to say something in English and express it with high self-confidence.
- They need to use words, phrases, and sentences using grammar and vocabulary; saying them correctly in order to convey meaning and ensure the listener's full comprehension.
- To speak quickly keeping at the same time the flow of the conversation, students need to be fluent speakers.

- Students have to stretch their language to know how to deal with certain situations. For instance, when forgetting a word, or being unable to find the exact word to say,
- Students need to find another way to explain the intended meaning.
- A final skill that students should have when interacting is to know how to communicate appropriately and not just saying things for the sake of saying. In other words, responding to what the others say, respecting turn-taking and the when to interrupt, expressing interest and asking for clarification sometimes keep the flow of the conversation

2.3. The Relationship between speaking and the other skills

2.3.1 Speaking and writing

Language teaching, along its history, focused on the study of a written language that is called language of literature and scholarship and any educated person has to have a good deal with literature and scholarship being taught through excellent models. As studying these models, the student finds him/herself producing a language or speaking. Halliday (1989, p. 92) says: “They are both realizations of meaning of language because what can be written can be said and vice versa. They are both a form of language that is the most important whether written or spoken.”, This means that both written or spoken form of language are both realization of meaning because the speaker's speech as it is spoken, it can be written.

2.3.2. Speaking and listening

Broughton, et al.(1980, pp. 65-6) It is a fact that students will produce sounds without listening to them before whether in his or her mothertongue or a foreign language without having a first listening to the form that s/he is expected to do.

Generally, listening is considered to be a passive skill and speaking an active one. However, it is not, because listening that is decoding a message needs active participants in communication. So, a receptive skill or a passive one that is listening

is for sure essential in understanding the message of communication. Listening is related to speaking also because

The speaker cannot keep talking unless s/ he is sure that his/her speech is understood by the listener and this is through the listener's body language, eye contact, or nonverbal noises.

Moreover, speaking also is important because even if a student is good at listening, this does not always mean that s/he speaks well. Most of the time listening leads to speaking, but there should be a practice in speaking. So, being a good listener needs from the student to be a good speaker.

2.4. Classroom speaking problems

There are some factors which hinder the student to talk in the classroom and prevent him/her from speaking accurately and fluently. So as, s/he will not speak the foreign language s/he is studying as s/he has to do Ur (1991, p. 121). They are divided into:

2.4.1. Inhibition

Unlike the other skills, the speaking skill is a skill that requires from the student to use the language and to face an audience, but most of the students are inhibited when trying to speak for the coming reasons; fear of making mistakes, fear from any kind of criticism or losing face, or shyness because of the attention given to them by the audience. (Also in Davies and Pearse, 2000, p.82) .

2.4.2. Nothing to say

This is another problem. There is no inhibition on the part of students; they are unable to speak because simply they cannot find what to say. They are not motivated enough to express themselves and inside them, they want to speak.

2.4.3. Low or uneven participation

It has a relationship with some students' dominance or a large group. In other words, some students do not speak at all in the classroom or they speak very little especially when the number of students is huge. In addition to some students' dominance who speak nearly all the time or during the whole session.

2.4.4. Mother-tongue interference

The case here is when the whole class or a number of students share the same mother tongue, so they may use it for its easiness or they feel comfortable, spontaneous, and less exposed as they use it.

2.4.5. Lack of confidence

Baker and Westrup (2003, p. 14) mentions the problem of students' lack of confidence. Learning together in one classroom, some students have to bear in mind that some students within the same class may show their unwillingness to listen to them or they are unwilling to give any kind of help or participation when communication takes place. Differently, this kind of students feel embarrassed most of the time, they are not sure about what to say or unable to speak freely; their requests and questions are always misunderstood. All these characteristics represent one main thing that is lack of confidence.

2.4.6. Other problems

Davies and Pearse (2000, p. 82) state two other problems facing EFL students which are first, a comprehensible pronunciation is essential because sometimes speakers with strong regional accent cannot understand non-native speakers. Second, the speaker finds difficulty in terms of time because s/he will not find time to think carefully about his /her speech when speaking. Moreover, s/he has to listen to the other's speech. Finally, s/he should be ready for any change of topic or what to say when moments of silence raised.

2.5. Speaking activities

In order to improve the speaking skill, speaking activities are used in the classroom; most of them improve the students' capability to communicate effectively. Harmer (2001, p. 271-4) differentiates these following activities:

2.5.1. Acting from a script

It is an activity in which students act out scenes from plays or their course books or dialogues they prepare themselves. This is frequently get them performing in front of the class. Besides, students should be given time for rehearsal and good preparation and the teacher with the rest of the class will be as "theatre directors" and evaluators. All this should be in a comfortable, supportive classroom atmosphere. Students do a lot of practice in order to ensure that learning and language production are included in this activity.

