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**Silence in the Oral Language Classroom: Teachers' Use of
Motivational and Interactive Strategies**

The case of second-year EFL Learners at Mila University

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the Master Degree in
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Dedication I

Dedicated to:

My dear mother and father whose love and support carried me over the years
and throughout this journey.

My kind-hearted sisters who never cease to have my back,

I'm lucky to have you.

LOKMANE, a very special thank you for your great assistance and
valuable advice.

Thank you all for making it such an amazing drive.

ZAHIA

Dedication II

In the Name of Allah the Almighty, most gracious, most merciful, all the praise is due to God alone, the sustainer of all the worlds.

I would like to dedicate this humble work to:

My dear parents, my mother, Salima, and my father, Ammar. Thank you Mom, Thank you Dad. They are three small words, but there is so much to add. Thank you for all your wonderful gifts, the sweet, invisible kind like reassuring words that ease a troubled mind. Thank you for your deep devotion and for your endless and unselfish sacrifice and love.

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My little candle, my brother Amir. Thank you for your efforts and all your little strives for me.

To all of you: "I LOVE YOU TO THE MOON AND BACK, FOREVER AND EVER"

MALAK

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Abstract

It is par for the course that active participation renders the teaching/learning process more productive and confers learners with the occasion to improve their speaking proficiency. Notwithstanding this particular assertion which concurs with an idealistic educational context, in truth, it is more common for learners to show a passive attitude and prefer to remain silent in the oral language classroom. Such a posture leads students to a plethora of adverse outcomes of which they are unaware. Appositely, this present study aims at inspecting the reasons behind learners' silence within the oral language classroom, as well as teachers' reaction to it, and what strategies they might use so as to overcome this phenomenon. In an attempt to postulate the final findings of this study, two hypotheses were allocated. Initially, we hypothesised that teachers of oral expression would make use of a variety of teaching methods and strategies (motivational/interactive) to eradicate learners' silence within the EFL classroom; furthermore, we conjectured that these strategies would stimulate learners' motivation and enhance their interaction. For the purpose of checking the validity of the hypotheses, two questionnaires were imparted; one was dispensed to **75** second year EFL students at Mila University, while the other was administered to **10** oral expression teachers at the same university. The results for this research inquiry show that the majority of learners agree on the notion that speaking is a difficult task as most of them face an abundance of obstacles when attempting to share talk, which, in due course, trigger their silence. Pertinently, results also reveal that learners' silence is attributable to a multiplicity of reasons, most prominent of which are shyness, lack of self-confidence, and low English proficiency level. What is more, it was unveiled that teachers spare no effort in utilising the most effective of strategies so as to encourage students to speak, increase their engagement, maximize their interaction, and minimize the encumbering ramifications of silence on their performance and development. Drawing on the established findings, a number of recommendations were delivered to both students and teachers for the sake of adopting more constructive attitudes and practices towards this phenomenon.

Key words: Speaking proficiency, silence, oral language classroom, motivational strategies, interactive strategies.

List of Abbreviations

ALM: Audio-Lingual Method

CA: Communicative Approach

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

GTM: Grammar-Translation Method

L2: Second Language

L.M.D: Licence, Master, Doctorate

Q: Question

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TL: Target Language

Vs: Versus

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Speaking, writing, listening and reading are four basic skills learners are supposed to acquire if willing to master any second/foreign language (L2/FL). In our modern world, the English language is regarded as “a lingua franca for international communication” (Sharifian, 2009, p. 2) and its “usage is beyond control” (Crystal, 2004, p. 46). Indeed, the widespread usage of the English language in a variety of fields (e.g., economics, business, science, and education) has no doubt driven people to be increasingly interested in developing their speaking abilities for practical use, regardless of their academic stature. Under the aforementioned set of circumstances, it is no surprise that such attitudes were even more adopted and implemented by those who are concerned with learning English in order to gain the ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in a given social context and, consequently, achieving the so-called communicative functions.

Over the past years, the field of language teaching and learning has witnessed the sprout of quite important as well as interesting issues that mainly concern learners of the English language. That is to say, foreign language learners encounter various predicaments during their learning experience - which appear to be serious and, to a great extent, perplexing, especially when emphasis is on spontaneous speaking in an English as a foreign language (EFL) setting - due to certain difficulties and prominent factors.

In the spirit of the foregoing account, it is by no means an easy task for oral language teachers to deal with EFL learners' problems. In contrast, they must exert tremendous efforts to comprehend students' obstacles and then subjugate instruction to certain changes through the implementation of several teaching strategies that are, mainly, various, effective and most importantly suitable to the learners themselves. The latter strategies utilised on the part of teachers aim at actively engaging learners into classroom interaction to a maximum.

Second-year L.M.D students in the English Department at Mila University – Abd Elhafid Boussouf – often face problems when it comes to the oral expression module especially that of being silent. The aforementioned phenomenon has many effects on EFL learners, most importantly of which the deterioration of the speaking skill which causes, in the first place, a terrible failure in terms of active interaction within the oral language classroom on the one hand, and also the ineffectiveness of future communication in tangible situations on the other.

2. Aims of the Study

The present scientific investigation aims at exploring the intricate phenomenon of second-year EFL learners' silence in the oral language classroom as well as the diverse reasons behind its manifestation within such a setting. What is more, this study seeks out to cast light on teachers' reaction towards their students' silence, and what strategies, if any, they adopt so as to motivate learners to become interactive; thus, putting an end to the spread of silence in the oral classroom environment.

3. Significance of the Study

Results from the present investigation - on the phenomenon of silence within the oral language classroom and what is used, in terms of strategies, to motivate, and also to improve EFL learners' interaction - would be of great use to oral expression teachers through raising their awareness of the reasons behind such phenomenon; hence, using the most suitable strategies to surmount such a barrier. Furthermore, this research paper would hopefully be a reliable source of knowledge for the different researchers who might be interested in this particular area of study.

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Of note is the fact that the current research attempts to ascertain some answers for the up-coming questions:

1. What are the reasons behind learners' silence in the oral language classroom?
2. What are teachers' reactions towards silence in the oral language classroom?
3. Do teachers of oral expression in the English Department at Mila University incorporate certain strategies, on a motivational basis, to enhance classroom interaction?
4. What are the most effective teaching strategies that can be used on the part of oral language teachers for classroom silence to be overcome?

On the basis of what has been mentioned above, in terms of questions, we hypothesize that:

1. Teachers of oral expression would better help overcoming learners' silence through adopting and effectively practising various teaching strategies.
2. Using various teaching strategies would stimulate learners' motivation as for enhancing their interaction within the oral language classroom.

5. Means of Research

For the purpose of imparting the necessary answers for our research inquiries, two questionnaires were utilised; one for students and another for teachers. The students' questionnaire is administered to second-year EFL learners at the Department of Foreign Languages, Abd Elhafid Boussouf University, Mila. A sample of 75 students out of a total population of 210 was randomly selected for the aim of investigating learners' standpoints concerning silence in the oral language classroom and the various strategies implemented by oral expression teachers to improve students' participation and interaction. Additionally, the teachers' questionnaire was conducted with a total number of 10 oral expression teachers. As such, the questionnaire strives to inspect the numerous teaching strategies which oral

expression teachers employ to relegate the phenomenon of classroom silence and liberate learners from its destructive yoke.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This research paper consists of three chapters. The first and the second chapters represent the theoretical background of the study, i.e., the literature review. The third chapter is the practical part of this dissertation. The first chapter focuses on the issue of silence in the oral language classroom. It first reveals the nature of the speaking skill and highlights its defining characteristics. Then, it proceeds to emphasize the importance of the speaking skill before specifying the major difficulties that EFL learners may encounter and exhibit when they speak English in EFL classrooms. At this point, the chapter shifts attention to the issue of classroom silence. That is, it begins with a definition of classroom silence from different standpoints. Thereafter, it interprets silence, shows its aspects, specifies the reasons behind such behaviour, and uncovers teachers' reaction to students silence in the oral language classroom. The second chapter is devoted to an account of the teaching strategies utilised by oral expression teachers to overcome classroom silence, the significance of such strategies, their types: Motivational and interactive, and the factors that influence the selection of appropriate teaching strategies. The third chapter, the practical part, is fundamentally concerned with the description of the selected research tools as well as the analysis, interpretation, and comparison of the collected data.

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CHAPTER ONE: On Speaking and Silence in the EFL Classroom

Introduction

Language is regarded as a crucial tool in communication between people. Given the importance of the role language plays during communication, it is nowadays emphasized that communication should be based on negotiation of meaning (Roberts, 2004). That is, students in EFL classrooms should speak more, and teachers should be aware of how to create a healthy environment for interaction to take place. Also, teachers must account for speaking activities that may enable students to speak English in the classroom (Brown, 2004). Therefore, the ultimate aim of the present curriculum prerequisites is to help learners to enhance their speaking proficiency through overcoming such speaking obstacles as classroom silence.

This chapter is divided into two major parts. The first part is devoted to the speaking skill. That is to say, we will eventually define the speaking skill and list its defining characteristics; we will also shed light on the importance of speaking, but we will emphasize as well the speaking difficulties that inhibit foreign language learners from communicating their ideas, and those which they face when it comes to practising speaking in real contexts. These difficulties may include speaking anxiety, lack of listening practice, teacher's wait time, and nothing to say. Silence in the oral language classroom is the primary concern of the second part of this chapter. Thus, we will practically reveal the nature of classroom silence, its interpretation, and the reasons behind this phenomenon taking into consideration how teachers react to it.

1.1. The Speaking Skill

It is undeniable that in learning a new language, learners should focus on developing the four skills of the target language (TL), namely, reading, writing, listening, and speaking in

an equal manner. In the past, the primary intention of learning a language was to master its syntactic features and grammatical structures. However, current approaches of language teaching and learning such as the communicative approach (CA) and the competency-based approach (CBA) paved the way for language to become more than a system of structures; instead, it is a means of conveying meaning and communicating one's ideas. As a result, the speaking skill becomes a priority for English language learners to acquire in the first place.

1.1.1. Definition of Speaking

In foreign language teaching / learning (FLT/FLL), speaking is a core skill that foreign language learners need to acquire through direct interaction and exposure to the TL. In this concern, different researchers contributed valuable definitions about the nature of speaking. As such, Widdowson (1996) argues that speaking is solely the process of transforming either the grammatical system or the abstract system of language or both systems simultaneously into physical and verbal symbols. It is, then, “a productive aural/oral skill and it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning” (Bailey, 2003, p. 48).

Speaking calls for two types of participants to be attentive during communication. That is, it requires a speaker, whose utterances work as a road map for the listener to understand the intended meaning of the message. However, Chaney (1998) encounters that speaking is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts” (p. 13). Thus, interactions in the oral language classroom prompt foreign language learners to exchange various conventional meanings in which they make use of both the spoken discourse and the supra-segmental features of the language along with the speakers' body language and facial expressions.

Furthermore, Clark and Clark (1997) state that meaning can be attained through the expression of ideas and emotions using several forms of language that are structured in a particular order. Therefore, speaking is an important skill in the process of acquiring a FL.

1.1.2. Characteristics of Speaking

The language classroom is an essential setting where EFL learners are exposed, in many ways, to a paramount linguistic baggage that, in turn, can be obtained through two types of interactions: learner-learner interaction and teacher-learner interaction. As a result, the learner, to interact effectively, needs to master the speaking skill. The latter; however, may not be easily enhanced unless its major characteristics, both fluency and accuracy, are profoundly learned and practised. Ellis (2009) supports the idea saying that “it is assumed that a proficient speaker will be able to perform tasks fluently and accurately, using complex language” (p. 475).

1.1.2.1. Fluency

In FLT, teachers become more interested in engaging EFL learners in classroom activities that aim at fostering their fluency; therefore, students will be able to develop their communicative competence. There are two main views concerning fluency in speaking, a broad view and a narrow view. The former suggests that being fluent refers to the total mastery of the speaking proficiency, whereas the narrow view deems fluency as an operative element of the speaking skill (Lennon, 1990). Obviously, it is necessary for EFL learners to know the exact nature of fluency in order to excel in their oral performance. Due to this irrefutable fact, Bailey (2003) defines fluency as “the extent to which speakers use the language quickly and confidently, with few hesitations or unnatural pauses, false starts, word searches, etc.” (p. 15). To put it differently, fluency is not only the speakers’ ability to speak in a high speed with increased self-confidence, but it is also the ability to maintain communication while being less reluctant to speak and aware of where to pause. So, EFL learners should bear in mind that pausing is as important as speaking because it helps to assure the speaker that the listener understands what is being said by him /her (Thornbury, 2005).

1.1.2.2. Accuracy

The issue of EFL students' accuracy is of general concern in second language acquisition (SLA) research since most of students nowadays seek fluency and tend to ignore the vital role of accuracy in communication. According to Yuan and Ellis (2003), accuracy refers to "the extent to which the language produced conforms to target language norms" (p. 2). In simple words, it is the student's ability to use "correct words and expressions to convey the intended meaning" (Bailey, 2005, p. 5). In this case, EFL learners are expected to produce utterances that are grammatically correct which contribute, in many ways, to the listener's perception of the spoken discourse. Moreover, "Accurate speakers do not make mistakes in grammar, vocabulary or Pronunciation" (Baker & Westrup, 2003, p. 16). Thus, attaining accuracy in speaking is pertinent to the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. However, EFL learners' speech is not free from either grammatical, semantic, or phonological errors. Hence, it is very important for students to master the grammatical structures of English to avoid communication breakdowns. Vocabulary is also significant in speaking because the choice of the right word in the appropriate context ensures the delivery of the speaker's intended meaning. Besides, "Mispronouncing a single sound causes the listener's misunderstanding, and various causes of stresses as well as intonations result in totally different meanings" (Wang, 2014, p. 111). That is to say, listeners become confused if speakers pronounce words incorrectly, and they may even lose interest in the conversation.

To put it briefly, fluency and accuracy are necessary in acquiring the speaking skill. To this effect, teachers should give them both equal importance (Bailey, 2003) by giving students activities that prompt them to focus on both fluency and accuracy at the same time.

1.1.3. Importance of the Speaking Skill

In the past, development in language teaching and learning approaches held a perplexing controversy about which skill of language should be prioritized over the remaining skills. Traditional approaches such as Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) showed supreme

interest in reading and writing skills arguing that language is learned through the memorization and the repetition of grammatical structures and lists of vocabulary. Similarly, the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) emphasized repetition and memorization. Nevertheless, language learning occurs when pieces of spoken dialogues are iterated and learned by heart (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The coming of the CA imparted the nature of language learning from a different perspective. It assures that EFL learners may acquire the FL through its use in real world communications because “there is no point knowing a lot about language if you can’t use it” (Scrivener, 2005, p. 146). Hence, speaking has an increasing importance that should be acknowledged.

Celce-Murcia (2001) states that “the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication” (p. 103). In fact, EFL learners nowadays are more willing to engage in oral communications that grant them opportunities to promote their speaking skills which, in the first place, triggers the whole composition of language knowledge. Ur (1996) supports this view saying “Speaking seems intuitively the most important: People who know a language are referred to as 'speakers' of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing, and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak” (p. 120).

In this respect, it would be significant to point out that mastering the speaking skill of a FL indicates the total acquisition of the intended language including other language aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Moreover, EFL learners are usually asked “do you speak English?”, as though speaking English equals its mastery, for that, EFL learners are extremely orienting their attention towards increasing their oral proficiency instead of other language skills.

In all, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in achieving ultimate language proficiency as long as it enables foreign language learners to achieve success in terms of performing effectively in conversations that involve the use of that FL (Nunan, 1991).

1.1.4. Speaking Difficulties in EFL Classes

For the sake of being communicatively competent, EFL learners attempt to practise speaking in the oral language classroom in more regular basis. However, during these trials, they are encountered with frustrating difficulties that may impede their oral performance. This is due to the irrefutable fact that speaking “is a complex process that requires students’ ability to express themselves orally, coherently, fluently, and appropriately in a given meaningful context” (Tadjouri, 2017, p. 6). To this effect, the speaking difficulties that can be identified in the English classrooms are: Speaking anxiety, lack of listening practice, teacher’s wait time, and nothing to say.

1.1.4.1. Speaking Anxiety

Anxiety is considered as a major factor that “most pervasively obstructs the learning process” (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 8), and it definitely affects EFL learners’ learning outcomes as well as their performance in EFL classrooms (Zhang & Jia, 2006). Woodrow (2006) further explains that anxiety creates a negative impact on students’ oral performance. Elmenfi and Gaibani (2016) define speaking anxiety as an affective factor which is a combination of both shyness and fear from speaking with/in front of other people. That is, when EFL learners speak in the oral language classroom, they are usually overwhelmed with feelings of diffidence and dread that prevent them from producing an intelligible speech.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) conducted a study about anxiety in foreign language classrooms. The results of their study revealed three main factors that are the basic causes of foreign language anxiety: Communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) put forth that communicative apprehension

is “a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people” (p. 127). In addition, EFL learners may be reluctant to speak because they are usually afraid of making mistakes or being embarrassed in front of their peers; specifically, they fear negative evaluation. Finally, test anxiety may be operative as well since it influences students’ examinations outcomes. Hence, “it is a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (Hortwiz et al., 1986, p. 128).

One can say that speaking anxiety may be difficult to surmount because it depends mainly on EFL learners’ feelings and how they regulate these feelings in order to reach satisfactory learning outcomes. It also depends on the type of classroom activities used by teachers and their consistency with students’ oral abilities and language knowledge.

1.1.4.2. Lack of Listening Practice

It is no wonder that in EFL classrooms, little or no attention is paid to the importance of listening practice in enhancing students’ oral ability. That is, EFL teachers tend to neglect listening arguing that learners will develop it automatically once they start to speak the FL (Persulesy, 1988). However, Rost (2009) argues that listening is an indispensable language skill that enables EFL learners to perceive the world around them and therefore succeed in communication.

Hasan (2000) confirms that “listening comprehension provides the right conditions for language acquisition and development of other language skills” (p. 138). In this case, listening is not only crucial in FLL but also in developing students’ oral proficiency. For that, teachers should provide their students with classroom activities that integrate both listening and speaking (Lynch, 2009) and which aim at enhancing the two skills in an effective manner.

1.1.4.3. Teacher’s Wait Time

Generally speaking, EFL teachers complain about their students arguing that most of the time they do not answer the questions teachers ask during a learning session and if they do so, their answers are characterized by lack of adequacy. In contrast, Stahl (1994) represents

that teachers do not give learners sufficient time to process information cognitively, “reflect on what has been said, observed, or done, and consider what their responses will be” (Stahl, 1994, p. 1-2).

The term “wait time” as an instructional concept was first coined by Rowe (1972). Eventually, Rowe (1986) defines wait time as a temporary pause that follows teachers’ questions and students’ answers. Carrying out her study, Rowe (1972) confirmed that teachers allow their students to have only one second to respond to a question. After students’ responses, teachers, however, wait less than one second to provide learners with the necessary feedback about their answers or move to the next question.

Increasing wait time on the part of the teacher has positive effects on students’ performance as well as teachers’ strategies of questioning learners. Tobin (1987) found that extending wait time results in students’ success to give coherent and complete responses. Furthermore, Stahl (1994) put forth that when students are allowed to have more than three seconds to think about appropriate answers, a number of positive results may occur:

- The length and correctness of their responses increase.
- The number of their “I don’t know” and no answer responses decreases.
- The number of volunteered, appropriate answers by larger numbers of students greatly increases.
- The scores of students on academic achievement tests tend to increase. (p. 2)

Despite the benefits that can be attained from extending wait time, it is difficult for teachers to wait for three seconds or more for students to respond to relevant questions since they are teaching under time constraints when presenting a lesson in the EFL classroom.

1.1.4.4. Nothing to Say

The last and probably the most significant problem that EFL learners face when it comes to speaking in the oral classroom is nothing to say. That is to say, they are unable to say anything in English when the teacher asks them some questions which makes him/her confused of how to deal with this phenomenon.