2.5.2. Communication games

It is a kind of an information-gap activity that brings students to communicate with one another. In other words, a student will communicate with his/her partner, for instance, to depict a picture, arrange disordered things, or solve a puzzle. Television and radio games are good means to improve students' fluency in the classroom.

2.5.3. Discussion activities

It is something in which students fail sometimes because of less confidence and fear to speak as they do not have what to say or they are shy. The "buzz way" is a proposed way for the teacher in order to use to avoid this problem. It means that students will have space for discussion working in small groups and there will be no stress or fear from speaking as when speaking in front of the whole class.

The buzz group is used, for example, to predict a content of a reading text, students' reaction towards it, or a discussing after listening to a song or conversation.

There is another way of discussion that is including "instant comment" mini activities into lessons in which students are going to comment about photographs or introducing topics and say what come into their minds seeing those things. There is a kind of discussion that happens in the middle of the lesson; it is unexpected and not pre-planned, but if it is encouraged, it can be very useful.

2.5.4. Prepared talks

It is a kind of activity in which students prepare talks which are topics chosen and developed by students themselves. They are formal and they are written through, it is better, if students prepare them from their notes than from a script. Well organized talks will be interesting for both speakers (students to students) and listener (teacher and students).

2.5.5. Simulation and role play

Role-play is when students are asked to play dialogues or they are pretending to do something or a character or performing in a specific situation. Edge (1993, p. 97) says that:

As its simplest, role-play is built into (ELT) from the earliest stages, when we ask students to say the lines of a dialogue. If we keep this in mind, we can make better use of dialogue by not letting students simply read each line aloud. When students are speaking a dialogue, make sure that they look at the person they are addressing, and that they speak their lines meaningfully. Here, in role plays, students should not be asked just to read a dialogue, but to perform it looking to the person s/he is talking to and speaking meaningfully.

In simulations, students are asked to play something or imagine themselves in a situation as it may happen in their real life like a business meeting, or an

interview. Hedge (1993) explains “Like role-plays, simulations involve pretence. In simulations; however, students are not so much asked to play at being someone else. They are rather asked to be themselves in an imaginary situation.”(p. 99). So, in simulations, students are asked to imagine themselves in a situation in which they find themselves performing other characters.

2.5.6. Speaking strategies.

Teaching and testing experts consider speaking as a “technical term to refer to one of the various skills that language learners should develop and have” This type of speaking is special for individuals. It is legal and purposeful because individuals speak and use language personally. However, it is also valuable to claim that “speaking forms {are} a part of the shared social activity of talking” (ibid., p. 20).

To be able to speak correctly and appropriately at the end of the learning process, most learners find speaking strategies worthy since they are important components in language learning strategy training. Oral strategies are called communicative strategies, communication strategies, conversation skills or oral communication strategies. Speaking strategies are what students use as tools to solve any communication problem during speaking English (ibid.).

According to López (2011, p. 3-4), O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p.43) speaking strategies help foreign language (FL) learners “in negotiating meaning where either linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a speaker of the target language”. López states that Hedge thinks that speaking strategies are used very well by a capable speaker. Hedge says that, “These strategies come into play when learners are unable to express what they want to say because they lack the resources to do so successfully”. These verbal and non-verbal strategies (e.g. clarification, nonverbal mimicry, gestures, and other strategies.) may be useful while the pauses that happen in communication because of unknown words or topics; effective communication

can be advantageous for students in order to be enhanced in speaking (Cited by López, 2011, p. 3).

According to Kellerman (1991) believes that learners may profit from these strategies by removing them from their native language to the target language (Cited by López, 2011, p. 3).

On the other hand, Canale (1983, p. 11) encourages using speaking strategies for training because “learners must be shown how such a strategy can be implemented in the second language.

Furthermore, learners must be encouraged to use such strategies (rather than remain silent) and must be given the opportunity to use them” (ibid., p. 4). Nakatani (2005) explains in his investigation that valuable improvements happen in acquiring the language in oral tests to the students who are taught speaking strategies. Teaching speaking strategies can harmonize teaching a foreign language and English language training (ELT). Despite of that, practicing teaching speaking strategies still may not be given the sufficient importance.

Therefore, Dornyei (1995) promotes the proposal of teaching the communication strategies that he put through offering procedures. Those six strategy training procedures, which he proposes, include promoting learners awareness about the communication strategies, encouraging students to take risks and use communicative strategies without the fear of mistakes, providing L2 models of the use of certain communication strategies through listening materials and videos, allowing learners to identify, categorize, and evaluate strategies used by native speakers or other L2 speakers, making cross-cultural differences in communication strategy use clear, teaching communication strategies by presenting linguistic devices, and providing opportunities to practise the strategy since the function of communication strategies is as an aid devices (Dornyei, 1995. Cited by Cervantes and Rodriguez, 2012, p. 115).

2.5.7. Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills

In communicating, the learners' primary goal is to complete a task to gain information. To reach that goal, learners should use the language that has been presented by the instructor.

Therefore, they might apply any vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know. In the result of communicative activities, the success means whether the learners convey and comprehend the message, yet accuracy is not what they are looking for since it does not hinder the meaning of the message. In daily communication, turn-taking takes place where there is a kind of information gap between the interlocutors. Communicative output activities include a similar real information gap. To finish the task, the role of learners is reducing that information gap (Bashir et al., 2011, p. 39).

Language is a way that the teacher uses to present different activities during lessons. In a balanced activities approach, the teacher uses a variety of activities from different categories of input and output. Learners with different levels benefit from that variety since it is more motivating to result in effective language learning. The capacity to speak a language is the product of language learning as many learners often thought, but speaking is also a critical part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies; using minimal responses, recognizing script, and using language to talk about language, and then the students would develop their knowledge of the language and their confidence to use it. Firstly, minimal responses are often idiomatic phrases that interlocutors use for understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses.

Using minimal responses assist language learners who lack confidence to talk successfully in oral classes listen in silence while allowing others to talk. Teachers should support that category of students by teaching them a stock of minimal responses that they can use while talking (ibid).

Secondly, being aware of the script (i.e., the text of play, broadcast, or scene) is a good way to develop speaking strategies since some communication situations are predictable; they are linked to a number of spoken exchanges; scripts, greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other function that are influenced by social and cultural norms. To obtain information and make a purchase are activities that involve doing the transactional exchanges.

In these scripts, the speaker's turn and the other one that follows it can often be expected.

Teachers may aid their students to improve their speaking by teaching them different scripts to be ready for various situations to communicate, so they will be able to predict what they will hear and what they will respond. By using communicative activities, instructors may make the students practise different scripts (ibid.)

Thirdly, the last way is pushing students to use language to talk about language. Language learners do not say a word when they do not understand another conversation partner because of embarrassment. Thus, the role of teachers is to aid them overcome that problem by telling them that misunderstanding and the clarification can occur in any interaction; it does not count what the speakers' language skill levels are. Instructors can also provide students with the needed strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension (ibid., p. 40).

Consequently, teachers can succeed in constructing authentic practice environment within the classroom via sustaining students to use clarification phrases in classroom in the case of misunderstanding to respond positively.

After enhancing a range of clarification strategies, students will be confident to deal with a variety of communication situations that they may occur outside the classroom.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have focused on one of the skills that should be present and given its real value within EFL classes that is the speaking skill. We tried to define it and give an overview about all what have a relationship with it from elements and skills which are crucial for speaking, at the same time mentioning the main problems that may impede students from speaking. For that, certain classroom speaking activities are suggested in order to solve these problems with the teacher's assistance that is the role of the teacher.

As a result, students will be involved in real communication, use English competently inside and outside the classroom in different contexts; therefore, their oral proficiency will be developed.

Introduction

In the foregoing chapters, we have presented a review of related literature to small classroom size and the speaking skill. The present chapter is devoted to the analysis of both data collection tools and the teachers' questionnaire. We will start, first of all, by analyzing the teacher's interview the result we obtain will enable us to diagnose our hypothesis as we try to gather data from a real situation as being present in I listen and Do sessions and from teachers' answers as being teachers of EFL for many years, so they have enough experience. Thus, it can be fruitful .

Description and design of the Teachers' questionnaire .

This interview is addressed to English teachers of with First year classes at Belhadj Dhaimi middle school .This interview consists of thirteen questions divided into two sections. The first section contains background information questions, asking teachers about their age, qualification and their experience in teaching EFL classes the second section encompasses questions about the matter of small classes. We interviewed teachers, first, if they teach large classes and whether a large class impedes their teaching process. Second, we interviewed them about their students' participation and cooperation and whether they agree on class reduction.