On the one hand, learners are not motivated to express their ideas and opinions about the topic suggested by the teacher because they have little or no interest in it, or they are not familiar with the subject at hand (Rivers, 1968). Thus, having enough knowledge about the topic would make it easier for EFL learners to break their silence and raise discussion in the classroom. On the other hand, EFL learners may not acquire all the vocabulary that composes the English language because “Spoken language also has a relatively high proportion of words and expressions that express the speaker’s attitude (**stance**) to what is being said” (Thornbury, 2005, p. 22). In addition, English words and expressions are context-dependent in the sense that their meaning changes from one context to another. Therefore, even if learners are aware of the literal meaning of those words, they are still afraid of misusing them. For that, they prefer to be uninvolved in any kind of interaction instead of feeling embarrassed in front of their class.

1.2. Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

It is believed that developing the speaking skill is of paramount importance for learners so as to attain fluency and, overall, to have a good command of the TL. However, interaction between oral language teachers and EFL learners may encounter a variety of obstacles that not only hinder, but completely halt the improvement of the speaking performance. Most notable of the aforementioned impediments is the widespread phenomenon of classroom silence within EFL settings. The latter predicament calls for oral language teachers’ attention so that solutions could be found, devised, and implemented to bring about the decline, and eventually, the end of such a harmfully sprawling problem.

1.2.1. Definition of Classroom Silence

Prior to diving into defining ‘classroom silence’, one must target ‘silence’ in itself as a common concept to all people within different contexts.

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2015, p. 1448), the term silence is defined as: 1) a complete lack of noise or sound ; 2) a situation where nobody is speaking ; 3) a situation in which somebody refuses to talk about something or to answer questions. In line with this, Levinson (1983) defines silence as “the absence of vocalization” (p. 299); put another way, the unwillingness to produce speech in a particular situation. In addition to that, Saville-Troike (1985) claimed that silence represents one, out of many forms of non-verbal communication. So, it is considerably usual for silence to be labelled as the absence of audible verbalization; nevertheless, from Jaworski’s standpoint, silence extends beyond the latter definition to be also described as someone’s failure to speak about a particular subject that s/he is expected actually to discuss (King, 2013).

It is essential to note that definitions of ‘classroom silence’ vary greatly from one researcher to another. By way of introduction, King (2013) holds that classroom silence “is more widely perceived to be a serious problem for many educators” (p. 83). He believes that it is regarded as a major threat to effectively learn any TL within a FL setting. Add to this, the absence of students’ oral participation and verbal responsiveness are two defining characteristics of classroom silence.

In the same line, White (1996) points out that classroom silence simply means “the absence of talk but not the absence of thought” (p. 37). That is to say, ideas are there even if they were not orally expressed. According to Liu (2017), “in the classroom context, silence means the limited or lack of cooperation and participation between students and teachers in the teaching and learning activities” (p. 77). In other words, classroom silence refers to the absence of teacher-learner interaction during the teaching/learning process.

1.2.2. Basic Interpretation of Silence

In an attempt to interpret silence within conversations, Kurzon (1998) points out that the presence of a reaction (i.e., response) to the stimulus introduced in the form of a question would denote the occurrence of speech, wherein the addressee either knows the answer and

explicitly states it, or does not know it and confesses his/her ignorance through asserting the following utterance: “I don’t know”. Contrariwise, if no reaction comes to pass, two possibilities ensue; silence or speech. In the former, yet another two eventualities transpire, namely, non-intentional and intentional silence. Predominantly, psychological disabilities characterize the focal reason for non-intentional silence as “the silent addressee has no control over his or her response to a question” (p. 36). Consistently, addressees have no choice but to be silent as shyness, fear, anxiety, and other similar psychological hurdles exert enormous control over them and render them reticent whether they are knowledgeable about the answer or not. Whilst some addressees are unintentionally silent, others deliberately adopt utter silence, which represents a choice for them and not an obligation. Intriguingly, addressees who are intentionally silent may also utilise speech , not to provide the questioner with an answer, but to enforce the choice of silence by declaring their refusal to respond all together; for instance, they may say “I will not talk”. Indeed, the previously mentioned conception was highly supported by Kurzon who believed that “intentional silence is a genuine choice made by the addressee and may be verbalized through a speech act if the addressee so chooses” (p. 36).

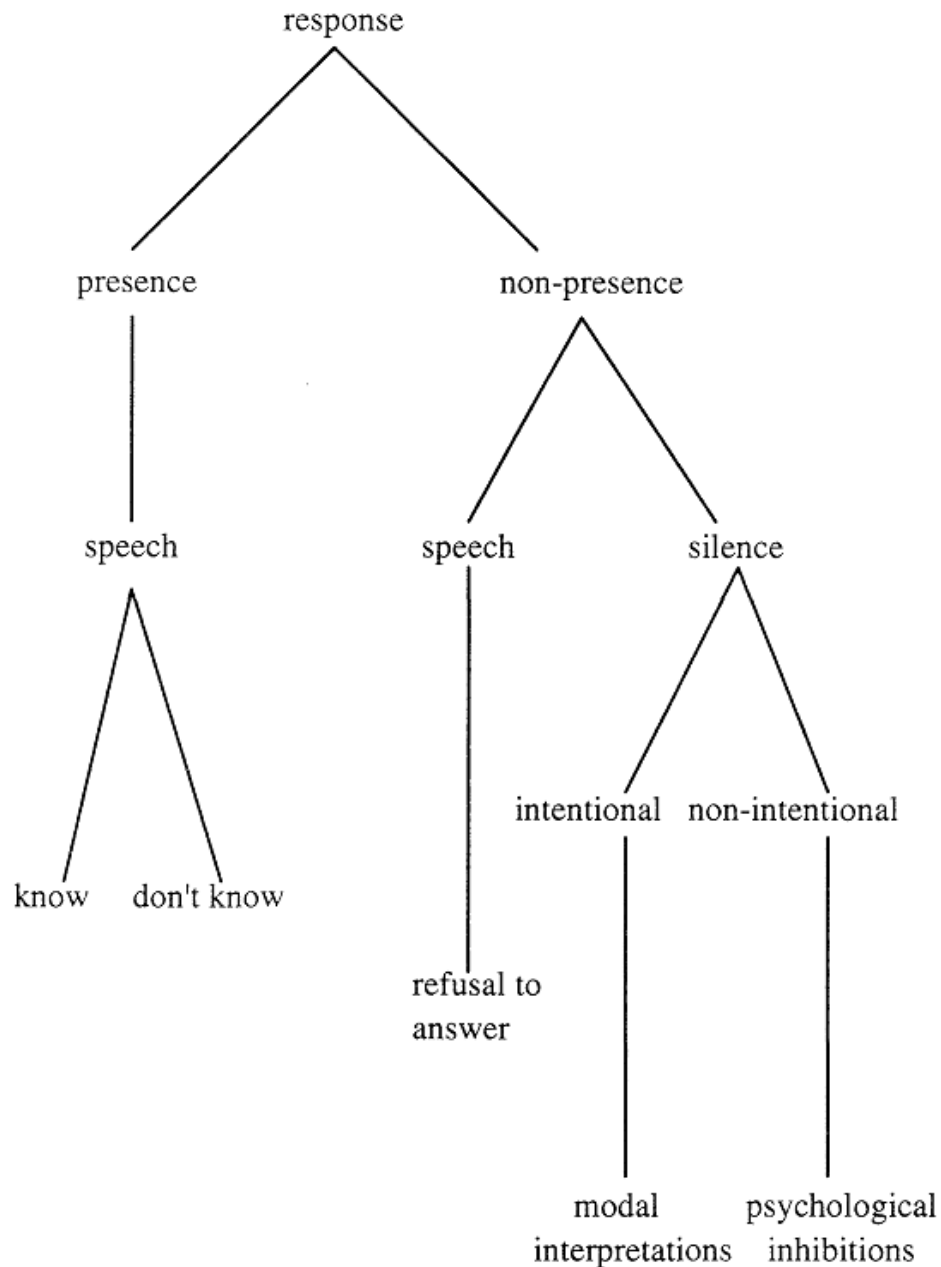


Figure 1.1. Interpretation of silence. Basic model (Kurzon, 1998, p. 45)

1.2.3. Positive vs. Negative Silence

Beyond any doubt, teachers of oral expression find learners' silence to be unwelcoming in the classroom as it thwarts the progress of their interaction-based tutoring. However, it is not the subsistence of classroom silence that is controversial, but rather its vague nature. It is downright inaccurate to think that the nature of students' silence is either entirely adverse or constructive.

A ferocious debate has been raging between researchers pertaining to whether the aforementioned phenomenon is of positive and beneficial consequences, or of negative and harmful effects on EFL learners and the teaching process in general. Clair (1998) argues that “Silence... is perceived as a passive background to the noisy activity of communication” (p. 8). Evidently, this quotation indicates the massive differences between the active learners’ interaction and the act of silence as the absence of any communication within the oral language classroom. Contrary to communication which is labelled as a sign of activeness, silence exhibits a more passive behaviour on the part of students which seems to be negative. Likewise, it was said that ‘silence is not golden’ as it is the result of learners’ fear to speak up the English language inside the classroom, let alone outside of it, which ultimately influences their future career deleteriously (Hamlin, 2019). The negative nature of silence was further supported by many other scholars including Deborah Tannen (1985) who, in simple words, declares that “silence... has a negative value in many communicative contexts” (p. 93).

On the other side, silence was perceived by other researchers as being a totally positive entity. Sontag (1969), for example, orients our attention to the huge importance of silence assuming that “without the polarity of silence, the system of language would fail” (p. 19). Although silence seems to be quite often negative within education, Jaworski and Sachdev (1998) disagree with this idea stating that “apart from being a linguistic reflex of the lack of communication, communication breakdown, feelings of negativity and conflict, silence is also a positive communication item” (p. 286). Actually, based on the results of their study, it was found that learners consider their silence to be positive since it serves a positive function – to facilitate learning in general.

It is broadly alleged that silence boasts a negative value as it engenders a fierce resistance to the effectiveness of the learning process. Whereas learners are neither participating nor willing to speak, they will most certainly lack the practice that they momentarily need to be fluent and efficient in the language, both whilst their academic

careers and later in their occupational ones. Learners could adopt silence as a sanctuary from their own psychological insecurities or to avoid displaying any linguistic feebleness which they may have. Notwithstanding, silence in the oral language classroom retains a positive aspect in the sense that it could be a sign of respect, namely, during a discussion which requires turn taking. Silence could also be utilised as a listening strategy which helps learners to be more attentive. Consequently, positive silence is neither the result of psychological complications nor linguistic weaknesses, but rather it is intentionally used as a tool to achieve certain purposes.

1.2.4. Reasons for Classroom Silence

It is no exaggeration to say that classroom interaction represents the key - for EFL learners - to practise speaking; therefore, students would be gradually able to use the FL, in a fluent manner, to accomplish different communicative purposes inside, and even outside the educational platform (i.e., the classroom). Harmer (1998) supports what was said claiming that “getting students to have a free discussion gives them a chance to rehearse having discussions outside the classroom” (p. 87). However, it seems that foreign language learners’ propensity towards silence, especially in the oral class, was and still considered the centre of discussion for researchers and instructors alike as it is, obviously, the by-product of a number of reasons that are psychological, but also linguistic in nature.

1.2.4.1. Psychological Reasons

It is widely postulated that EFL learners’ silence in the speaking class strongly correlates with a number of such psychological reasons as lacking self-confidence, shyness and the lack of motivation.

1.2.4.1.1. Lack of Self- Confidence

In his book ‘Self-Confidence: Unleash your confidence, turn your life around’, Iland (2013) introduces the etymology of the term self-confidence stating that “Confidence

originated from the Latin word ‘confidentia’ meaning ‘to trust’ and ‘to have faith’” (p. 11). Generally speaking, self-confidence refers to “people’s sense of competence and skill, their perceived capability to deal effectively with various situations” (Shrauger & Schohn, 1995, p. 256). In an educational context though, self-confidence designates one’s belief in his/her own capacities and abilities to achieve certain goals including using the TL as a means of communication within the oral classroom.

It has been proved by many researchers that self-confidence has a direct influence on foreign language learners’ oral performance. In fact, “confidence is an essential aspect of any good presentation. It provides impetus to speakers to communicate his or her ideas effectively” (Kakepoto, Habil, Omar, & Said, 2012, p. 71). Students possessing self-confidence (i.e., high self-confidence) are supposed to freely express their feelings and ideas in front of all the members of the classroom paving the way for active interaction to take place. On the contrary, lacking the sense of self-confidence is, absolutely, risky for learners as they are often observed to be anxious, shy, and afraid about the possibility of making mistakes and experiencing long pauses and hesitations when it comes to speaking. So, they simply prefer to keep silent rather than being laughed at by their teachers or classmates.

Last but not least, Tsui (1996) holds that students’ silence can be strongly attributed to one significant reason which is the lack of confidence assuming that “the students’ lack of confidence is. . . reflected in their unwillingness to speak up in class” (p. 150). In the same vein, Petress (2001) considers EFL students’ low self-confidence one major factor causing them to think negatively about their level at English (i.e., poor English) which prevents learners from speaking their minds in response to the teacher’s questions.

1.2.4.1.2. Shyness

For many people, shyness represents an undesirable character trait that might result in dissipating valuable opportunities in almost all occasions. In the classroom context, it is widely noticed that foreign language learners are of different personalities. Unlike non-shy

students (usually named extroverts) who are in most times ready and open for classroom discussions, shy students are marked to be silent all the class along causing themselves, intentionally, to be out of the spotlight. In this vein, Ur (1996) writes: “Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom, worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts” (p. 121).

Obviously, “speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say” (Juhana, 2012, p. 101). This view is well supported by the findings of a research study done by Juhana in 2012 investigating the ‘Psychological Factors that Hinder Students from Speaking in English Class’. It was found that ‘shyness’-in addition to anxiety, lack of confidence and motivation- is one of the most influential factors on EFL learners’ oral performance that should be taken into consideration.

Actually, Kurzon (1998) highlights the following:

The silent addressee may know or not know the answer to the question s/he is being asked. If s/he knows, then there are two possible responses- verbal response as the cooperative way of responding to a question, or silence. Which is uncooperative, to say the least. If, on the other hand, the addressee does not know the answer, s/he has also the possibility of two of ways of responding - by saying ‘ I don’t know’, or by keeping silent. I have claimed since people are often embarrassed when they have to reveal their ignorance, they can hide this ignorance behind a wall of silence in situations where they are not forced to speak. A pupil sitting at the back of the class often play this game. (p. 38)

Before going any further, it would worth our while to mention that being silent is not necessarily a sign of lacking knowledge on the part of learners, they may know a lot about a certain topic but they remain silent anyway out of many reasons including ‘shyness’. The latter seems to be a convincing reason that would justify EFL learners’ passivity in the oral class.

In sum, there are students who are shy and afraid that their self-image would be at risk if they utter a single word as the other people may judge them, criticise them or even laugh at them. Thereby, they withdraw into deep silence as a way of regaining power, self-control and control over the situation they are experiencing (Kurzon, 1998).

1.2.4.1.3. Lack of Motivation

Another important psychological reason for students' silence in the oral language classroom would be strongly related to 'lacking motivation'. It is well known that being motivated is what actually leads learners to 'behave' in a particular way or perform a particular action (Doan, 2011). Being de-motivated, instead, would create a plethora of problems, such as students' refusal to produce a foreign speech.

In fact, it is due to motivation that learners are aspired to learn the TL; as such, they would be able to use it as a means of communication in the speaking class. Put it differently, motivation plays a pivotal role when it comes to learn the FL as it insofar facilitates the learning process. Quite the contrary, de-motivation is regarded as a formidable language barrier to the aforementioned process. Falout and Falout (2005) agree upon this idea stating that while "motivation pushes learning for life, de-motivation cuts learning short" (p. 280).

Lacking motivation on the part of EFL learners could be the result of multiple factors. For instance, the teacher's personality may affect learners' motivation to produce speech especially if s/he was exceedingly strict, characterized by a tumultuous mood or simply not open to his/her learners' ideas and personal perspectives about certain subjects. Indeed, the topic of discussion is of a crucial role in fostering foreign language learners' oral performance. It may be interesting to some, but not necessarily to all the students to talk about; consequently, they are prone to lose motivation to build an interactive environment. Furthermore, the classroom atmosphere has a decisive impact on students' willingness to talk. It should be informative to note that learners would feel unrelaxed and anxious in an

environment where support, tolerance and sense of belonging are not welcomed to be part of the speaking classroom (Zeng, 2010; Riasati, 2012).

1.2.4.2. Linguistic Reasons

In addition to the psychological inhibitions which obviously affect EFL learners' production of speech, an array of linguistic reasons also bring about the occurrence of silence in the oral language classroom.

1.2.4.2.1. Low English Proficiency Level

According to many researchers (e.g., Tsui, 1996; Liu, 2005; Liu & Jackson, 2009), low English proficiency, as one fundamental factor, causes students to remain silent during discussions and debates while they are, actually, expected to take risks and break silence through classroom interaction, or say simply, participation.

Low English proficiency encompasses lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, and non-standard pronunciation. It is worthy to mention that some students find it problematic to select the most appropriate vocabulary in order to express their intentions properly. In fact, students' limited vocabulary is, fairly, what prevents them from speaking English in the oral class. Al Hosni (2014), for example, observed three classes within one school to identify the speaking difficulties among EFL learners. It was revealed that "students struggle to find the appropriate vocabulary item when trying to speak in English, which reflects their insufficient vocabulary repertoire" (p. 26).

Harmer (2001) maintains that "if grammar rules are too carelessly violated, communication may suffer" (p. 208). So, with regard to the FL vocabulary, one must be aware of its grammatical rules as they make communication survive in an EFL setting. Taking the discussion further, pronunciation makes a serious problem that EFL learners are really worried about when speaking. Usually, students feel embarrassed and extremely anxious

when they mispronounce the different words of English. This is the reason why they choose to be silent and not committing themselves to mockery (Abebe & Deneke, 2015).

1.2.4.2.2. Incomprehensible Input

One of the reasons why EFL students hold a silent mode in the oral classroom is that they are admittedly exposed to some incomprehensible input. According to Tsui (1996) “Many teachers attribute the lack of response to students not being able to understand teachers’ instructions and questions” (p. 154). In other words, learners’ unresponsiveness to teachers’ questions is likely to be tied to their lack of understanding in the first place. He actually mentioned, in his chapter, that one of the teachers noted the following:

After viewing myself asking questions, I realized that what I thought were simple and clear questions were in fact quite difficult to understand. Not only this, but the questions were often confusing and not specific enough....The result is that students who do not understand the question fall into two categories: either they ask for clarification and I try to rephrase the question or they remain silent. (p. 154)

It is patent from this quote that learners might suffer questions’ comprehension as they seem vague, implicit and to some extent complex to decode and interpret. Thereby, students would feel the necessity to keep silent over seeking clarification as well as explanation from their teachers for those ambiguous questions.

1.2.4.2.3. Destructive Feedback

Usually, in the oral language classroom, students fall into the trap of making errors and mistakes, mainly pertaining to pronunciation or the formation of well-structured utterances; and herein comes the role of the teacher as a feedback provider for improving learners’ speaking activity. It is beyond doubt that feedback (oral feedback particularly) is an essential part of the learning process as it brings some kind of correction to the learners’ suggested-responses and offers the grounds for development to come about. According to Dörnyei (2001) “feedback is not just a decoration on the cake or an additional asset that’s

worth having. It is an essential ingredient of learning” (p. 123). That is to say, feedback is indispensable when learning takes place.

For all intents and purposes, feedback is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, constructive feedback is characterized by being positive, helpful and most importantly respectful in that it seeks to correct learners without attacking their behaviour and making them feel unpleasant or ashamed. On the other hand, destructive feedback is seen as critical, harsh and harmful for students as it destroys their self-image and renders them unconfident about their oral performance as for de-motivating them to share talk. In fact, Irons (2008) purports that “Being overly critical serves no constructive purposes and can be very de-motivating for students” (p. 84). So, if instructors provide destructive feedback while teaching, their students would lose the sense of being motivated, which in turn, prevents them from engaging into classroom discussions just to stay away from criticism and verbal punishment.