Section One: Background Information

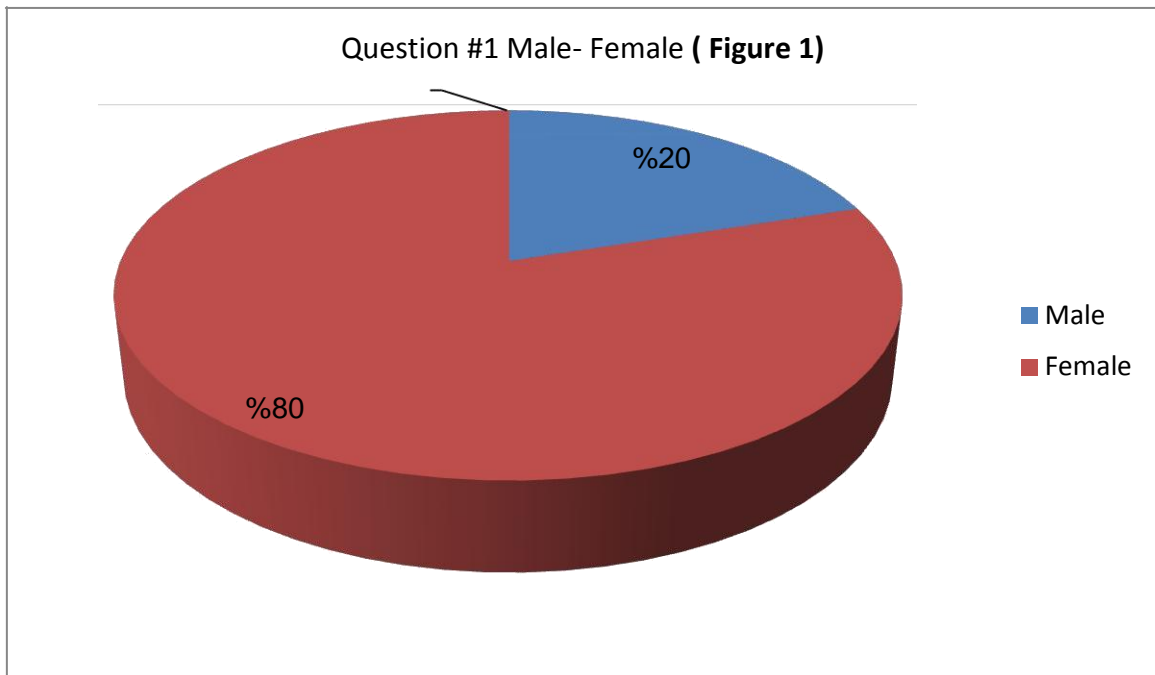


Figure 1 shows the gender of the participants in the study, findings indicate that 80 % of the participants are female and 20 % of the participants are male.

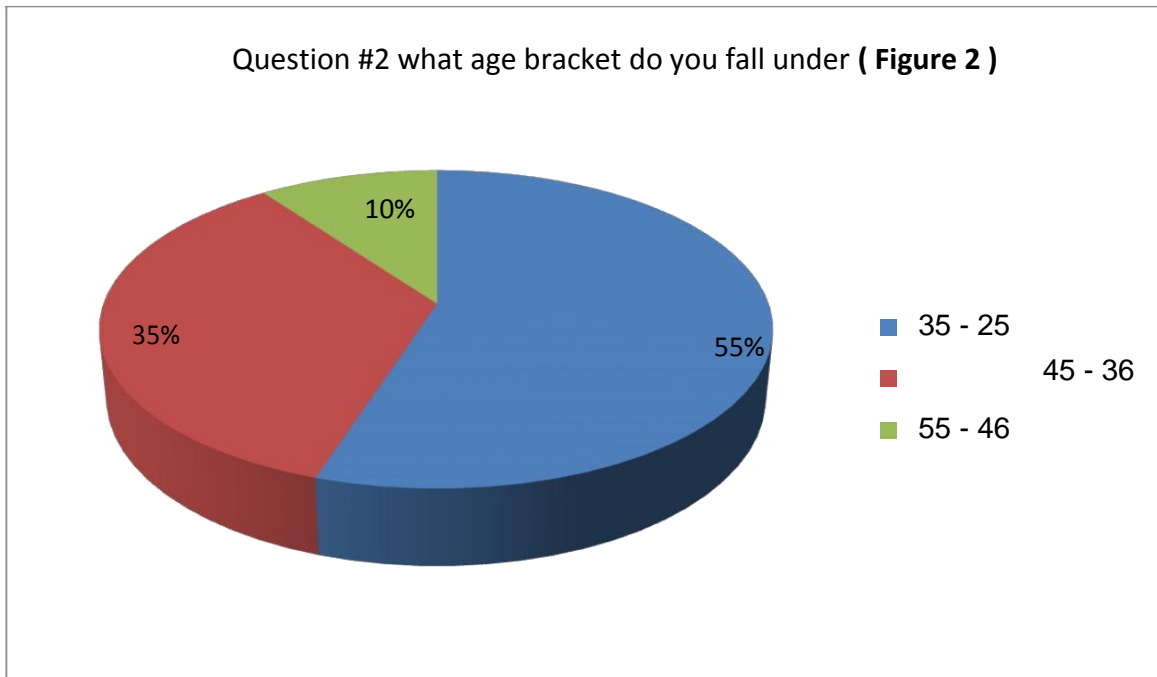


Figure 2 shows the age of the participants involved in this study, Findings indicate that 55% of the participants are between the ages of 25 and 35. 35% of the participants are between 36 and 45 years of age and 10% of the participants are between 46 and 55 years of age. There were no teachers under the age of 25 or over the age of 55 involved in this study.

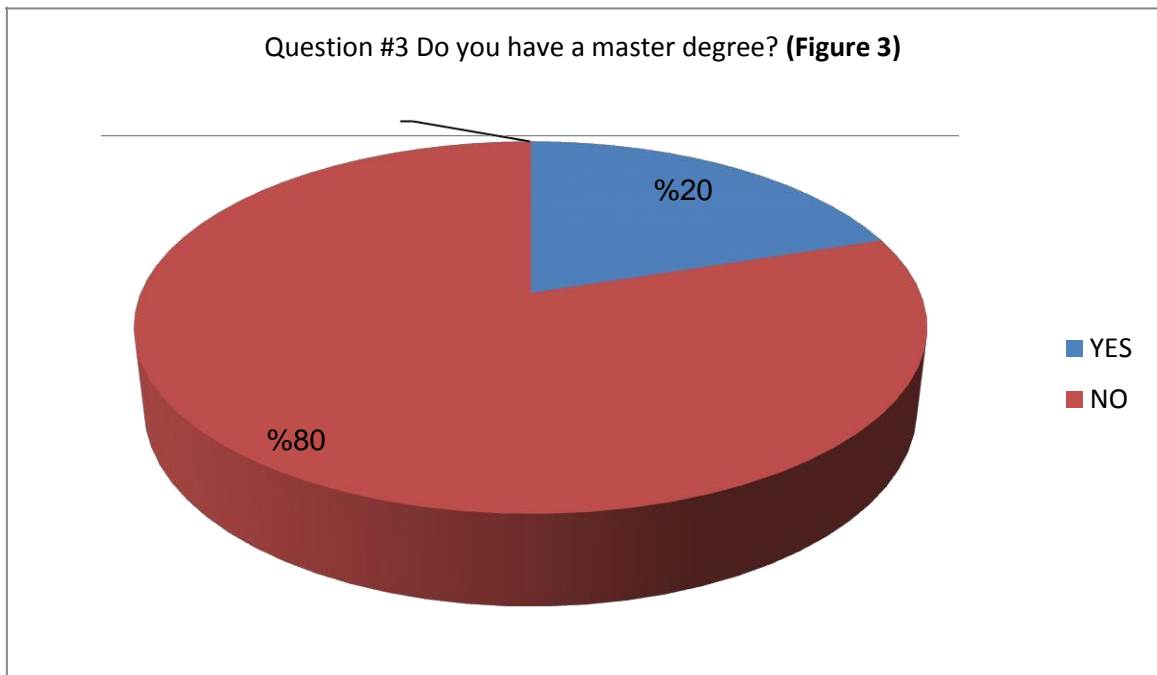


Figure 3 represents the percentage of participants who have a master degree. Findings indicate that 20% of the participants do have a master degree and 80% of the participants do not have a master degree.

Question #4: How long have you taught in the education system? (Figure 4)