1.2.5. Teachers’ Reaction towards Silence in the EFL Classroom

It is utterly erroneous to presume that the perplexing phenomenon of classroom silence casts its shadows upon learners only; contrarily, teachers are also prone to its subtle, but grand effects and, consequently, the entirety of the lesson’s machinations. Much like a symptom of a more dangerous disease, educators take students’ silence as a sign of a present defect which, undoubtedly, should be rectified at once lest it incites mayhem in the process of teaching and learning.

Based on a thorough analysis of the situation at hand, a teacher may establish a hierarchy of reasons for learners’ silence, wherein the causes are arranged from the most to the least likely to be detrimental (Reda, 2009). On that premise, the teacher starts remedying the most likely ones to cause the foregoing phenomenon while observing any kind of progress. If no enhancement transpires, he directly shifts his mind to amend certain

conditions. After all, it is the teachers' responsibility to devote magnitude efforts for such a conundrum to be controlled.

To elaborate on the possible causes of learners' silence and how teachers react to them, further illustration is in order. Teachers may surmise that their teaching methodology constitutes the overwhelming bulk of the issue (Zhouyuan, 2016), which in turn leads them to modify or drastically alter it. For instance, in the traditional classroom, the instructor possesses the absolute authority as he controls interaction leaving little to no margin for students' oral interference; whereas, normally the teacher gives command for learners themselves to manage the learning situation and also more freedom to talk. Furthermore, learners are left exposed to feelings of fear, insecurity and self-doubt that would ruin the classroom atmosphere.

To remove reminiscent obstacles, the teacher needs, certainly, to grow self-confidence within his/her students to help them believe in their speaking ability of the English language. Also, he could adjust or even change the questioning strategies in an attempt to create a healthy environment in which learners feel comfortable and unafraid to share their own point of view about a particular topic (Zhouyuan, 2016). Put it in a nutshell, teachers are capable through their reaction to students' silence to offer an efficacious and possibly final solution to this enigmatic dilemma.

Conclusion

On the whole, based on what was sketched above, speaking represents one fundamental, necessary skill to be acquired by EFL learners as its improvement facilitates both the learning process and foreign language communication among them in the oral language classroom. Nevertheless, it is still quite challenging for oral language teachers to develop such a skill in their learners. The reason behind the presence of adversity lies within the nature of this situation as it is filled with some serious difficulties that avert students from

expressing their ideas and thoughts, mainly of which lacking speech (i.e., silence) due to several reasons. For all intents and purposes, it is not an overstatement to affirm that English language teachers are the most qualified candidates to counter the wide-ranging phenomenon of classroom silence as they are familiar with their students' personalities and insecurities. Such knowledge would prove priceless in their attempts to adopt the most appropriate means and methods to create interaction and increase participation once more in the oral language classroom.

CHAPTER TWO: Teachers' Strategies for Overcoming Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

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CHAPTER TWO: Teachers' Strategies for Overcoming Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

Introduction

It is enormously apparent that teachers play a prominent role in the teaching/learning process as they assume a variety of responsibilities, mainly of which information delivery and skills' enhancement. As intricate as the aforementioned duties may seem, oral expression teachers face an even more complex task since they are aiming at more than just a mere conveyance of knowledge. The oral sessions require most of all active participation on the part of learners, who are by no means accustomed to classroom interaction in the other modules. The lack of oral communication in the other sessions may render students demotivated and silent. Herein, it falls upon the shoulders of oral language teachers to solve the phenomenon of learners' silence since they possess both the capacity and the authority to do so. Teachers of oral expression aspire to promote classroom interaction, motivate their students, improve their speaking skill, and keep them as communicative as possible through the usage of various teaching techniques and strategies.

Given rise to communication within the oral language classroom hardly denotes the only goal of using teaching strategies in the present instance. On the contrary, a number of short- and long-term objectives could be achieved by means of this apparatus. The improvement of the learners' speaking skill characterizes the short-term goal as teachers seek to bring about interaction and to elevate the oral proficiency of their students. The long-term goals portray the development of learners' critical thinking and mental abilities, the promotion of constructive and powerful dialogue, the endorsement of collaboration in a variety of educational contexts and environments, and the nourishment of social tolerance and acceptance of others' presence, ideas, and perspectives (Senthamarai, 2018).

The present chapter offers a comprehensive picture of the foregoing account in which teaching strategies were insofar the centre of our discussion. Basically, it aims at providing the term ‘teaching strategy’ with some multiple definitions from diverse perspectives, bringing into view its great significance to the field of language teaching and learning, shedding light on its various types in terms of motivational strategies such as using games and ICTs, etc., in addition to those interactive strategies including role-playing strategy and cooperative learning strategy as well as highlighting the factors influencing these strategies.

2.1. Definition of Teaching Strategies

It is unmistakably apparent that teaching strategies hold a notable position in the educational field especially that of language teaching and learning for their vital role in managing, as well as supporting the instruction process. Previous to providing various definitions to ‘teaching strategies’, attention must be oriented first to clarify the term ‘strategy’ as a basic concept.

The term ‘strategy’ is derived from the Greek word ‘strategia’ which translates to ‘generalship’, i.e., military command (Nickols, 2012). The etymology of the word shows that the term was first used in the military domain; however, later its use was expanded to include a number of such fields as economy, business, sports, and education.

As a matter of fact, Steiner (1979) asserts that strategy answers the question: “What are the ends we seek and how should we achieve them?” (p. 348). The previous statement implies that a strategy incorporates both the objectives set to be reached, namely, the ultimate aims, and also the structured and organized sequence of actions, guidelines, and instructions to achieve them.

The term is also defined by Mintzberg (1994) as follows: “strategy is a plan, or something equivalent- a direction, a guide or course of action into the future, a path to get from here to there” (p. 23). The afore-said account describes strategy as a schema which

comprehensively explains and affirms what means should be employed and how they should be utilised in order to initiate a complete change from one situation to another, i.e., accomplishing the definitive target.

Given their status as indispensable tool in the educational procedure, teaching strategies represent the focal point of interest for many researchers whose aim is to investigate their role in L2/FL language acquisition. That is to say, such inspection endeavours to understand how these teaching strategies are precisely structured and put into use with the utmost goal of yielding constructive outcomes. Experts in the field have imparted a number of definitions from diverse perspectives to delineate ‘teaching strategies’.

According to Wandberg and Rohwer (2010), teaching strategies “refer to the structure, system, methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that a teacher uses during instruction” (p. 164). The latter quotation maintains that teaching strategies do not only encompass a limited scope of category, but rather they include all what teachers apply to improve instruction.

In fact, teaching strategies represent techniques which are employed by teachers in an attempt to enhance specific skills. What is more, it is of paramount importance that the teaching strategies employed must be appropriate and suitable to the comprehensive level of students. That is to say, they should neither be of vastly superior nor inferior level compared to learners’ potentials (Picard, 2004).

Last but not least, Herrell and Jordan (2003) describe teaching strategies as “approaches that can be used across curricular areas to support the learning of students” (p. 5). In other words, teaching strategies are the tools used in order to encourage learners and facilitate the learning process.

2.2. Significance of Teaching Strategies

Broadly speaking, including all students in a lesson is a challenging task for EFL teachers. For this reason, they tend to exert some effort in order to make sure that the input introduced to their students is comprehensible. They are also concerned with how to encourage students to speak in the classroom and how to maintain this through a classroom session. Some teachers opt for different teaching strategies that may help them achieve this purpose. In fact, teaching strategies are significant because they enjoy some merits.

Reiser and Dick (1996) argue that teachers may primarily use teaching strategies to attain desirable teaching and learning goals. That is to say, teaching strategies determine the success of the teaching/learning process. In the oral language classroom, for instance, the ultimate “goal for English language teaching is to develop the learners’ communicative competence which will enable them to communicate successfully in the real world” (Rababah, 2003, p. 6). Here, the teacher may use the role-play as a teaching strategy to assist students accomplish this goal. Therefore, students, by taking roles in contexts which resemble real life situations, will be able to function and communicate effectively whenever they confront such social interactions that involve the use of the English language.

In his book, Xu (2010) explains that he used “the term instructional strategies to refer to strategies teachers use to facilitate students’ use of learners strategies” (p. 22). Indeed, learning strategies are very important in the learning process since they are the basic ways through which learners learn the TL, and if teachers support these strategies by using their own strategies, EFL development will be optimized. For example, the teacher may make students discuss a certain topic which incites them to use metacognitive learning strategies as they monitor their thoughts to argue and defend their own opinions and thus convince the others.

Moreover, teaching strategies enable students to enhance their critical thinking. That is, they learn how to analyze things accurately and carefully before making a final decision to share their thoughts with the rest of the class. To support this claim, Buehl (2017, p. 10) emphasizes that “By integrating classroom strategies into our instruction, we foster the development of individuals who are purposeful thinkers”. Another area where teaching strategies are recognized useful is in their effectiveness in helping students to overcome their speaking difficulties (Widyaningsih & Robiasih, 2018). So, it is far more important for teachers to know students’ speaking deficiencies and try to establish good teaching strategies that contribute wholly to promoting students’ oral proficiency as well as their interaction in the classroom.

On the whole, it seems that teaching strategies take a substantial role in enhancing the teaching/learning process, in general, and in boosting students’ academic practices, in particular.

2.3. Types of Teaching Strategies

It was argued by Luoma (2004) that “speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop” (p. ix). The previous quotation indicates that the mastery of speaking is by no means an easy task as it requires time and practice. Moreover, other aspects come to play in the enhancement of speaking such as, motivation. To elucidate the important role which motivation occupies, Dörnyei (2001) maintains that “learners with sufficient motivation can achieve a working knowledge of an L2” (p. 5). Herein comes the role of teachers to make use of what pushes their learners forward towards improvement. In fact, the good oral language teacher is one that diversifies his/her teaching strategies and techniques for the utmost goal of increasing students’ engagement in the oral session. Within the up-coming subsections, two types of teaching

strategies will be the subject of our discussion: Motivational strategies and the interactive ones.

2.3.1. Motivational Strategies

According to Scheidecher and Freeman (1999), “Motivation is, without question, the most complex and challenging issue facing teachers today” (p. 116). Obviously, this statement exhibits two significant facts. The first one is the substantial importance that motivation possesses in the learning process as it represents a decisive factor in determining learners’ success or failure. The second fact which the former quotation displays is the challenging nature of creating motivation. As a consequence of such a complexity, researchers and teachers alike are utilising a variety of teaching strategies to overcome this difficulty and render learners motivated.

In his book “Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom”, Dörnyei (2001) states that motivational strategies “refer to those motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect” (p. 28). On that account, motivational strategies denote techniques which are purposefully put to use with the explicit aim of increasing motivation and; consequently, accomplishing positive outcomes. What comes next, then, is a matter of discussing some appropriate and beneficial strategies in terms of raising students’ motivation to share talk in the oral language classroom to a maximum.

2.3.1.1. Communicative Games

Over the past few years, the rapid spread of games has made them, not only a pervasive activity for past-time and amusement, but rather an advantageous tool in the field of education and an important part of the teaching curriculum as Hadfield (1999) emphasized: “....Games should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus” (p. 8). Nowadays, teachers use games in an effort to facilitate learning by means of motivating students on the one hand, and to improve learners’ communicative ability on the other.

'Communicative games' were introduced by many researchers (Byrne, 1995; Zhu, 2012; Haycraft, 1978) as entertaining activities that educators use in order to motivate students as for developing their communicative competence through the practical use of the TL. In fact, Gibbons (1993) gave a very detailed and clear definition for communication games saying that they are:

Activities set up in the classroom to create opportunities and purposes for verbal communication practice. Many times the purpose of communication in these games is to convey information or cause something to occur as a result of the activity. Some of the games provide practice in the use of a particular language function such as giving direction or asking questions. Other games require students to work together and communicate to solve a problem. (as cited in Herrell & Jordan, 2003, p. 87)

As alluded to in the upper quotation, communication games are a type of activities which aim at stimulating interaction and communication within the EFL classroom; hence, offering learners a chance to practise the language. Furthermore, it is clear that each game has a specific objective to be accomplished via its implementation in the oral language classroom.

The use of communicative games in the educational setting delivers a large assembly of advantages for learners on many levels (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2006; Hubbard, Jones, Thornton, & Wheeler, 1983; Richard-Amato, 1996). For starters, one very beneficial outcome would be generating motivation among students by means of amusement and fun, which in turn encourages them to freely communicate, interact, and share ideas within the oral session. What is more, since participation is both unburdened by any insecurities which learners might have and also overflowing with a sense of pleasure and enjoyment, students would effortlessly and rapidly acquire vocabulary and practise the TL as a whole. Adding to that, the frequent presence of communicative games would most probably break the usual routine of lessons and keep learners attentive and interested.

2.3.1.2. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

In light of the rapid development taking place in the field of science and technology, many transformations transpired in all arenas of life and at all levels. In accordance with that,

education was no exception, as it has kept pace with this progress by integrating a variety of technological tools in the instructional process within the EFL classes and particularly in the oral language session in order to ensure improvement of learners' speaking proficiency. Indeed, there was a general approval for the insertion and use of ICTs in the educational system in view of their role as instruments which enhance teaching quality as well as motivating students and keeping them interested.

Actually, the concept of ICTs was defined by Manichander (2016) as follows: "information and communication technologies (ICTs) which include radio and television, as well as newer digital technologies such as computers and the internet have been touted as potentially powerful enabling tools for educational change and reform" (p. 312). Moreover, Blurton (1999) describes ICTs as "a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and create, disseminate, store and manage information" (p. 46). Briefly speaking, then, ICTs represent any technological tool which ensures the delivery of information and eases teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction and communication. It is worthy to mention that there exist numerous types of ICTs starting from what is currently considered as somewhat antique as radios to the modern cutting edge tools like computers and smart phones.

It is seemingly indisputable that the incorporation of ICTs in the learning process offers an array of advantages which, no doubt, prove beneficial for teachers and learners alike. Initially, due to the prospect of utilising technologically novice tools such as computers in class, learners would exhibit a more positive attitude and feel motivated to study the language in a different and unconventional manner which upsets the usual routine of lessons, resulting in students' increased interaction and communication (Tinio, 2003). Furthermore, such tools lie within learners easy grasp to use, not only under the supervision of teachers, but rather in a manner which allows students to be independent acquirers of knowledge (Kirschner & Davis, 2003). Another advantage would be the massive preservation of time and effort as these tools

offer an alternative to the traditional methods which customarily last for longer periods and consumes more energy (Adamu, 2004).

2.3.1.3. Constructive Feedback

Research in the field of education has distinctly proven that feedback [i.e., “the listener or reader’s response given to the learner’s speech or writing” (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 34)] designates an integral part of the teaching/learning process, especially for EFL students since it enables them to both track their progress -lack or surplus of- and also substantiate whether or not they are on the right path of improvement. Moreover, it is no secret that teachers use feedback to both grade their learners and rectify their errors and inaccuracies. Be that as it may, it falls within the range of teachers’ responsibilities to take into account a variety of principles when providing feedback and carefully proceed with the employment of such a double-edged tool as it may easily cause more harm than good placing students’ motivation at risk (Dörnyei, 2001; Reid, 2007).

In fact, the very embodiment of a good oral language teacher resides within his/her ability to incorporate constructive feedback in all tasks, however small, for what teachers may regard as nearly insignificant, learners see as imperative to elevate their self- motivation and subsequently ameliorate their speaking performance. This very fact is alluded to by Gorman (2004) who affirms that “it is difficult to imagine any but a few people maintaining a high level of personal motivation in the absence of any positive feedback” (p. 51). What is more, teachers’ suggestions for their learners’ improvement “should be framed in a constructive way which can be done by first stating what a student has achieved and then going on to discuss how this can be improved” (p. 49) as Reid (2007) puts it. In other words, for such a strategy to come into fruition, instructors’ constructive feedback must initially assert learners’ achievements, followed by guidelines on how to further enhance their performance in attempts to preserve and cultivate within students the sense of progress.

One of the most essential principles which constructive feedback encompasses is focusing on learners' efforts and participation rather than their answers' correctness and achievements. The latter element was endorsed by Reid (2007), who states that "Rewards and positive feedback need to be provided for all effort- you reward not the achievement but the effort. For many that is an achievement in itself " (p. 90). Put differently, teachers' should show appreciation concerning their learners' efforts in spite of the errors they may commit when speaking in the oral language classroom, which would lead to the alleviation of their self-belief and the ultimate accomplishment of their goals.

2.3.2. Interactive Strategies

Although the aim of the oral language class is to engage students in a variety of activities that allow them to speak and interact with each other and with the teacher in order to acquire the communicative skills, teachers find the lack of interaction and participation in the classroom confusing, and they tend to treat this problem by relying on different teaching strategies. These strategies are often referred to as 'Interactive strategies'.

2.3.2.1. Role-Play

Role-play is considered as a useful communicative strategy that teachers employ in order to promote students' speaking skills and interaction in the oral language classroom. Van Ments (1999, p. 4) maintains that:

the idea of role-play, in its simplest form, is that of asking someone to imagine that they are either themselves or another person in a particular situation. They are then asked to behave exactly as they feel that person would.

In other words, the teacher asks students to take roles in an imaginary situation which represents real life contexts, and where they are expected to perform a set of behaviour and produce a range of utterances in order to express what a person would do in that real social interaction.

According to Van Ments (1999), there are two types of role-play. The first type is primarily concerned with developing students' skills. To put it differently, students, by taking disparate roles in different situations which contain a set of problems they may confront in real life contexts, will be able to develop their communicative skills as well as problem solving skills. The second type is mainly pertinent to feelings and attitudes. Through role-plays, learners will develop a sense of empathy. That is, they will eventually understand how people feel and act in different circumstances. Therefore, they may succeed in negotiating meaning while they interact with others.

Role-plays are convenient teaching strategies because they "have added relevance, variety, excitement and fun to the ESL classroom. They have provided a change from the traditional classroom arrangement and allowed students to be totally involved in the task" (Gaudart, 1990, p. 245). This may imply that teachers' use of this strategy results in having a shift from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness in EFL classrooms. Thus, both teachers' and students' roles change in the process in the sense that teachers become less involved in classroom talk, and students are actively engaged in speaking activities and classroom interactions. Subsequently, far from passively receiving and comprehending aural input, students actively involve themselves in the interactions that occur in the oral language classroom, challenging their psychological and linguistic deficiencies to communicate effectively and efficiently.

Moreover, Ladousse (1987) confirms that role-play is a communicative strategy that develops students' speaking fluency, increases their motivation, but crucially, it elevates classroom interaction. Ladousse (1987) also states that "The overall aim of role-play is to train students to deal with unpredictable nature of language" (p. 6). In fact, role-play enables students to practise and use the TL in a

variety of hypothetical situations where learners may encounter new language properties and features which, in turn, allows them to obtain paramount linguistic knowledge. Consequently, students' interaction in the classroom will be more frequent as they progressively surmount their speaking difficulties.

In addition, role-play as a teaching strategy stimulates oral communication between students, because the interactions that occur during this process are the results of students' voluntary contributions of oral responses instead of the teacher obliging them to memorize and repeat what is written in the ready-made scripts. This asserts that "Learners say what they want to say and not what someone has told them to say" (Dickinson, 1981, p. 382).

In a simple sense, it seems that the role-play is a useful teaching strategy that teachers usually apply to promote students' interaction in the oral language classroom. However, its use differs from one classroom to another. That is, some teachers depend only on role-plays in teaching the oral expression module, while others vary their teaching strategies in accordance with students' levels and interests. Add to this, what works with a particular classroom does not necessarily work with another.