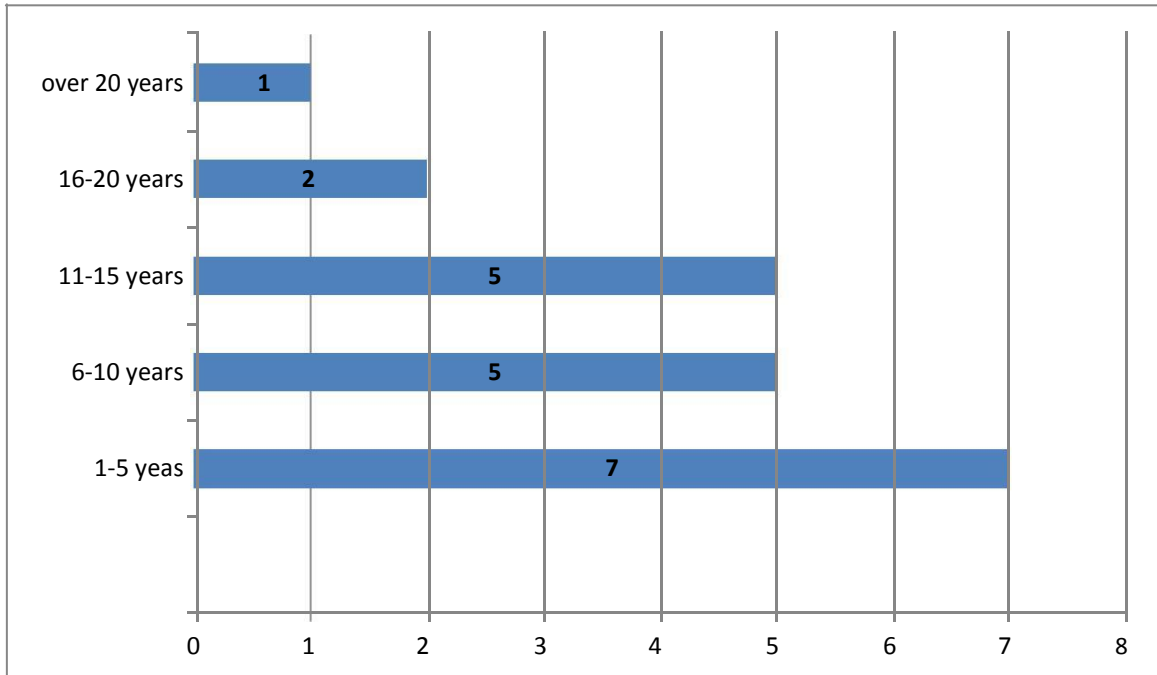


Figure 5 represents the number of years that each participant has been in the teaching profession. Results indicate that 7 participants have been teaching for 1-5 years, 5 participants have been teaching for 6-10 years, 5 participants have been teaching for 11-15 years, 2 participants have been teaching for 16-20 years, and 1 participant has been teaching for over 20 years.

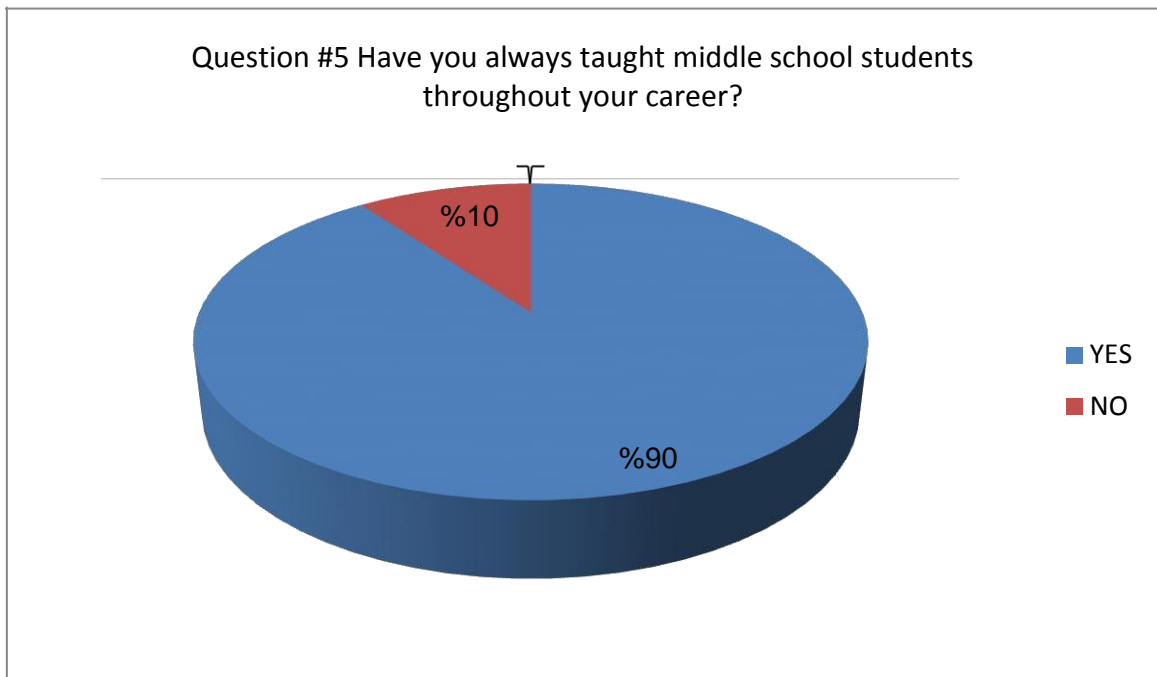


Figure 5 shows the percentage of participants who have only taught in a middle school atmosphere their entire career. 90% have taught only middle school students and 10% have taught either elementary students or high school students as well.

Section Two:

Table 1 was utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed with Class Size, Student Achievement.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	50%	N=10
Agree	50%	N=10
Disagree	0%	N=0
Strongly Disagree	0%	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding Class Size, Student Achievement: 50%, 10 teachers strongly agreed with the statement that larger class sizes contribute to a decrease in student achievement, 50%, 10 teachers agreed with the statement, 0%, 0 teachers disagreed with the statement, and 0%, 0 teachers strongly disagreed with the statement. This determines that most teachers agree with the statement that larger class sizes contribute to a decrease in student achievement.

Table 2 was utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed with Larger Classes, Discipline Problems.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	40%	N=8
Agree	55%	N=11
Disagree	5%	N=1
Strongly Disagree	0%	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding Larger Classes, Discipline Problems: 40%, 8 participants strongly agree with the statement that larger classes have more discipline problems, 55%, 11 participants agree with the statement, 5%, 1 participant disagrees with the statement, and 0%, 0 participants strongly disagreed with the statement. Most participants agree with the statement that larger classes have more discipline problems.

Table 3 was utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed that smaller classes allow more time for teachers to spend on oral skills which can increase student achievement.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	50%	N=10
Agree	50%	N=10
Disagree	0%	N=0
Strongly Disagree	0%	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding smaller classes allow more time for teachers to spend on oral skills which can increase student achievement. 50%, 10 participants strongly agree with the statement that smaller classes allow more time for teachers to spend on oral skills which can increase student achievement. 50%, 10 participants agree with the statement, 0%, 0 participant disagrees with the statement, and 0%, 0 participants strongly disagreed with the statement. Therefore, most participants agree with the statement that smaller classes allow more time for teachers to spend on oral skills which can increase student achievement.

Table 4 was utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed that Students in smaller classes show more appreciation for one another and more desire to participate in classroom activities.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	30%	N=06
Agree	50%	N=10
Disagree	5%	N=01
Strongly Disagree	15%	N=03

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding Students in smaller classes show more appreciation for one another and more desire to participate in classroom activities.

30%, 06 participants strongly agree with the statement Students in smaller classes show more appreciation for one another and more desire to participate in classroom activities.

50%, 10 participants agree with the statement, 5%, 1 participant disagrees with the statement, and 15%, 3 participants strongly disagreed with the statement. This determines that most participants agree with the statement that Students in smaller classes show more appreciation for one another and more desire to participate in classroom activities.

Table 5 was utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed that In smaller classes, more learning activities take place .

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	75%	N=15
Agree	25%	N=05
Disagree	0%	N=0
Strongly Disagree	0%	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding In smaller classes, more learning activities take place. 75%, 15 participants strongly agree with the statement In smaller classes, more learning activities take place. 25%, 05 participants agree with the statement, 0%, 0 participant disagrees with the statement, and 0%, 0 participants strongly disagreed with the statement. Therefore , most participants strongly agree with the statement that In smaller classes, more learning activities take place.

Table 6 utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed that smaller classes foster greater interaction among students, helping them using the language and speak fluently.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	35%	N=07
Agree	55%	N=11
Disagree	0%	N=0
Strongly Disagree	10%	N=02

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding smaller classes foster greater interaction among students, helping them using the language and speak fluently.

35%, 07 participants strongly agree with the statement smaller classes foster greater interaction among students, helping them using the language and speak fluently. 55%, 11 participants agree with the statement, 0%, 0 participants disagrees with the statement, and 10%, 02 participants strongly disagreed with the statement. Most participants agree with the statement that smaller classes foster greater interaction among students, helping them using the language and speak fluently.

Table 7: utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed that smaller classes allow for potential disciplinary problems to be identified and resolved more quickly.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	40%	N=08
Agree	50%	N=10
Disagree	5%	N=01
Strongly Disagree	5%	N=01

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding smaller classes allow for potential disciplinary problems to be identified and resolved more quickly.

40%, 08 participants strongly agree with the statement more quickly. 50%, 10 participants agree with the statement, 5%, 1 participant disagrees with the statement, and 5%, 01 participant strongly disagreed with the statement. This determines that most participants agree with the statement that smaller classes allow for potential disciplinary problems to be identified and resolved more quickly.

Table 8 was utilized to test the degree to which middle school teachers agreed or disagreed with Class Size Costs.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Strongly Agree	00%	N=00
Agree	00%	N=00
Disagree	50%	N=10
Strongly Disagree	50%	N=10

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding Class Size Costs:0%, 0 participants strongly agree with the statement that class sizes are too costly and should not be a possibility, 0%, 0 participants agree with the statement, 50%, 10 participants disagree with the statement, and 50%, 10 participants strongly disagree with the statement. Therefore, all participants disagree with the statement that class sizes are too costly and that they should not be a possibility.

Discussion of the results of the teachers' interview

Concerning the impact of small classes on students' speaking skill, the results show that all the teachers said that they taught and still teach large classes and they agreed on that teaching small classes are better when it comes to effectiveness. They argue that in small classes they can give every student care and attention. Moreover, the class will be less noisy and the problem of seating and movement are not found. Interviewing them about the effect of a large class on the students' oral performance, they all said that it affects them negatively.

Twenty middle school teachers in a school answered the background information sheets and the 8 question surveys. All of the data collected indicates that most teachers agree with the findings of the literature review, which implements that class size affects student achievement and their oral performance. Survey results indicate that all twenty teachers (100%) strongly agree or agree that

larger class sizes contribute to a decrease in student achievement. Twenty teachers strongly disagree or disagree that class size reductions are too costly and should not be a possibility. Nineteen teachers (95%) strongly agree or agree that larger classes have more discipline problems. Twenty teachers (100%) strongly agree or agree that smaller classes allow more time for teachers to spend on oral skills, which can increase student achievement. Twenty teachers (100%) strongly agree or agree that in smaller classes more learning activities take place.

All of these responses show that teachers believe that smaller class sizes can increase student achievement in several areas. From conducting this study and analysing the preceding data formulated from the survey, we believe that class size does have a correlation to student oral performance.