2.3.2.2. Cooperative Learning

Traditional language classes adopted teacher-centred instruction in order to achieve particular teaching and learning objectives. In these classrooms, "the teacher probably does most of the talking and is by far the most active person" (Scrivener, 2005, p. 16). That is to say, the teacher is the main character, and s/he is the only source of information from which students can develop language knowledge. Students, however, are passive learners as they listen, repeat, and memorize what the teacher says, and they are not responsible for their learning because they have no role in the classroom apart from the one mentioned above. In recent years, though,

the shift from teacher-centred instruction to learner-centred instruction liberates teachers from some of the overarching roles they take in the classroom and grants them to their students in the process. Maurer (1997) argues that “students should feel that they are investigating, discovering, and fiddling around with the language in question without having too much riding on the outcome” (“practice”, para. 1). In this case, students are actively in charge of their learning while the teacher is only a guide to them in their educational journey. Furthermore, in learner-centred teaching, students can work cooperatively to accomplish certain communicative or learning tasks. Thus, teachers can use cooperative learning as a strategy to promote students’ interaction in the oral language classroom.

SLA researchers provided many definitions of cooperative learning strategy and they vary from one researcher to another. For example, Williams (2002) defines it as an effective teaching strategy which encourages learners to work together and interact with each other to achieve desirable and positive learning outcomes. Moreover, Slavin (1995), maintains that:

Cooperative learning refers to a variety of teaching methods in which students work in small groups to help one another learn academic content. In cooperative classrooms, students are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other’s current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other’s understanding. (p. 2)

Cooperative learning, then, is a kind of group work in which learners are supposed to work in unison while having equal responsibility under the indirect supervision of the teacher to attain the objective of the learning activity.

According to the definitions above, cooperative learning is a beneficial teaching strategy teachers utilise in order to promote interaction in the oral language classroom. In the same vein, Richards and Rodgers (2001) claim that:

Cooperative Language Learning originates outside of language teaching, but because it is compatible with many of the assumption of Communicative Language Teaching it has become a popular and relatively uncontroversial

approach to the organization of classroom teaching in many parts of the world. (p. 151)

Cooperative learning gives students the opportunity to interact with each other and maintain positive classroom relationships. Hence, students are no more isolated, and they are determined to participate frequently in the speaking class (Smink & Shcargel, 2004). In addition, Dörnyei (2001) confirms that cooperative learning helps students to deal with their psychological issues since it increases their motivation, strengthens their attitudes toward leaning and speaking, and builds their self-confidence as well as their self-esteem. That is, “students in cooperative groups will feel more liked by their classmates because of the increased opportunities to interact” (Christison, 1990, p. 146). When students are highly self-confident, they are able to overcome their speaking difficulties and their affective factors will increase positively as they are not afraid of making mistakes or being embarrassed in front of their classmates. This will lead them to increase their oral contributions in classroom discussions. In his turn, Myers (1999) states that “Children with high self-esteem tend also to have high academic achievement” (p. 22). To put it differently, students who have vested self-esteem are usually determined to create a good image in front of others. As a result, students become more interested and motivated to participate and interact in the oral expression session.

2.3.2.3. Circle Talk

Many speaking classes are based on the use of circle talk as a teaching strategy to develop students’ speaking skills and interaction in the classroom. Circle talk, usually referred to as talking circle or inside-outside circle (Kagan, 1994, as cited in Erwin, 2010), is defined by Erwin (2010) as “an extremely flexible cooperative learning structure that can be used in a variety of ways in almost any classroom. The only requirement is enough space” (p. 22). To put it bluntly, this

strategy is one form of cooperative learning in which students are supposed to work in pairs in order to share information or discuss a given topic, and since there is no prerequisites or specific conditions apart from having enough space under which this strategy should work, teachers actually have the opportunity to be creative and manipulate the said strategy.

Any approach, method, or strategy have particular procedures that teachers should follow in order to successfully manage them and attain desirable teaching and learning outcomes. For that, Kagan (1994, as cited in Erwin, 2004, p. 79-80) outlines the following steps of the process of applying circle talk in the classroom:

1. Have students count off by twos.
2. Direct the “ones” to stand in a circle.
3. Once they have arranged themselves in a circle, ask them to turn around so that they are facing out.
4. Direct the “twos” to face the “ones” creating an outer circle.
5. Give the students a direction such as, “Shake hands with the person you are facing and say ‘Good morning!’ ”
6. Give the students a question or problem to discuss and a time parameter. For example: “For the next two minutes, discuss everything you know about the Civil War.”
7. After the time limit is up, direct them to shake hands again and to say, “Nice talking to you.”
8. Direct one of the circles to move to the right or left by a certain number of people. For example: “Outer circle, move three people to your right. Please say ‘Hi’ to the people you walk past.”
9. Either give them the same questions or problem, or ask them to discuss something different.
10. Repeat steps 5-10, as needed.

In essence, circle talk strategy is crucially based on dividing students and situating them in two concentric circles where students in the outer circle face inward and those in the inner circle face outward so each student from both circles is facing another one and create a pair. After this, the teacher assigns each pair to speak about a problematic topic or answer a specific question alternatively in a limited time. When students finish talking and the time is over, the teacher asks students in one of

the circles to move either to the right or to the left with a particular number of students. Here, the teacher is free to either ask them to discuss the same topic or to change to other topics.

Ernst-Slavit (1994, p. 294) confirms that circle talk is a strategy “used by the teacher to encourage talk and interaction” in EFL classrooms. In the same vein, Erwin (2010, p. 23-24) lists some advantages of circle talk that contribute directly or indirectly to promoting interaction in the oral language classroom, so teachers can use it:

- As an ice breaker or team builder.
- As a way to help students discover prior knowledge about a particular topic before holding a large-group discussion.
- As a drill-and-practice activity. For example, give each student an index card with a different term or vocabulary word and its definition.
- As a review. Each prompt could be to ask the students to review what they remember about a specific aspect of a lesson or unit they are about to be assessed on.
- As a listening exercise.

Based on the different uses of circle talk that are listed above, it seems that it is indeed a significant teaching strategy used in encouraging classroom interaction in a number of scales. To begin with, circle talk helps to alleviate conflicts and misunderstandings in the oral class; therefore, it initiates and maintains good relationships between students and assists those who are not self-confident to develop a sense of belonging and recognition from other students. The latter, thus, prompts them to participate and share their thoughts freely with others. Moreover, Circle talk endows students with opportunities to reflect on their ideas and thoughts as they are able to discuss them with their partners so when it comes to whole-class discussions, students are able to willingly share their opinions and strongly argue their view points with the rest of the class. Circle talk also enables students to practise specific aspects of a lesson. For instance, the teacher presents a new set of

vocabulary in a given lesson, and s/he uses the circle talk to enable students to acquire a large amount of vocabulary. As such, students become motivated to put the new set of vocabulary into practice by repeatedly interacting in the speaking class. Finally, students, by listening to others speak, may be able to fill in gaps in their understanding, correct already formed hypotheses about the language, benefit from peer feedback, and improve their listening skills. Subsequently, students will improve their language and engage themselves more in classroom discussions.

2.4. Factors Influencing Teaching Strategies

More often than not, teachers grapple with the task of selecting the most appropriate of teaching strategies, which must incontrovertibly be suitable for learners, paving their way towards improvement and successful achievement. Howbeit, the present process of selection is on no account simple. If anything, the procedure is rather a convoluted one, as it is strongly influenced by a variety of factors, starting from teachers' beliefs and students' preferences, and arriving at a cluster of such contextual factors as classroom size and the availability of resources.

2.4.1. Teacher Cognition

The choice of instructional methods and strategies is, by and large, governed by teachers' cognition which according to Borg (2003) constitutes "what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationship of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom" (p. 81). Accordingly, teachers' beliefs, thoughts, and thinking processes affect instructors' pedagogical decisions, which in turn determine their classroom practices.

De facto, in spite of learners' needs and individual differences as well as the setting in which learning takes place, educators teach in a manner which primarily adheres to the expertise they possess. As such, teachers' prior experience determines

how they manage the process of teaching. Having said that, it would be erroneous to paint all experience which teachers boast with the same brush, as the term itself in this context could signal both a teaching experience for instructors who have already taught for a long period of time, and also a learning experience for novice teachers. Thanks to the familiarity and the vast inventory of expertise the former category of teachers possess in the field of education, they deem it unneeded to rely on anything but their previous experience to decide about the teaching methodology, wherein they spontaneously utilise the most effective strategies from their standpoints. Contrariwise, in the absence of a rich teaching experience the latter group of instructors rely in their teaching on previous learning experience, i.e., how they were taught. This very same idea is emphasized by Brown (2003) who maintains that the means by which successful teaching was formerly carried out will once more be implemented.

2.4.2. Learners' Interests

A critical factor which boasts paramount importance and, no doubt, deserves to be taken into account when selecting the instructional strategies and methods denotes learners' interests and preferences. That is to say, if teachers aspire to attain positive results, they must construct a clear image of their learners' interests, preferences, learning styles, and motivation. Only then can instructors come into a conclusive decision regarding which methodology to follow in order to better manage and settle on classroom practices (Weston & Cranton, 1986). The latter notion was corroborated by Nguyen, Warren, and Fehring (2014), who asserted that "having a good understanding of how the learner learns will help teachers determine their philosophy of education, their teaching style, approach, methods, and classroom techniques" (p. 94). To draw an inference, it is beyond question that the

aforementioned factor vastly affects the choice of the teaching strategies utilised in the language classroom.

2.4.3. Classroom Size

In most EFL classrooms, teachers and learners disfavour teaching and learning in classes that are overpopulated (Nan, 2014). In other words, large-size classes deter teachers from managing the whole class as they strive to control the noise and to include all students in a lesson. This state of affairs creates a recondite situation where teachers are not able to employ different teaching strategies in the classroom. As a result, large-size classes affect the choice as well as the use of a particular teaching strategy because “A large class irrespective of number is one in which the teacher feels his performance and what he is supposed to is hampered by the population of the students”(Sharndama, 2013, p. 35). Carrying out their study on Factors Affecting English Language Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Nguyen et al. (2014) confirmed that large class size is one of the main factors that can affect the quality of teaching and affect teachers’ practices as well. For that, teachers should take into consideration the classroom size before selecting a teaching strategy.

2.4.4. Availability of Materials

Teaching materials play an important role in promoting the quality of EFL teaching and learning. Mathew and Alidmat (2013) assert that students learn better and develop English language skills such as communicative skills through the support of audio-visual aids. Therefore, “The use of teaching materials has a major impact on the activity of language teaching” (Nguyen et al., 2014, p. 96). That is to say, the choice of a teaching strategy pertains crucially to the availability of teaching materials in the classroom. In the same vein, Adhikari (2017) affirms that the availability and the use of teaching materials is an influential factor in the selection

of the appropriate teaching strategy. This may be the case because teachers feel helpless when they find a limited number of teaching materials in the classroom which may not be suitable for the selected strategy, so they are sometimes obliged to follow one teaching method and to use a single strategy repeatedly in all language lessons.

Conclusion

In recent years, researchers have been investigating the main issues that are pertinent to EFL teaching and learning. One of the main problems that currently concerns SLA researchers is how particular professional practices on the part of oral expression teachers lead to increased classroom participation and total lack of classroom silence. These practices are mainly motivational and interactive teaching strategies. Although these strategies differ in their characteristics and steps, they may help students to surmount the reasons of their silence and interact effectively in the oral language classroom. That is, motivational strategies provide learners with an enjoyable way of learning and thus treat their affective side positively which prompts them to speak in the oral expression session. Interactive strategies, on the other hand, do not only focus on students' motivation to speak but it also tackles different classroom aspects and targets various language features that students find difficult in order to engage them in classroom interaction. The following chapter, which is the field work, will examine whether oral expression teachers use motivational and interactive strategies and whether they are effective in overcoming students' silence in the oral language classroom.

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CHAPTER THREE: The Field Work

Introduction

This chapter aims at investigating teachers' use of motivational and interactive strategies to overcome silence in the oral language classroom. That is, it is directed to tackle the problem, answer the questions, and achieve the aims of the study. To accomplish this, the students' and the teachers' questionnaires are utilised. The students' questionnaire is intended to explore students' attitudes toward the strategies, if any, used by their oral expression teachers to increase learners' participation in the oral class. The teachers' questionnaire seeks to further inspect the various strategies that oral expression teachers apply to liberate students from classroom silence. This chapter, then, starts with an explanation of the main data collection method, namely the students' and the teachers' questionnaires. It is followed by a specification of the population and the sample selected for our research work. After describing the research tool and analyzing the obtained results, the main findings of the study are compared. Finally, some pedagogical recommendations and limitations are specified.

3.1. Data Collection Tools

Writing a research paper is a process which requires the researcher to follow a particular methodology. For that, choosing a research instrument is not an easy task. Data collection methods need to be chosen carefully in order to contribute most effectively to the researcher's work. In this study, we opted for the questionnaire as a data collection tool. Again, the questionnaire delivered to students intends to check their perceptions and opinions about classroom silence and their teachers' practices, i.e., strategies to bring students to speak during classroom discussions. Moreover, we aimed to know teachers' reactions to, and attitudes toward students' refusal to share

talk in the oral language classroom, and the strategies used to surmount classroom silence through the use of the teachers' questionnaire. In what follows, we will state some merits of the questionnaire that persuaded us to select it as a research tool to carry out our investigation.

3.1.1. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is considered by many researchers as the most convenient means to collect data from different respondents. Brown (2001) defines questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from existing answers" (p. 6). In other words, the questionnaire is a series of written questions that aims to gather information from a number of people who are supposed to answer those questions by choosing the appropriate answer or by providing their own responses; it includes two types of questions: open-ended, close-ended.

A questionnaire is often, if not always, selected as a research instrument because "questionnaires are easy to administer and information can be obtained from large numbers of respondents" (Richards, 2001, p. 301). That is to say, the researcher can collect a considerable amount of information from a huge number of people in a short period of time. Hence, it saves both time and effort. In addition, it is an effective means of measuring attitudes, behaviour, opinions, and intentions of a relatively large number of subjects. For instance, the researcher can ask students if they agree with a certain statement or how long they have been learning a language.

3.2. Population and Participants

The present research is carried out at the Department of English, Mila University during the academic year 2019/2020. Two sets of participants fall under examination within

this inquiry. The first group constitutes 10 teachers of oral expression who were requested to undertake a questionnaire. The second characterizes a sample of 75 participants randomly selected out of the whole population (N= 210) of second-year EFL students to impart answers to another questionnaire. The size of the latter sample was deemed appropriate as it was vastly representative of the total number of students.

In fact, the choice fell upon the aforementioned sample and not first year or third year students for a variety of reasons. At the outset, first year students are yet to be totally accustomed to a full time process of specific language acquisition since they have spent a great portion of their prior academic years studying an array of dissimilar mismatched disciplines- some of which are by no means associated with the English language. Learners of the latter category are mostly beginners who are receiving a moderately preliminary tutoring in grammar and vocabulary, and are hardly comfortable and communicative in the English oral class due to a cluster of psychological and linguistic obstacles. Stunningly contrariwise, the overwhelming bulk of third year students have already transcended most of the aforesaid obstacles with which first year students have just begun to struggle. They are communicative, experienced, relatively fluent, confident, and knowledgeable. Second year students; however, boast neither the acute insecurities and lack of linguistic expertise of first year students, nor the aptitudes of third year learners. In a nutshell, they are undergoing a process of overcoming any difficulties which render them silent. This narrow window of progress makes them the ideal and most suitable choice to closely study the phenomenon of classroom silence and how to prevail over it.

3.3. Description and Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

3.3.1. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The present questionnaire aims at closely investigating classroom silence in the oral expression session, its nature, how students and teachers instigate it, and what both parties do to overcome such a precarious phenomenon.

The entirety of the questionnaire comprises 20 questions of a variety of types. Multiple choice questions constitute the majority of them, followed by a fairly considerable number of close-ended questions, and lastly, open-ended questions, which we deemed appropriate as they provide a window of opportunity for learners to freely express their thoughts and ideas pertaining to our topic of research.

Of note is the fact that this questionnaire is composed of two main sections (see Appendix 1) as follows:

- **Section One: Silence in the Oral Language Classroom (Q1-Q12)**

The first section inspects a notion of silence in the oral language classroom. Learners were required to answer a totality of 12 items related mainly to their level in the speaking skill and its importance in learning the English language, their frequency of participation in the oral session, and what kind of difficulties students encounter when speaking the FL. They were further inquired about the spread of silence in the speaking class, its nature (i.e., positive /negative), and the reason why they deem it so. The tenth question investigates students' perception about the different psychological and linguistic reasons for being silent during the session of oral expression. The subsequent question looks into whether teachers react to their learners' silence, then, respondents were requested to explain how so.

- **Section Two: Overcoming Silence Through the Use of Motivational and Interactive Teaching Strategies (Q13-Q20)**

The second section is centred on overcoming silence through the use of motivational and interactive strategies. This division comprises 8 items in which learners are compelled to supply responses about the extent of their motivation in studying oral expression and whether they are satisfied with the ways the aforementioned module is taught, granted that they allocate an explanation if they are dissatisfied. Moreover, students' standpoints on the use, practicality and effectiveness of various teaching strategies were obtained. Finally, respondents were given the chance to add any further suggestions or comments.

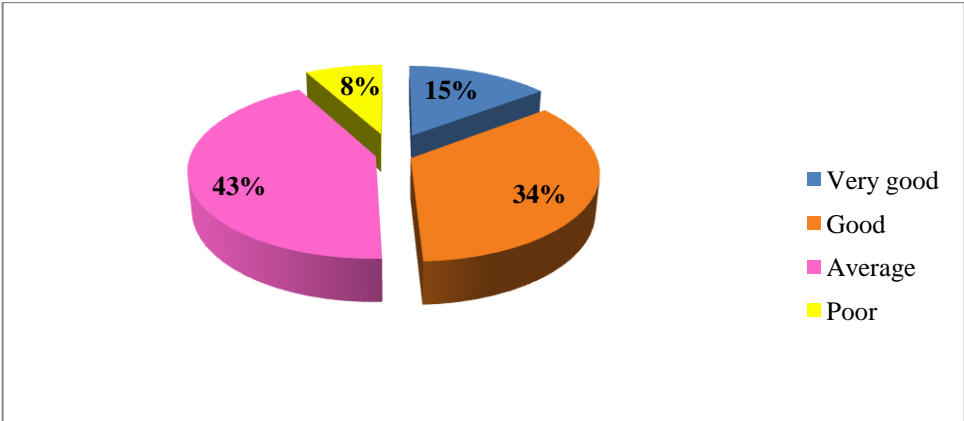
3.3.2. Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

Q1: How do you consider your level in speaking English?

Options	Number	Percentage
Very good	11	14.67%
Good	26	34.67%
Average	32	42.67%
Poor	6	8%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.1. Participants' Level in Speaking English



Graph 3.1. Participants' Level in Speaking English

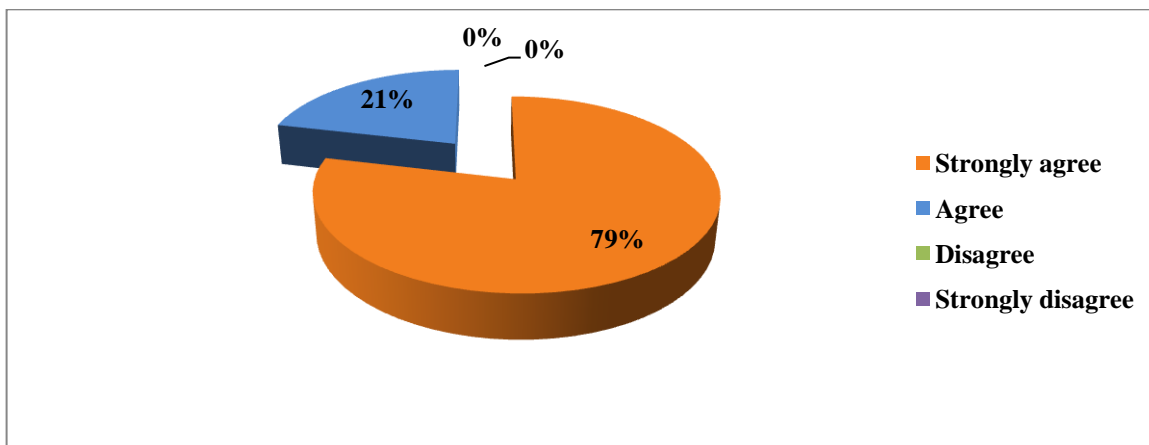
It is worth noticing from Table 3.1 that 42.67% of students claimed to have an *average* level in speaking English and only 8% of them regarded theirs as *poor*. This denotes that the majority of students face speaking difficulties which, in turn, leads us to believe that they are indeed in need of help from their teachers. That is to say, their teachers are expected to use various teaching strategies in the oral expression class in order to assist them to get rid of these frustrating problems. However, 14.67% of students thought that their oral language is *very good*, while 34.67% of them just believed that their speaking level is *good*. This does not mean that they do not face any problems when it comes to speaking English with or in front of others. By contrast, students' levels prompt them to exert more efforts to enhance their speaking skills as they tend to practice it inside and outside the oral language classroom. Moreover, students may be able to perceive and use their teachers' teaching strategies as motivational stimuli to speak more and thus increase their oral proficiency.

Q2: Please, indicate how far you agree with the following statement:

“Speaking is an important skill to develop in learning English”

Options	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	59	78.67%
Agree	16	21.33%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.2. Students' Attitudes towards the Importance of Speaking in Learning English



Graph 3.2. Students' Attitudes towards the Importance of Speaking in Learning English

Table 3.2 displays students' standpoints concerning the importance of the speaking skill in learning the English language. A vast majority-as we expected- of 59 participants with a percentage of 78.67 strongly agree with its importance; 16 participants who constitute 21.33% agree, while a total absence of disagreement is noticed with a 0 % for both strongly disagree and disagree categories.

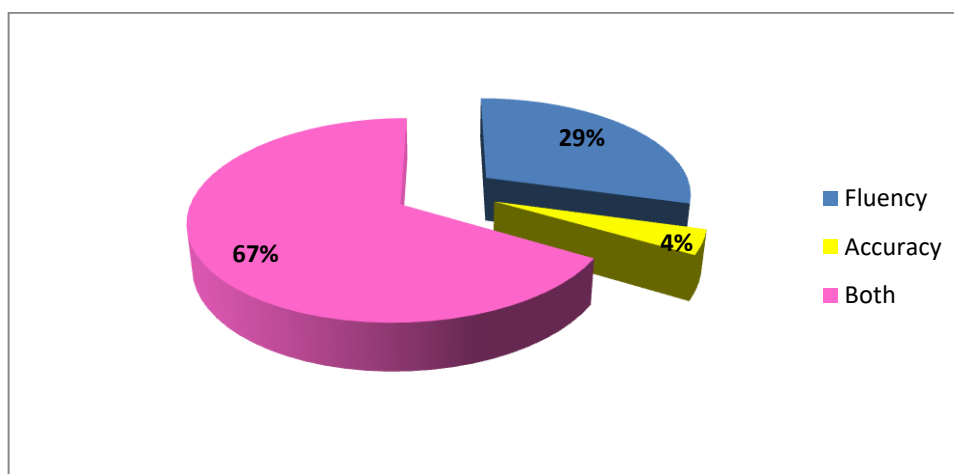
The upper findings reveal a strikingly unanimous agreement between all the students on the importance of the speaking skill in developing their level in English. Such undisputed accord can be allocated to students' propensity and aspiration to be communicative and fluent, given that their focus is mainly oriented toward the usage of English in real life communication. As alluded to in the first chapter, the emergence of novel methods and approaches of teaching, namely, the CA, opened the door for similar views of language acquisition. That is to say, for students, speaking holds a predominant position and takes precedence over the other skills such as, writing, listening and reading, and developing it is tantamount to developing the language as a whole.

Q3: As a learner of the English language, do you want to improve your:

Options	Number	Percentage
Fluency	22	29.33%
Accuracy	3	4%

Both	50	66.67%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.3. Students' Perception about the Aspects of Speaking



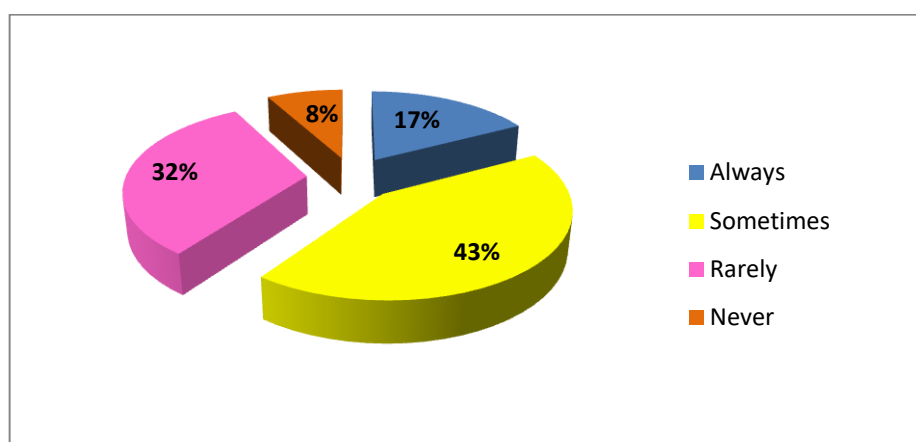
Graph 3.3. Students' Perception about the Aspects of Speaking

As we can see from Table 3.3 above, the highest percentage of the participants (66.67%) declared that they are interested in improving their speaking skills in terms of *both fluency and accuracy*. This is of great significance because it shows that they are aware of the fact that in order for them to be good speakers of English, they should master both fluency and accuracy. Nevertheless, 29.33% of them are only interested in becoming *fluent* speakers because what is important to them when they speak is conveying the message and its meaning. Therefore, they are not afraid of making mistakes, and they have enough self-confidence to speak in front of their classmates and teachers. The lowest percentage of students (4%) considered *accuracy* the most important aspect of the speaking skill to improve. Obviously, participants want to produce utterances that are free from mistakes. To put it differently, they tend to use correct grammar rules, appropriate vocabulary, and correct pronunciation. They are no longer interested in conveying meanings. Instead, students are willing to become accurate users of the English language.

Q4: How often do you share talk in the oral expression session?

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	13	17.33%
Sometimes	32	42.67%
Rarely	24	32%
Never	6	8%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.4. Students' Frequency of Participation in Oral Expression



Graph 3.4. Students' Frequency of Participation in Oral Expression

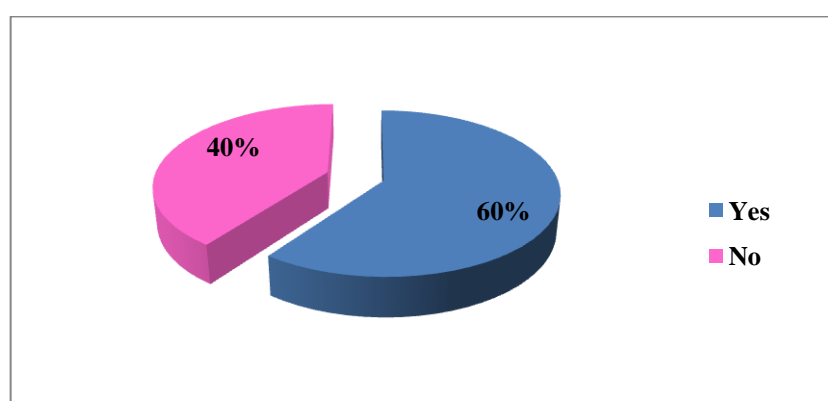
Statistically, Table 3.4 embodies students' frequency of participation in oral expression. The data show that 17.33 % (13 students) of the entire sample *always* share talk in the oral session. The latter percentage signifies a group of students who maintain regular basis participation in view of the fact that they always want their voices and opinions to be heard. Obviously, such learners possess a high self-esteem and the wilfulness to partake in the oral class under any challenging factor; a trait which is of short to non-existent supply in the following categories. The highest percentage of 42.67 represents the 32 students who claimed to speak *sometimes*. These learners are by no means constant participants like students of the aforementioned category, but they averagely engage in conversations whenever they are sufficiently motivated or knowledgeable about the subject in hand. A faction of 24 contestants who stated that they *rarely* participate characterizes the second highest rate by 32%. This

elevated proportion indicates that these students are not actively participating due to a variety of internal, but also external reasons. The internal causes denote learners' psychological disabilities such as, speaking anxiety, shyness and also a lack of self-confidence in their linguistic proficiency. Conversely, the external causes largely relate to teachers themselves as they could be utilising a teaching method which discourages learners to speak, or adopting a severe and unfair treatment. They could also be providing learners with a negative feedback which de-motivate them to participate. Lastly, 8% of the respondents declared that they *never* participate in the oral class. This percentage represents the lowest proportion of all the participants. It is worthy to mention that although it is a possibility, such an assertion does not necessarily indicate any psychological or linguistic hurdles as exist in the previous category; rather, it is also possible that they are simply not interested in oral expression.

Q5: In your opinion, is it difficult to speak English?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	45	60%
No	30	40%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.5. Rate of English Speaking Difficulty



Graph 3.5. Rate of English Speaking Difficulty

The statistics related to this question which are presented in Table 3.5 show that 60% of our participants indicated that they find speaking English difficult. This confirms the fact

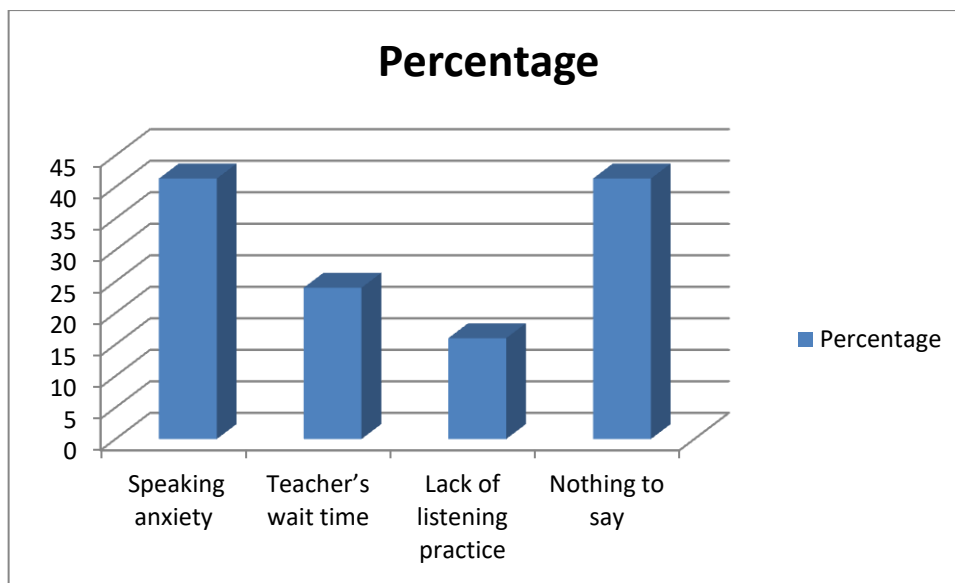
that speaking is a complex task that requires students' ability to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings fluently, accurately, and appropriately in order to avoid communication breakdowns. This striking majority of students are not satisfied with their speaking levels, and they want to attain satisfactory results through improving their oral performance. Moreover, they are aware of having some major obstacles that prevent them from speaking English in the oral class which results in creating prolonged silence during classroom discussions. As such, they never get the chance to practise speaking in the oral expression session and thus work on their weaknesses and difficulties. The results also denote that their oral expression teachers do not use teaching strategies that may appeal to the participants' levels because some factors that cause speaking deficiencies such as speaking anxiety are psychological in nature, and students may be able to regulate them with a relatively low or high degree of help from their teachers, and other factors, like wait time, are only the responsibility of the teacher to manage in order to assist students to surmount their speaking problems.

The remaining of our sample (40%) stated that speaking is an easy task to accomplish. This proportion of students represents those who claimed to have very good and good levels in speaking English. In fact, extroversion may take a substantial role in obtaining this result. That is, extrovert learners are more likely to be fluent and courageous speakers with high self-confidence which is an advantage because when they speak, they have increasing opportunities to work on their oral proficiencies. As a result, they will be able to overcome their oral problems. It is also a possibility that introverts may be included in this percentage as well. As it is known, introverts have high self-esteem. For that, they do not like to share their opinions with the rest of the class. If it ever happens and they speak, they are accurate in the sense that their speech tends to be correct. Hence, they may not have any obstacles in speaking.

Q6: If yes, is it due to:

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Speaking anxiety	31	41.33%
Teacher's wait time	18	24%
Lack of listening practice	12	16%
Nothing to say	31	41.33%

Table 3.6.Factors that Cause Difficulty While Speaking



Graph 3.6.Factors that Cause Difficulty While Speaking

Analyzing this question shows that a high and equal percentage of students said that their speaking difficulties are mainly *speaking anxiety* (41.33%) and *nothing to say* (41.33%). It seems that most of students' speaking anxiety comes from their fear of using incorrect grammatical rules, inappropriate vocabulary, and mispronouncing words. Besides, they may be afraid of receiving negative evaluation from their teachers. Here, their teachers should, for example, create a positive environment in the classroom by providing them with positive feedback or by using some humour as an attempt to ease their anxiety and encourage them to speak. Students may have nothing to say because they are not motivated or interested in the topics suggested by their teachers, or they are not familiar with them. Lack of vocabulary can

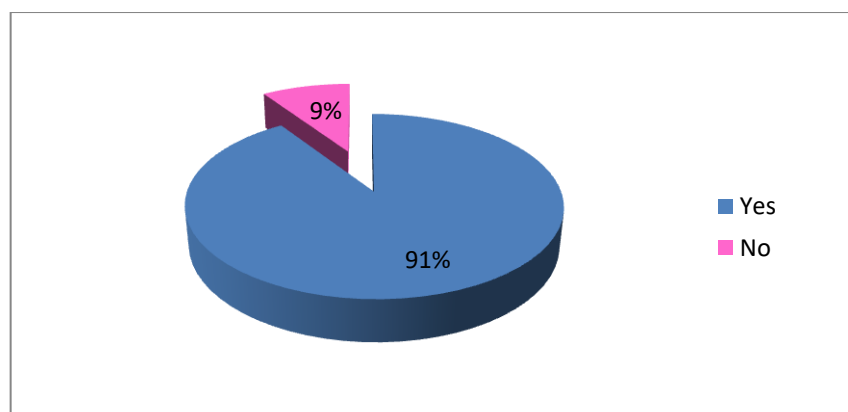
be another reason why students find themselves unable to produce utterances during classroom discussions.

Twenty-four percent of participants believed that the only difficulty they face in speaking English is *teacher's wait time* which confirms that teachers actually do not give their students ample time to think about coherent answers to the proposed questions. The last percentage of students (16%) just thought that *lack of listening practice* is their particular deficiency. This implies that students are not satisfied with the way they are taught listening and there must be a possibility that their teachers are providing them with incomprehensible input. To put it differently, the audios these students listen to are full of English vocabulary which is beyond their level of linguistic development. In addition, speaking and listening skills are correlated since lack of practice in one skill may lead to miss-performance in the other.

Q7: Is silence during the speaking class a widespread phenomenon among EFL learners?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	68	90.67%
No	7	9.33%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.7. Students' standpoints on classroom silence



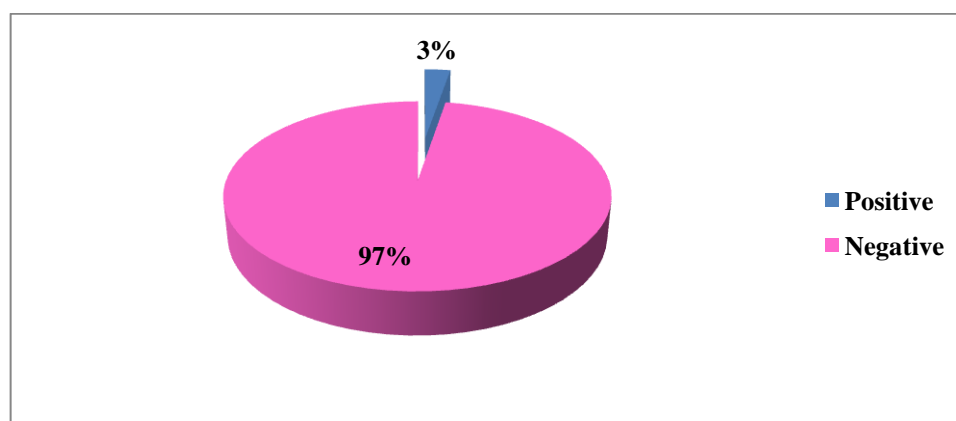
Graph 3.7. Students' standpoints on Classroom Silence

It is clearly noticeable from the results in Table 3.7 above that almost all students (90.67%) agreed that silence is a widespread phenomenon in oral language classrooms. This indicates that in the first place, they are aware of the severity of the problem and second, they have the willingness and determination to get rid of classroom silence. Indeed, it is not only a problem for EFL students, but also for teachers and SLA researchers as it obstructs the teaching- learning process. For this reason, teachers should be enlightened about why students decide not to participate and commit themselves to absolute silence. Lack of self-confidence, for instance, may be a main reason of classroom silence; it is an affective factor that teachers should target by either using teaching strategies that build students self-confidence like constructive feedback, or by guiding them to adopt different learning strategies such as self-talk. The rest of the respondents (9.33%) put forth that classroom silence is not common among EFL learners and this may be for one reason or another.

Q8: How do you consider silence in the oral class, is it :

Options	Number	Percentage
Positive	2	2.67%
Negative	73	97.33%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.8. Students' Attitudes towards the Nature of Classroom Silence



Graph 3.8. Students' Attitudes towards the Nature of Classroom Silence

A staggering 97.33 % of the sample stated that silence in the oral class is of a *negative* nature. If this astounding previous result indicate anything, then it would be the acute awareness of learners about the detrimental influence of silence on both their academic and occupational careers. These learners view silence as a halting factor to their progress and improvement. As referred to in the review of literature, silence can be synonymous with the lack of communication, deterioration of language efficiency and the likelihood of an unsuccessful future profession; whereas, a very small percentage of 2.67 % consider silence to be *positive*. Much like any phenomenon which is analysed from various angles, the latter participants might have remarked a bright side to silence which others fail to see.

It is informative to note that the following item seeks to provide us with a convincing justification for whatever choice students made.

Q9: Please, justify your choice.

The overwhelming percentage which opted for the choice that silence is negative provided a range of justifications. A large number of students maintained that silence in the oral class stands as a major obstacle to the development of EFL learners' communicative capacities, which require, above all, excessive oral participation. In another sense, they elucidated that practice constitutes the most effective means to achieve language fluency. Other respondents, however, justified the negative nature of silence by saying that it has a serious impact on the affective side of the learners causing diffidence and a severe loss of self-confidence which, in turn, render them more reluctant to speak. In addition to that, some students affirmed that silence disrupts the flow of the oral sessions and generates a stressful atmosphere which by no means serves the learners any good.

As for those participants who claimed silence to be positive, they answered by giving some arguments which can be summarized as follows:

- Silence is golden.