Conclusion

All in all, the results revealed in this study concerning the role and the positive impact of a class size on the students' oral performance confirmed our hypotheses. Using two different tools, an interview with teachers and an observation, and the results we got from them, were the same, our hypotheses were proved. This means that whenever students are taught in a small classroom, their speaking skill is enhanced.

This chapter has analysed how the small number of students in EFL classes affects positively the students' oral performance and this emerged from the findings of that study.

General Conclusion

Our present research is concerned with the investigation of the effect of small classes on the students' oral performance, mainly, the speaking skill. Our purpose was, first, to examine how students perform orally in a large class; Second, to prove as we believe and hypothesized that small classes affects the students speaking skill positively in terms of having more opportunities to interact whether with the teacher or with their peers and more speaking activities and time to speak and practice the language they have been taught.

Our dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first and the second chapters were the theoretical background about the speaking skill and the classroom size phenomena. We tried to give a clear overview about the speaking skill and all the theoretical issues that are related to the nature of the speaking skill within the second chapter. In the first chapter, we tried to provide a better understanding of the issue of classroom management and all the elements that have a relationship with it till we reach the matter of small classes in which we tried to give an overview about it.

It is by means of an interview with teachers and an observation within first year middle school classes that we investigated the relationship between the speaking skill and small classes and obtained some findings. Based on previous research there is an existing correlation between class size and students' oral performance.

The literature reviews based on the reliable constructs reinforce this correlation. Also, data provided strengthens the theory that smaller class sizes do enhance students' speaking skill.

The answers to research questions are as follows, most of the participants agreed with the findings on class size based on the literature and most participants agreed with the theory that smaller class sizes increase students' opportunities to interact, participate, communicate and use the language fluently. Hence, their oral performance will be enhanced.

Recommendations

There are a few recommendations that can be made based on this study. First, class sizes should be decreased. Government officials, administrators, and educators must come together and implement class size reductions. They should decide on the appropriate teacher-student ratio and insist that all classes abide by the specified ratio.

Once changes have been implemented, student scores should be monitored and assessed on at least a yearly basis. Data should then be generated to provide evidence that class size reductions make a difference in the learning process as a whole and the speaking skill as an important part of it.

Once class size reductions are made there is no telling how much student achievement could increase. Maybe this is what the learning process has been waiting for!

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Appendix A : Teacher's questionnaire

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of M'sila
Mohammed Boudiaf
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English Languages

“Teacher's questionnaire”

Dear Teacher,

This questionnaire is an essential component of a study on the role of small sized classroom on learners' oral performance the case of first year middle school pupils. It is greatly appreciated if you can spare some time to complete this questionnaire and help us. Please answer all questions as truthfully and accurately as possible. All answers are confidential and complete anonymity is assured.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Section One: Background Information

1- Male female

2- what age bracket do you fall under ?

25 - 35 36 - 45 46 - 55

3- Do you have a Master degree?

a. No

b. Yes

4- How long have you taught in the education system?

a. 1-5 years

b. 6-10 years

c. 11-15 years

d. 16-20 years

e. Over 20 years

5- Have you always taught middle school students throughout your career .

a- Yes b- No

Section Two:

1. Larger class sizes contribute to a decrease in student achievement.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

2. Larger classes have more discipline problems.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

3. Smaller classes allow more time for teachers to spend on oral skills which can increase student achievement.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

4. Students in smaller classes show more appreciation for one another and more desire to Participate in classroom activities.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

5. In smaller classes, more learning activities take place.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

6. Smaller classes foster greater interaction among students, helping them using the language and speak fluently .

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

7. Smaller classes allow for potential disciplinary problems to be identified and resolved more quickly.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

8. Class size reductions are costly and should not be a possibility.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Thank you for your collaboration

Résumé

La compétence orale est l'une des compétences importantes dans l'étude de l'anglais comme langue étrangère où l'étudiant montre ses connaissances en utilisant ses capacités orales. Cependant, il y a de différents facteurs qui l'empêchent d'être un interlocuteur compétent; qui est la grande classe dont la taille est un facteur. Les chercheurs ont étudié les effets de la taille des classes sur le rendement des élèves pendant des années. Cette étude a exploré comment les petites classes d'anglais facilitent l'apprentissage des langues étrangères en particulier la compétence orale, on croit généralement que les petites classes sont plus appropriées pour enseigner l'apprentissage éclairé. Un plan de recherche quantitatif a utilisé un échantillon de 20 enseignants de collège âgés entre 25 et 55 ans. Les Enseignants ont remplis une fiche de renseignements généraux. Les données étaient alors analysé pour révéler que la plupart des enseignants étaient tout à fait d'accord que les petites classes augmentent le rendement des élèves dans divers domaines. Basé sur les résultats de la littérature et les données générées, la plupart des participants étaient d'accord avec la théorie selon laquelle les petites classes améliorent la performance orale des élèves.