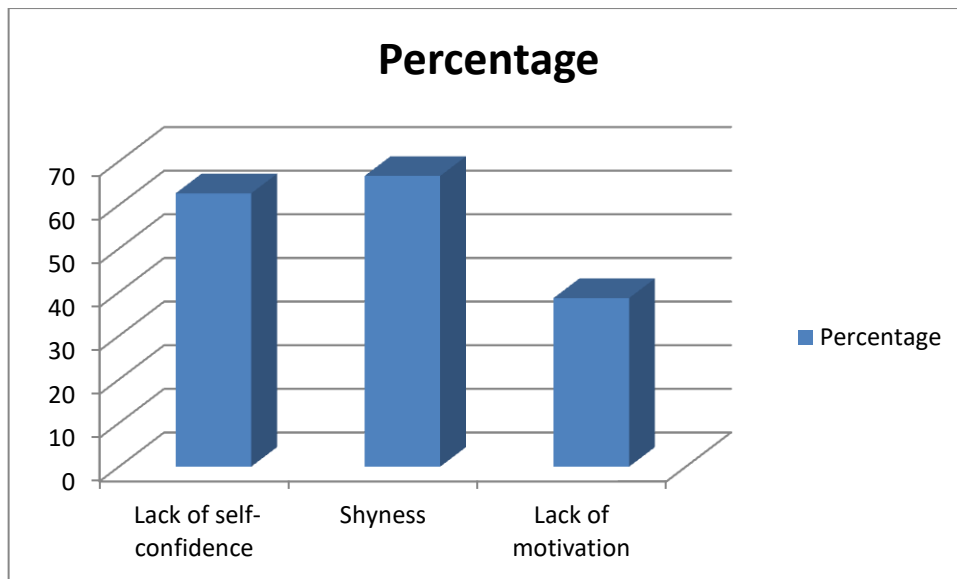
- Silence is regarded as a listening strategy

Q10: Which of the following could be the reason for being silent in the session of oral expression?

1- Psychological reasons :

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of self-confidence	47	62.67%
Shyness	50	66.66%
Lack of motivation	29	38.66%

Table 3.9. Psychological Causes of Students' Silence in the Oral Language Classroom



Graph 3.9. Psychological Causes of Students' Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

Two-thirds of the participants, which is indeed a fairly high portion, admit that their *shyness* is the reason behind their silence in the oral session. It could be comparatively speculated that students' shyness is mostly due to their personality. As it is noticed also from the table above, the *lack of self-confidence* assumes a large ratio of 62.67% closely after shyness; consequently, it represents the second reason which causes silence according to the respondents. As it was established earlier on, self-confidence has a direct influence on EFL

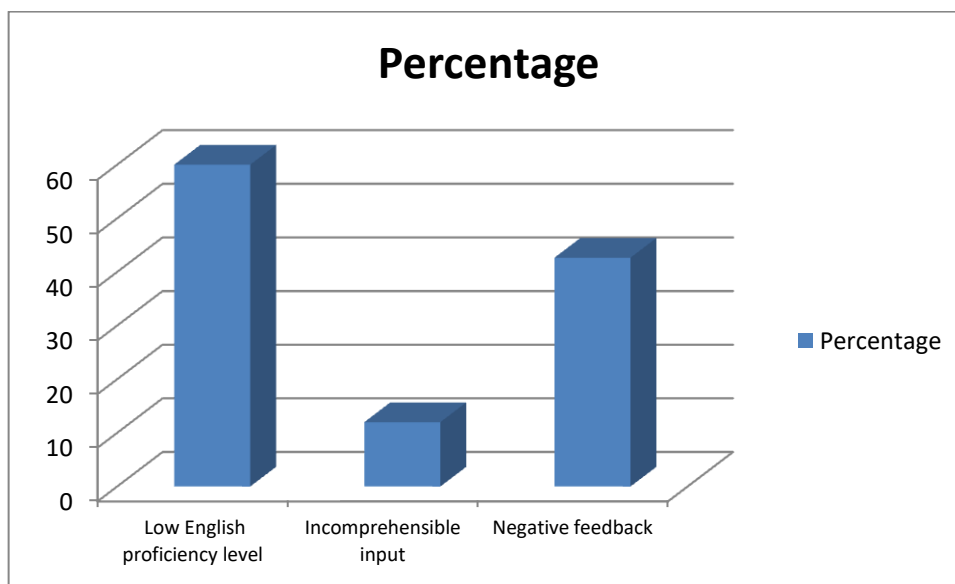
learners' oral performance, and the lack of which could very well amplify classroom silence. Finally, *motivation* comes last with the lowest percentage of 38.66%.

In fact, these psychological inhibitions do not represent the only source for the occurrence of classroom silence, another source could be of a linguistic nature as we are going to explore below.

2- Linguistic reasons :

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Low English proficiency level	45	60%
Incomprehensible input	9	12%
Negative feedback	32	42.66%

Table 3.10.Linguistic Causes of Students' Silence in the Oral Language Classroom



Graph 3.10.Linguistic Causes of Students' Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

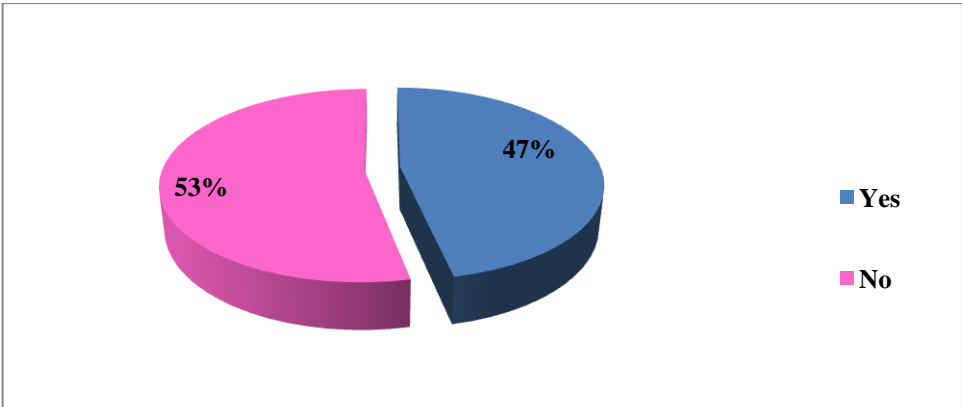
The statistics associated with this question reveal that *low English proficiency* portrays the foremost linguistic reason in causing classroom silence with a 60% lead. It is clear then that most students struggle with a variety of language aspects, most importantly of which are

vocabulary and pronunciation. *Negative feedback* follows closely with a relatively high rate of 42.66%. Lastly, *incomprehensible input* denotes the lowest proportion of only 12%.

Q11: Does the teacher of oral expression react to students’ silence during classroom discussions?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	46.67%
No	40	53.33%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.11. Students’ Perception of the Teacher’s Reaction to Silence during Classroom Discussions



Graph 3.11. Students' Perception of the Teacher's Reaction to Silence during Classroom Discussions

The results embodied in Table 3.11 show that the majority of our sample (53.33%) accused their teachers to take no reaction when silencing manipulates classroom discussions. Of course, their answers came about for many reasons they are extremely familiar with and aware of. The other informants, who represent 46.67%, actually confirm their teachers’ role in managing silence through adopting as well as for applying certain procedures that would, to a great extent, help controlling and why not totally eradicating this problem.

The next question would be of a great use as it seeks to properly clarify teachers' reactions, if any, concerning silence in the oral language classroom.

Q12: If yes, please explain how.

The participants who opted for 'yes' in the previous question imparted a multiplicity of explanations about teachers' reaction to silence and what they commonly do to encourage learners to speak in the oral session. A large number of students claimed their teachers find motivation to be the key to unravelling the afore-said obstacle. They, above all, use an array of strategies to augment their learners' motivation, namely, communicative games, reward and adopting topics suggested by students themselves to make lessons more enjoyable. Among the given justifications, learners asserted that teachers target their affective side in an effort to boost their self-esteem and self-confidence, face their fears, and reduce their shyness. Other respondents declared that teachers consider learners' silence as a sign of passivity which must be replaced by active interaction using different methods and strategies to achieve this purpose. One of the most interesting explanations was that teachers resort to humour by cracking jokes in order to break the silence and build a comfortable atmosphere which encourage learners to share talk in the first place. Forcing students to speak was also amongst various teachers' reactions cited by contestants.

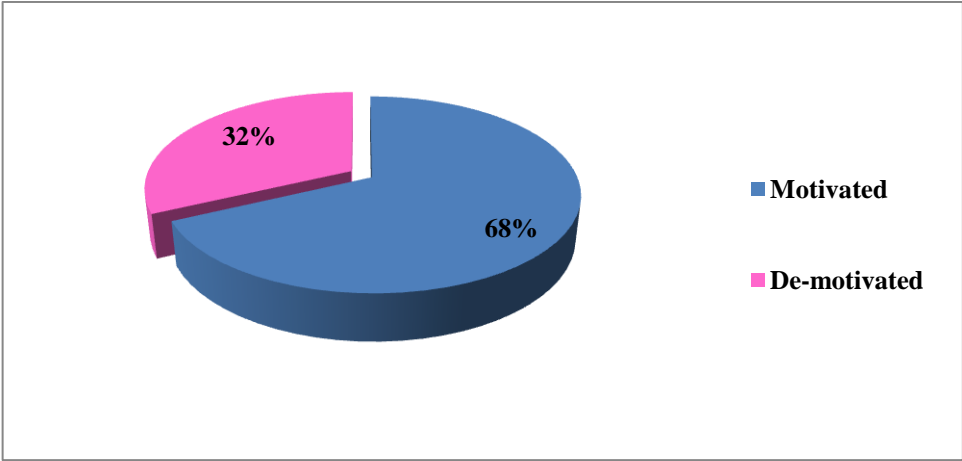
Contrary to the utmost objective of putting an end to silence in the oral class, a number of participants emphasized that teachers' reactions could boast a negative nature. According to a relatively small group of respondents, teachers turn to harsh and severe criticism, which, by all means, leads to creating an unhealthy atmosphere inhibiting students to express their thoughts freely.

Section Two: Overcoming Silence Through the Use of Motivational and Interactive Teaching Strategies

Q13: In the oral expression class, do you feel:

Options	Number	Percentage
Motivated	51	68%
De-motivated	24	32%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.12. Students' Motivation in the Oral Expression Class



Graph3.12. Students' Motivation in the Oral Expression Class

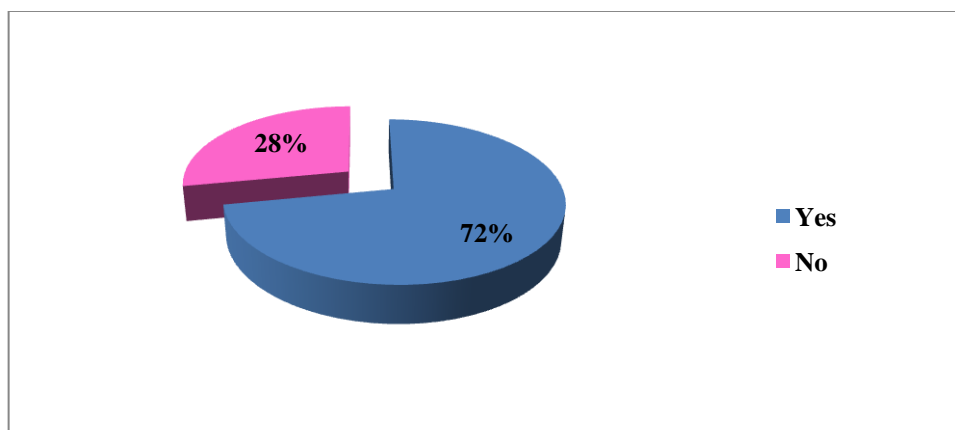
This question seeks to explore students' motivation in the oral expression class as it is indicated in Table 3.12. A vast proportion of 68% stated that they feel motivated in the speaking classroom. Whereas, a much lower percentage of respondents, precisely 32%, asserted that they are in no way motivated.

Although a large ratio of students expressed high motivation in the oral class, such a fact on no account indicates that they are prolific or even regular speakers during oral session. Actually, the presence of motivation alone is in no way sufficient to propel learners to share talk; in contrast, a number of different aspects could play a profound role. For instance, a surplus of psychological inhibitions and the lack of linguistic proficiency may halt the learners from taking part during classroom discussions. In opposition to the initial category, the absence of motivation amongst learners may as well be the result of teachers' methodology, classroom atmosphere, or even their lack of interest in the module.

Q14: Are you satisfied with the way you are taught the oral expression module?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	54	72%
No	21	28%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.13. Students' Satisfaction about the Way They Are Taught Oral Expression



Graph3.13. Students' Satisfaction about the Way They Are Taught Oral Expression

This question is targeted to diagnose students' attitudes toward the way they are taught the oral expression module. The majority of respondents (72%) showed supreme agreement and acceptance to the way teachers are teaching them speaking. Obviously, teachers apply effective teaching strategies that may appeal to students' preferences in terms of their needs and interests. It means that teachers have a tendency to use a variety of teaching strategies to motivate students and push them to engage in classroom talk. The other percentage of students (28%) seemed to be dissatisfied about the way they are receiving instruction in the oral language classroom. Their repudiation of the effectiveness of teachers' methods and strategies differs from one student to another. For that, the forthcoming question demands students to contribute explanations on why they show such resentfulness.

Q15: If no, please say why.

Students who answered the previous question by "no" elaborated a variety of answers; however, each group of students agreed on a particular response. In justification, the vast

majority of students revealed that they are not content with the way teachers are teaching them speaking English because teachers do not make any attempt to create positive learning atmosphere by establishing a good relationship with them which affects, in many ways, students' affective state and results in having lack of motivation in the classroom. Another group of participants attributed their dissatisfaction to lack of interest. That is, the topics that are discussed in the oral classroom are not of great relevance to students' topical preferences. Furthermore, they argued that teachers are unfair, and they do not give them the chance to speak and share their opinions. That is to say, teachers tend to work with brilliant students and ignore other students' speaking deficiencies and reasons of not participating in the oral language classroom.

Another reason was provided by a number of students in which they admitted that because teachers do not use appropriate and different teaching strategies, they find the act of speaking increasingly difficult and therefore they become more silent. Finally, students explained that teachers do not grant them control of their learning. In fact, these teachers adopted teacher-centred approach to teach students how to speak the English language. Thus, students find themselves restricted to what they should speak and not to what they actually want to speak.

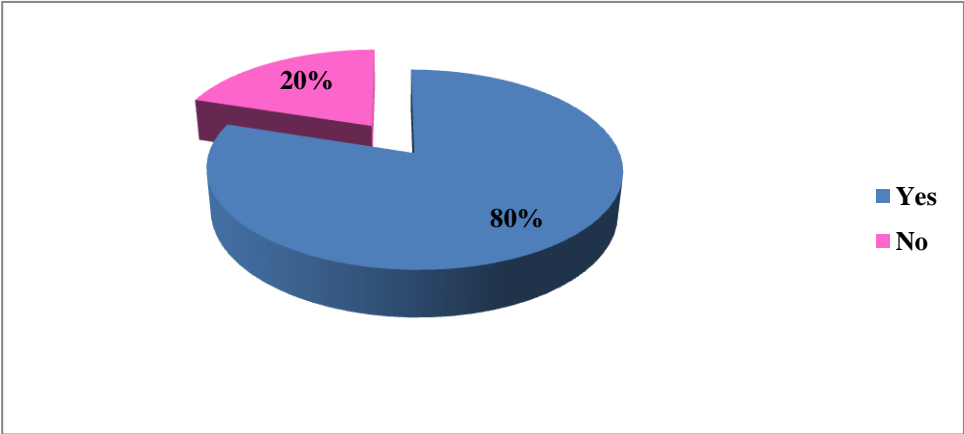
Analyzing the aforementioned answers confirms that students really have plenty of problems with instructors' methods of teaching the oral expression session, and teachers must be enlightened about these issues since they will not only influence students' learning but also teachers' teaching process and practices. This may lead us to the fact that when teachers' ways of teaching and learners' preferred ways of learning meet, silence in the oral language classroom is subdued.

Q16: Does your teacher use various teaching strategies to raise your motivation to speak?

Options	Number	Percentage
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Yes	60	80%
No	15	20%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.14. Rate of Teaching Strategies' Usage by the Teacher to Raise Students' Motivation to Speak



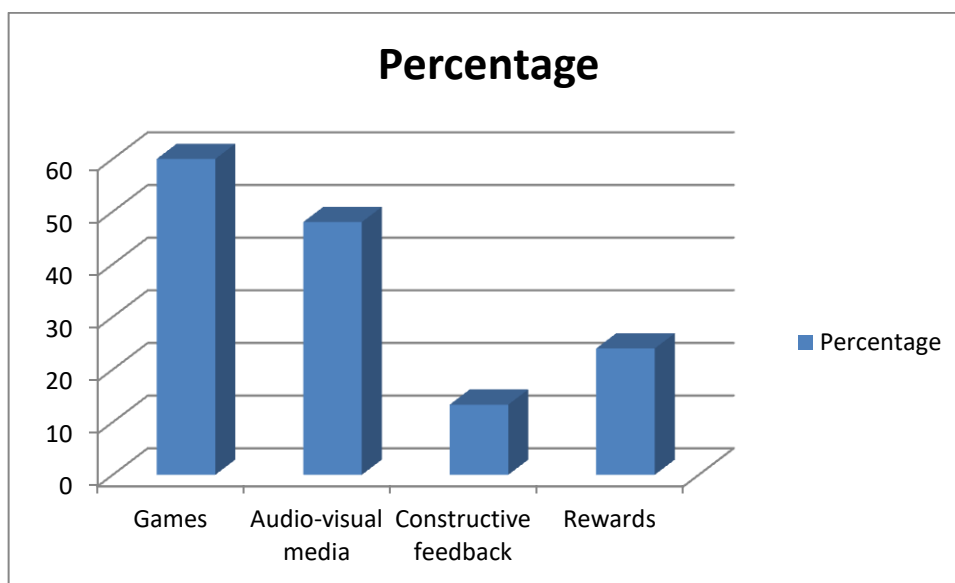
Graph 3.14. Rate of Teaching Strategies' Usage by the Teacher to Raise Students' Motivation to Speak

It seems that most of students (80%), as illustrated in Table 3.14, confirmed that motivational teaching strategies are highly utilised by oral expression teachers to boost students' motivation to speak. Therefore, teachers are familiar with their students to the extent of knowing what really motivates them, and they are in a mission of breaking down students silence through the use of such strategies. In fact, teachers have a variety of ways to raise students' motivation in speaking, and the following question shows some teaching strategies to accomplish this goal. In addition, 20% of students declared that there is no use of motivational teaching strategies on the part of their teachers. Here, we can deduce that these teachers are either not experienced enough to manage different teaching strategies in the classroom, or simply they are not completely able to solve students' problems, mainly, classroom silence.

Q17: If yes, which of the following motivational strategies do you deem as effective?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Games	45	60%
Audio-visual media	36	48%
Constructive feedback	10	13.33%
Rewards	18	24%

Table 3.15. Students' Perception about the Motivational Strategies' Efficacy



Graph 3.15. Students' Perception about the Motivational Strategies' Efficacy

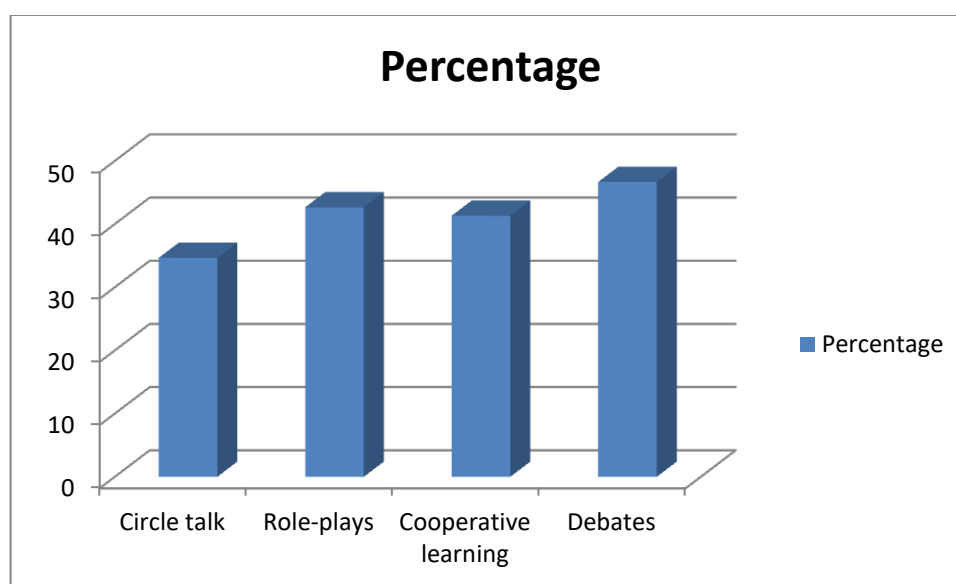
We can notice from the results in Table 3.15 obtained from students' answers that *games* are the most utilised strategy by oral expression teachers with the highest percentage (60%). Followed by two other strategies, those of *audio-visual media* with (48%) and *rewards* with (24%). However, teachers seem to rarely use the “*constructive feedback*” strategy since it is presented with a low percentage (13.33%). So students recognize these strategies as effective. That is, when teachers apply such strategies, students will be able to communicate their ideas freely, and their motivation will possibly reach its summit. From this, we can say that motivation is a very important element in language learning, in general, and in learning speaking, in particular. These differences in using motivational strategies permit us to say that

teachers use these strategies in accordance with students' individual differences, interests, and learning preferences.

Q18: What are the strategies that actually make you more willing to interact in the oral classroom?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Circle talk	26	34.66%
Role-plays	32	42.66%
Cooperative learning	31	41.33%
Debates	35	46.67%

Table 3.16.Strategies Which Incite Interaction within the Oral Classroom



Graph 3.16.Strategies Which Incite Interaction within the Oral Classroom

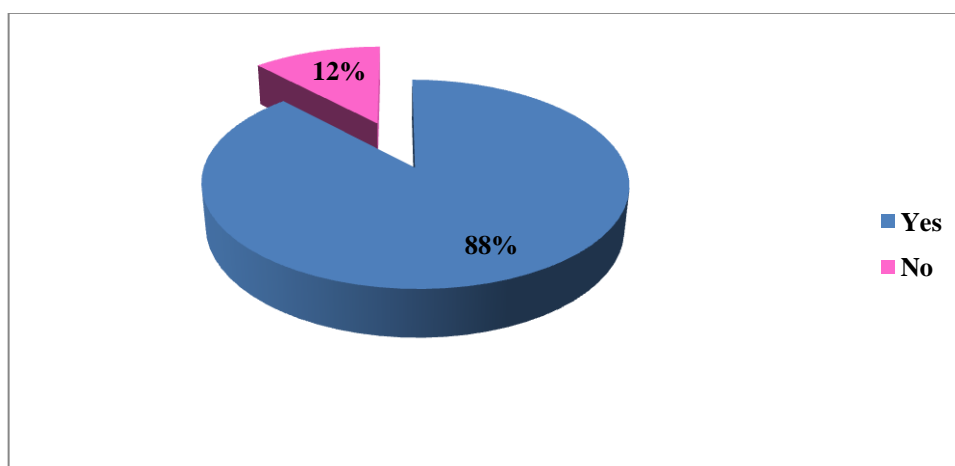
Out of the total sample of 75 respondents, most students opted for *debates*, *role-plays* and *cooperative learning* with nearly alike percentages of 46.67%, 42.66% and 41.33%, respectively. Participants regard the aforementioned strategies as very effective in the sense that they momentarily help to render learners as interactive as possible, also develop their speaking skills. For instance, debates offer a priceless opportunity for students to share their ideas freely, compete with one another, increase their self-confidence, build and exchange

arguments, and enhance their critical thinking, all while practising the language within a joyful and educationally beneficial atmosphere. *Circle talk* came last with the lowest proportion. The latter strategy itself is one of great benefits, as it grants learners plentiful freedom to talk and practise speaking English in a comfortable environment; nonetheless, it is a method which is scarcely used by teachers of oral expression in our university. Such disuse might be the reason why learners mostly failed to account for its numerous advantages.

Q19: Do you believe that through using the aforementioned strategies (both motivational and interactive strategies), the teacher would be able to break prolonged silence during oral expression session?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	66	88%
No	9	12%
Total	75	100%

Table 3.17. Students' Beliefs Regarding the Usefulness of the Motivational and Interactive Strategies to Break Silence during Oral Expression Session



Graph 3.17. Students' Beliefs Regarding the Usefulness of the Motivational and Interactive Strategies to Break Silence during Oral Expression Session

The results reported in Table 3.17 reveals that 88% of students are satisfied about the strategies that are used by oral expression teachers. In fact, students' recognition of the

effectiveness of teachers' strategies, namely motivational and interactive strategies, suggests that by utilising these strategies, teachers are really making positive changes in students' oral performance. That is to say, they are able to overcome silence in the oral language classroom. 12% of participants showed their disagreement concerning the effectiveness of the aforementioned strategies in defying classroom silence. In this, they are communicating their choice of other teaching strategies than the ones mentioned above. As stated before, some students insisted that teachers should have a good relationship with their students, and this may be the reason why teachers fail to use these strategies as motivational and interactive stimuli to increase students' participation in the oral expression session.

Q20: Please, add any further suggestions or comments.

Respondents were welcomed to add any comments or recommendations in the twentieth question. The answers have not fallen short of expected as learners imparted a number of valuable suggestions for the teachers to consider in order to break classroom silence.

- The speaking skill holds a great deal of importance in learning English, and the practice of which, i.e., sharing talks and participating, lead to learners' fluency and overall language development.
- Teachers need to be aware of the various obstacles which face their students, such as shyness, fear, and aid at eliminating those hurdles. They must also strive to improve their relations with their learners through fair and sympathetic treatment and create a comfortable atmosphere in which participation is welcomed.
- Teachers are required to vary their teaching methodologies and strategies in order to incite learners as much as possible to share talks and be an active party in the oral sessions.

- The oral expression module, more than any other, contributes greatly to the enhancement of learners' speaking skill.

3.4. Description and Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

3.4.1. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The second questionnaire by which the data collection process was conducted within this scientific investigation is directed to teachers. The inquiry aims at assembling tangible information pertaining to oral expression teachers' perceptions on the phenomenon of classroom silence within the oral language classroom, its causes, their reaction to it, and the various strategies they employ to restrain its detrimental occurrence.

The teachers' questionnaire comprises a grand total of 12 questions, divided into three sections (see Appendix 2) wherein the inquiries are of a gradual and diverse nature, containing a mixture of multiple choice questions and open-ended ones. Such an arrangement endeavours to obtain authentic and valuable answers, which would positively contribute to the reliability of the data utilised within this research paper.

- **Section One: Background Information (Q1- Q3)**

Initially, teachers are invited in the first section to answer 3 questions aiming at gathering personal information related to their expertise in teaching the oral expression module. That is to say, the segment queries the length and difficulty of teachers' tutoring experience and whether they received any training in order to teach the aforementioned module.

- **Section Two: Silence in the Oral Language Classroom (Q4-Q8)**

In the second section of the questionnaire, teachers are required to impart answers to 5 questions concerning the importance of the speaking skill and the hurdles which learners face when they attempt to use the English language within the oral session. What is more, the

items also inspect teachers’ perspectives about the nature of learners’ silence, the reasons behind it, and how they react to it putting in mind their stature as final decision makers within the oral session.

- Section Three: Overcoming Silence through the Use of Motivational and Interactive Strategies (Q9-Q12)**

Lastly, in the third section teachers are requested to answer 4 questions about the differentiation of instruction and the strategies they put to use in order to motivate their learners to speak as well as to enhance classroom interaction. Finally, instructors were asked to offer other solutions and recommendations to avoid the problem of silence in the oral language classroom.

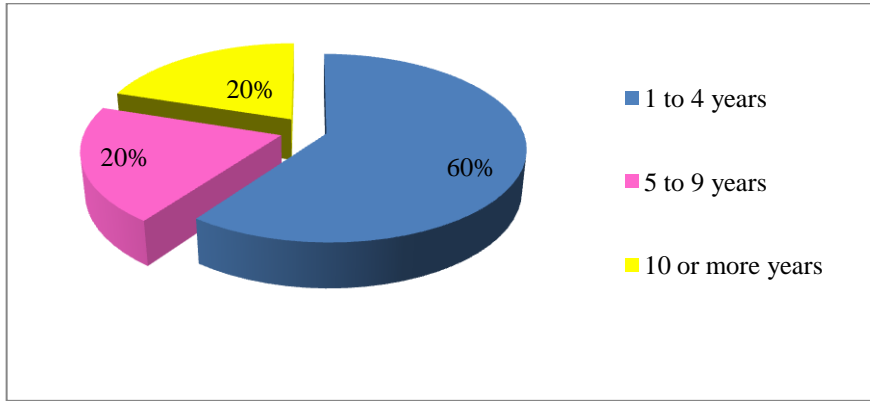
3.4.2. Analysis and Interpretation of the Teachers’ Questionnaire:

Section One: Background Information

Q1: How long have you been teaching “Oral Expression”?

Option	Number	Percentage
1 to 4 years	6	60%
5 to 9 years	2	20%
10 or more years	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.18. Participants’ Experience in Teaching Oral Expression



Graph 3.18. Participants' Experience in Teaching Oral Expression

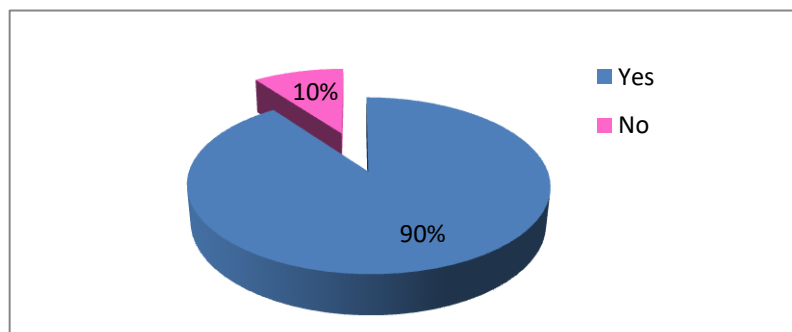
As Table 3.18 above illustrates, the majority of participants' experience in teaching the oral expression module ranges between *1-4 years* (60%). It is followed by 20% of respondents who have a teaching experience between *5-9 years*, then comes a category that represents also 20% of informants with *10 or more* teaching years. Obtaining these results may permit us to state that our participants would contribute reliable and useful information to our research as they have good teaching experience concerning the oral expression module.

Q2: Is it difficult to teach Oral Expression?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.19. Teachers' Opinion Concerning the Difficulty of Teaching the Oral

Expression Module



Graph 3.19. Teachers' Opinion Concerning the Difficulty of Teaching the Oral Expression Module

Out of the total sample of teachers who underwent this present questionnaire, all but one (90%) asserted that teaching the oral expression module is a difficult feat. Obviously, this latter affirmation reveals the numerous challenges to which teachers are exposed at various levels. For the purpose of attaining a better idea and constituting a clear image of the difficulties which teachers come across, the following question was put forth wherein teachers were required to impart an explanation pertaining to their answers.

- Please, explain how

As established in the previous question, the overwhelming bulk of the sample, i.e., teachers who affirmed the difficulty of teaching the oral expression module provided a variety of justifications to explain their standpoints. For starters, a number of instructors stated that what presents a major hurdle in the oral teaching process is the difficulty of involving all learners in conversations and classroom discussions. That is to say, for interaction to be achieved, an enormous and intricate effort must be exerted on the part of teachers. For instance, instructors face this very predicament in selecting a proper topic of discussion which must interest, not only a small portion of learners, but preferably all of them, so as to guarantee communication in the oral sessions. Another obstacle which teachers referred to in their justifications is that teaching the oral expression module does not only encompass the limited scope of using the language to deliver meaning, but rather it focuses on a multitude of aspects, namely, the grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, body language, turn taking, listening skill, and critical thinking of learners in order to insure improvement and incite communication. Not only that, but in addition to the aforementioned aspects, teachers must also take into account a number of psychological factors such as motivation, personality traits, individual differences, learning strategies, previous experiences, and when, how, and what kind of feedback to be given. These latter elements undoubtedly contribute to a great

extent to learners' performance and development. Other instructors argued an entirely different interpretation declaring that it is not students who always constitute the main adversity in teaching oral expression, but rather incompetent teachers as well. That is to say, an instructor must possess a solid background about linguistic productivity, topic knowledge, and effective questioning skills so as not to render the whole process of teaching ineffective and fruitless. Contrarily, while some justifications linked the difficulty to students and teachers, other interpretations allocated it to several external factors such as the lack of time devoted to developing the speaking skill, and the shortage of materials and technological equipments to fulfil a successful teaching experience.

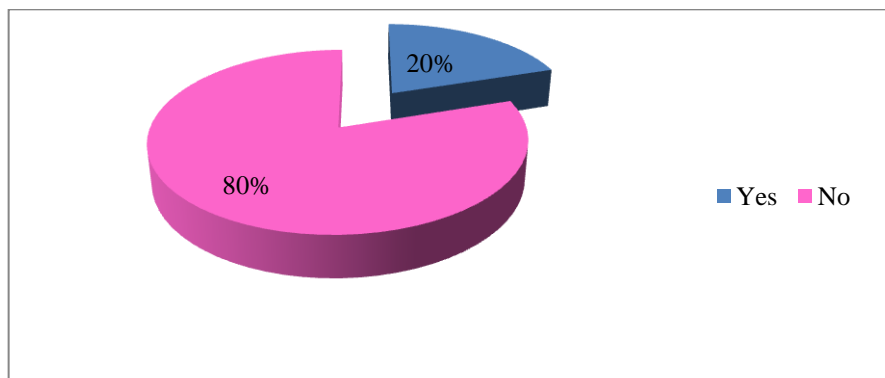
Contrary to the majority of teachers who took part in this questionnaire, one teacher affirmed that teaching the oral expression module presents no difficulty. The instructor argued that once the teacher is aware of his/her learners' needs, profiles ,and individual differences, he/she would find no trouble choosing the most appropriate of teaching methods and strategies to carry out a successful teaching/ learning process.

To conclude, it is beyond any doubt that teachers assume a lot of responsibilities and play a vital role in the teaching/learning procedure which is by no means constitutes an easy task. Putting it clearly, teachers are required to allocate huge amounts of time and effort to work out the most appropriate of ways to deal with their learners and propel them towards development.

Q3: Have you ever received any kind of training concerning teaching oral expression?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	2	20%
No	8	80%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.20. Teachers' Training of Teaching Oral Expression



Graph 3.20. Teachers' Training of Teaching Oral Expression

Coming to the question whether our participants received training concerning oral expression, eight teachers (80%) admitted that they have not been trained to teach the oral expression module before starting their teaching career. On the contrary, only two teachers (20%) confirmed that they received training before they start teaching oral expression. In fact, these teachers, who have not been trained, may encounter several problems during the first years of their teaching profession due to the lack of incipient training. In other words, this portion of teachers is neither prepared nor equipped with all teaching requirements and necessities because all what they possess is a Licence degree, a Master degree, etc., in the English language, and they may lack the basics of language teaching which, in turn, affect the success of the teaching process. As in our case, they may not be able to wholly perceive students' speaking difficulties and the reasons behind their occurrence, especially silence, and employ appropriate teaching strategies to surmount the said difficulties. Besides, experience, though it is attained in a long period of time, may supersede training because it also endows teachers with all the things that they need to carry out their teaching in EFL classrooms.

As for those who received training, they can easily recognize and detect students' reasons of being silent in the oral language classroom and accordingly make use of relevant teaching strategies to overcome this problem.

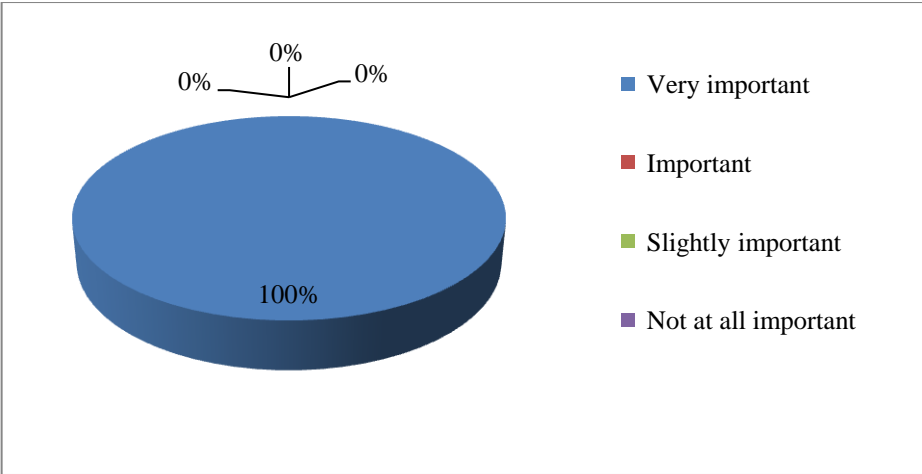
It is, then, worth to say that training is as important as experience since each has its unique effects on the success of the teaching process, and if they are coupled with each other, better results will occur.

Section Two: Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

Q4: To what extent you consider speaking as an important skill to be developed?

Options	Number	Percentage
Very important	10	100%
Important	0	0%
Slightly important	0	0%
Not at all important	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.21. Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Importance of Speaking in Learning English



Graph 3.21. Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Importance of Speaking in Learning English

The data in Table 3.21, which exhibits teachers’ attitudes towards the importance of speaking, unveils a stupendously unanimous conformity amid the partakers of this inquest as 100% of them (all 10 teachers) harmoniously concurred that the speaking skill assumes a very important stature, leaving the other optional slots completely unmarked (0% for the

remainder of options). Irrefutably, if the preceding findings project anything, then it would be teachers' sheer awareness of the momentous role which speaking holds in the teaching/learning process.

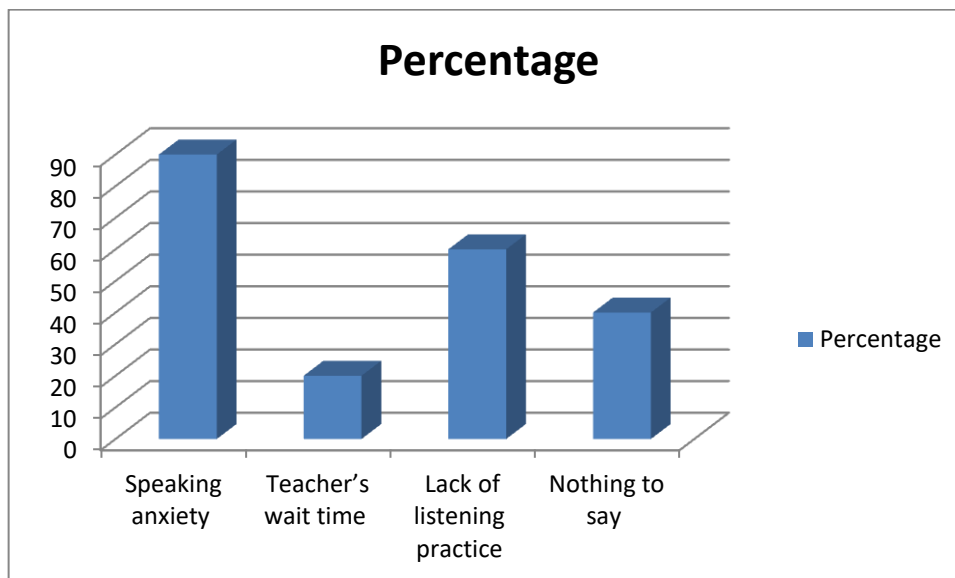
Drawing on the foregoing account, teachers' absolute mindfulness of the significance of speaking may possibly be attributable to a bundle of reasons. Prior to diving into the rationales, it is worthy to mention that nothing could be more erroneous than attempting to vindicate the utter futility and unimportance of the writing, reading, and listening skills in comparison with speaking, as they, in their own right, boast an imperative position in the acquisition of language. Alternatively, it would be far more accurate to assert that although all language skills are vital, speaking is more vital than the rest. This latter account could stem from the fact that speaking is an oral productive skill which requires generating speech instantaneously, all while adhering to the conventions and precepts which bind the language together and give it meaning. That is to say, the mastery of the speaking skill equals the mastery of most, if not all aspects of language. What is more, students are in dire need of developing their speaking skill given that it is, not only of beneficial outcomes during their academic careers, but also of vastly practical use in their future professional ones. Last of all, it comes as no surprise that of all four skills, speaking is the one whose development unswervingly leads to a massive boost in learners' self confidence, self-esteem, and motivation, rendering them elevated psychologically as well as linguistically as mentioned in the first chapter.

Q5: Based on your experience, what are the difficulties that learners usually encounter when speaking?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Speaking anxiety	9	90%
Teacher's wait time	2	20%

Lack of listening practice	6	60%
Nothing to say	4	40%

Table 3.22. Teachers' Beliefs about the Factors that Cause Difficulty while speaking



Graph 3.22. Teachers' Beliefs about the Factors that Cause Difficulty while speaking

Oral expression teachers were asked about the difficulties that second-year students have when they speak English in the oral language classroom. The results are displayed in Table 3.22 which shows that the majority of the participants with a percentage of 90% answered that *speaking anxiety* is the main speaking difficulty students confront when they speak. Besides, 60% of them believed that the major speaking difficulty is the *lack of listening practice*. Another portion of them (40%) emphasized that *nothing to say* constitutes the primary problem for EFL learners when it comes to speaking English in the classroom. The last category (20%) affirmed that *teacher's wait time* is the only obstacle that inhibits students from practicing English in the speaking class.

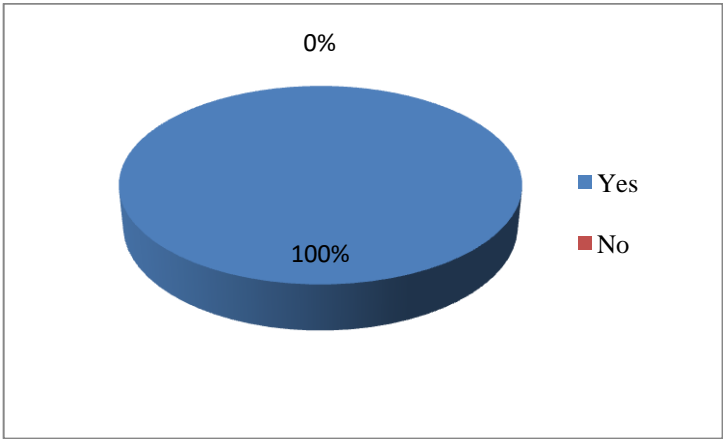
To draw an inference, these teachers can perceive and detect students' speaking difficulties, and they may be aware of the fact that these problems are due to psychological factors like shyness and anxiety, or they are due to teachers'

professional practices such as providing students with a limited time to respond to the proposed questions. As a result, they strive to solve such overwhelming problems through the use of particular and diversified set of teaching strategies.

Q6: Do you consider learners’ silence in the oral language classroom as a serious problem which must be addressed and handled?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.23. Teachers’ Perspectives about Classroom Silence



Graph 3.23. Teachers’ Perspectives about Classroom Silence

In conformity with the statistics embodied in Table 3.23, all contestant teachers (100%) arrived at an undisputed and definitive consonance apropos deeming silence a serious and prevalent conundrum amidst learners in the language classroom, which, by all accounts, reveals the scale of this phenomenon’s encumbrance on, not only learners, but also teachers and the entirety of the instructional process. As it is the case in the most detrimental of trends, silence afflicts its procurers (i.e., students) far greater than others. Intrinsically, learners are shorn of one of their most instrumental assets, that is, the development of their communicative competence, which, in sequence, brings about adverse outcomes in their forthcoming

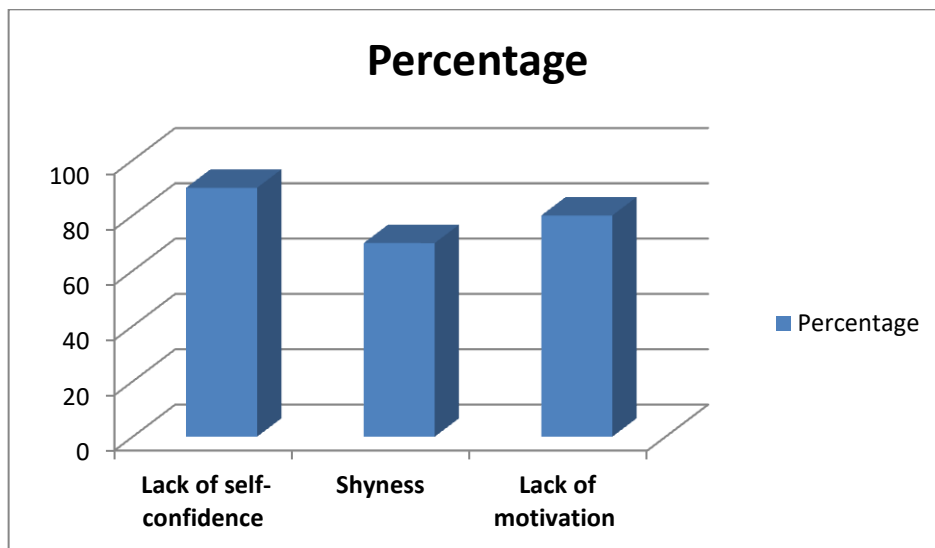
occupational careers. Pertinently, teachers are, by no means, impervious to silence’s disruptive repercussions as the success of their tasks is strongly linked to their learners’ responsiveness. In this vein, teachers grapple with the dilemma of picking the techniques, methods, and strategies which would most likely render their learners communicative and keep the phenomenon of silence under control. Far from being the only negative downside, teachers also experience a number of psychological insecurities in accordance with their learners’ silence as lack of confidence and self-doubt in their competence and abilities become entrenched in their psyche, causing de-motivation and even carelessness. Lastly speaking, it is, in no way, logical to presume that a phenomenon which casts its shadows on the two pillars of the teaching apparatus, i.e., teachers and learners, would somehow leave the instructional process unaffected. In truth, learners’ silence would undoubtedly increase the likelihood of rendering instruction utterly unsuccessful.

Q7: In your opinion, which of the following could be the reason behind learners’ propensity towards silence in the oral class?

1. Psychological Reasons:

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of self-confidence	9	90%
Shyness	7	70%
Lack of motivation	8	80%

Table 3.24. Teachers’ Beliefs about the Psychological Causes of Students’ Silence in the Oral Language Classroom



Graph 3.24. Teachers' Beliefs about the Psychological Causes of Students' Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

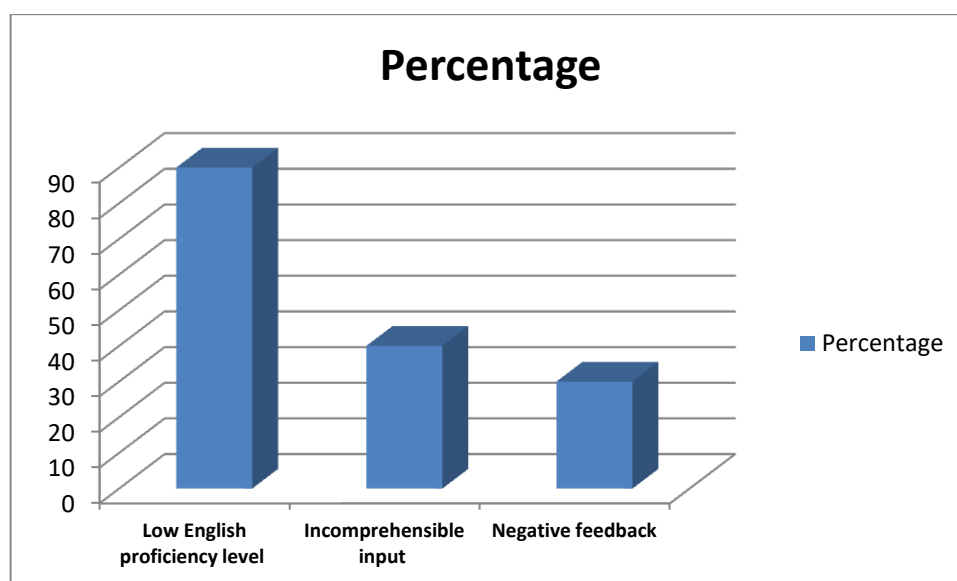
The statistics exhibited in Table 3.24, which portrays teachers' views vis-à-vis the psychological reasons behind learners' silence, depicts a convergence in the three percentages revealed in the table. Be that as it may, some causes display a higher rate than the others, lending clues to what sort of insecurities might be of a more deleterious impact. In accordance with teachers' responses, the *lack of self confidence* constitutes the most harmful of reasons with the highest rate of 90%. In keeping with the data, the lack of confidence is vastly pervasive amongst learners who have little to no belief in their own linguistic abilities, which, no doubt, leads them to adopt silence in order to protect their self-image. Coming second is the *lack of motivation*, with a proportion of 80%. As established in the first chapter, this present reason brings about the deterioration and ultimate downfall of learners' oral proficiency, as they are no longer motivated to take part in any oral classroom activity which would widen the range of their aptitudes. At last, *shyness* comes as the final and thirdly rated cause with a 70% ratio.

2. Linguistic Reasons:

Options	Frequency	Percentage
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Low English proficiency level	9	90%
Incomprehensible input	4	40%
Negative feedback	3	30%

Table 3.25. Teachers' Beliefs about the Linguistic Causes of Students' Silence in the Oral Language Classroom



Graph 3.25. Teachers' Beliefs about the Linguistic Causes of Students' Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

The data displayed in Table 3.25 unveils that a 90% lead propels *low English proficiency*, more than any other linguistic defect, to be the main cause of learners' silence in the oral language classroom. In line with students' questionnaire, both learners and teachers who took part in the data collection process share this latter particular standpoint. This commonality demonstrates both parties' awareness of the grievous consequences of low English proficiency, which reflects, not only the lack of vocabulary repertoire, but also the deterioration of standard grammar and pronunciation. Following up on the statistics, *incomprehensible input* arrives second with a rate of 40%. Reasonably, the hurdle herein lies with teachers' delivery of the educational content, as the process in itself could be flawed,

rendering learners uninformed and silent. Finally, *negative feedback* assumes the last rank scoring a 30% proportion.

Q8: How do you react to students' silence during the oral session?

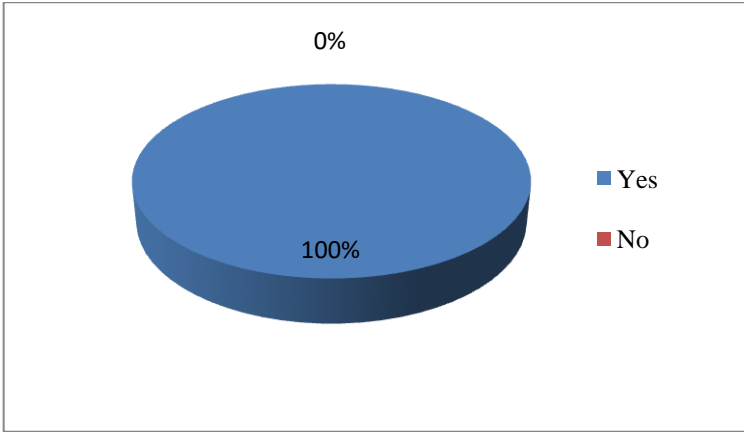
The current question seeks out to cognize teachers' reaction to learners' silence in the oral language classroom, that is to say, the presence or absence of reaction, and the manner of which if any transpired. In that line, teachers' responses were, by all means, diverse in nature, but they all fell in the same scope. For starters, a group of teachers ascertained that a particular process is in order by which the instructor, as an initial step, attempts to get hold of the reasons behind his students' silence, and, subsequently, settle on what methodologies to adopt in order to eradicate it as a second step. For all intents and purposes, the strategies, techniques, and activities (e.g., role-plays, games, rewards) are selected on account that they immensely contribute in rendering learners active, interested, and motivated to be part of the speaking session. What is more, these strategies are expected to insert within the classroom the element of amusement and relief -usually by using educational games and providing positive feedback- which helps create a healthy atmosphere to support using the language freely. In concurrence with other responses, some instructors asserted that it is the duty of teachers to counsel their learners on the importance of speaking as an essential skill for their language development. Furthermore, teachers should endeavour to build up a good relationship with their learners so as to help them eliminate their fears and insecurities. Building on that, instructors strive to implant one very crucial concept into the minds of students, this is to mean making mistakes in the course of learning is by no means inadequate, but rather it is an essential part of the acquisition process.

Section Three: Overcoming Silence through the Use of Motivational and Interactive Strategies

Q9: Generally speaking, do you differentiate your Teaching Strategies?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.26. Rate of Teaching Strategies' Differentiation



Graph 3.26. Rate of Teaching Strategies' Differentiation

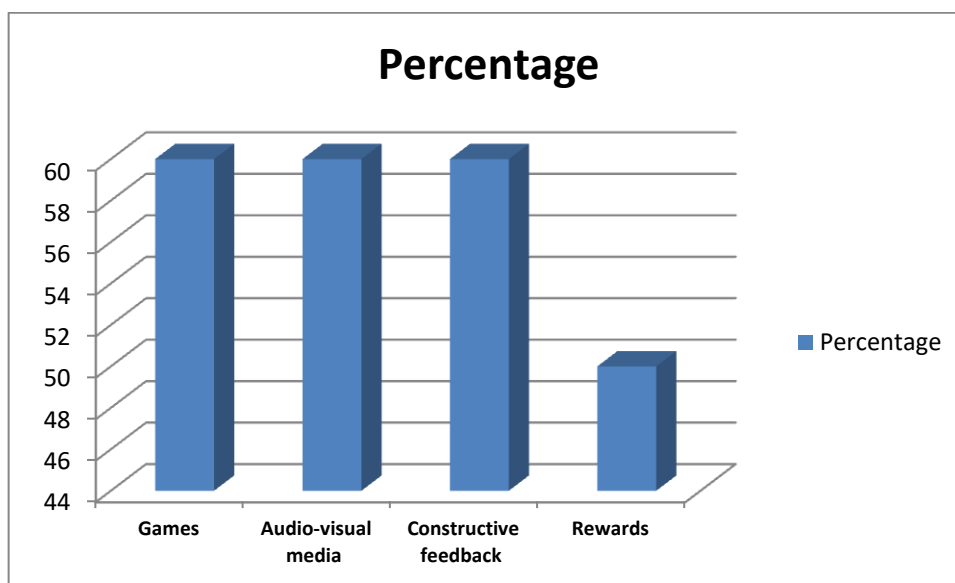
The yielded results from Table 3.26 reveal that the whole population (10 teachers), the equivalent of 100% of the informants acknowledged that they differentiate their teaching strategies, whereas no teacher denied the use of different instructional strategies (0%). This is, indeed, a surprising fact which is of a great value because it denotes that oral expression teachers vary in the use of teaching strategies in accordance with students' needs, interests, and leaning styles and preferences (i.e., individual differences). Furthermore, they attempt to help students to overcome their speaking difficulties as classroom silence through these instructional practices.

Q10: Which of the following strategies do you often employ in an attempt to motivate your learners to share talk?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Games	6	60%

Audio-visual media	6	60%
Constructive feedback	6	60%
Rewards	5	50%

Table 3.27.Strategies for Raising Students' Motivation



Graph 3.27.Strategies for Raising Students' Motivation

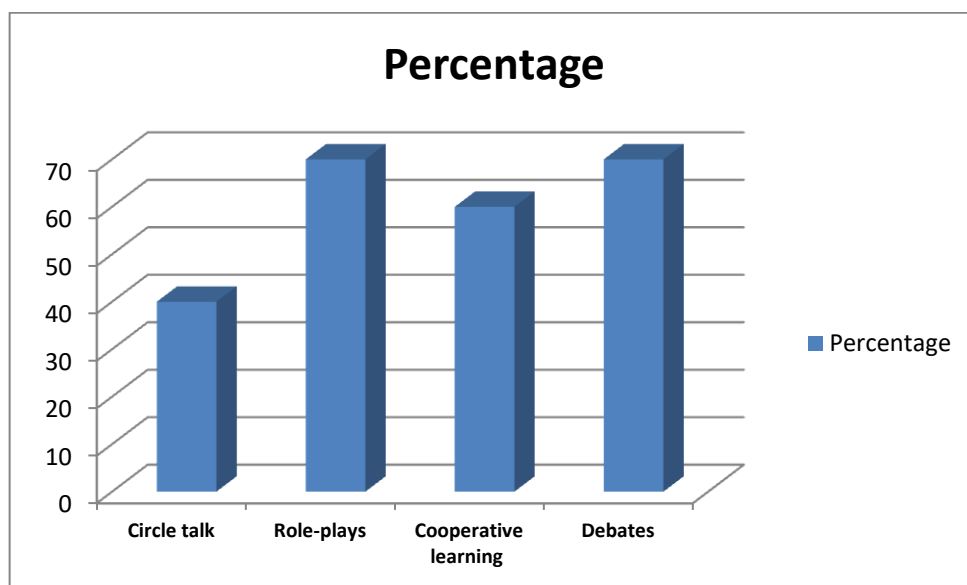
The statistics associated with the present question in Table 3.27 show that three out of the four proposed teaching strategies boast the same proportion of 60 % (*Games, audio-visual media, and constructive feedback*). Accordingly, this latter data signpost the fact that teachers are by no means utilising one technique or another in particular, but rather a group of strategies altogether. That is to say, instructors differentiate the use of teaching methods, techniques and strategies in order to capture learners' attention and interest and keep them as motivated as possible to speak. Following up on the data, *rewards* come last with a 50% rate.

Q11: What are the strategies that make your students more interactive in the oral class?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Circle talk	4	40%

Role-plays	7	70%
Cooperative learning	6	60%
Debates	7	70%

Table 3.28. Strategies which Incite Interaction within the Oral Classroom



Graph 3.28 Strategies which Incite Interaction within the Oral Classroom

This question rather investigates teachers' use of various teaching strategies to boost interaction in the oral language classroom. The results show that most of the respondents opted for *role-plays* and *debates* with the same percentage of 70% for each, while 60% of them declared that they depend on *cooperative learning* strategy to make students more interactive in the speaking class. Obviously, oral expression teachers are interested in assisting students to ameliorate their other skills along with the speaking skill such as critical thinking skills and communicative skills. These skills contribute fundamentally to students' willingness to interact with others. Furthermore, the use of *role-plays* implies that teachers are concerned with the process and the product of speaking English as the said strategy offers learners opportunities to learn how to interact in different real contexts.

On the other hand, a low percentage of the informants (40%) declared that they use *circle talk* as a teaching strategy to create an interactive atmosphere in the classroom. This suggests that teachers rarely use this strategy despite the enormous benefits that can be attained from its usage. That is to say, this strategy tackles different aspects within the oral language classroom which paves the way for interaction to take pace as it breaks the ice and builds good relationships between students, allows them to review previous lessons, and enables them to reflect on their ideas and discuss them with the others.

Q12: What other solutions do you recommend for the purpose of overcoming silence in the oral language classroom?

When invited to provide other solutions for the phenomenon of silence in the oral language classroom, the participants yielded a set of answers therein they agree on mainly eight to nine points, and they are summarized in what follows:

- Teachers should select appropriate materials and tasks as well as topics that interest students; they should also focus on free-choice topics.
- Teachers should extend the time allocated for awaiting students' answers to the asked questions.
- Speaking classes should constitute of small numbers of students, so each student may have the opportunity to participate actively in disparate kinds of discussions.
- Teachers should avoid negative feedback as it causes mayhem in students' personality and in the process of language acquisition. If teachers are to give negative feedback, they should select the right words to do so.

- Teachers should allow students who are silent in the oral class to lead different types of activities. This may increase students' self-confidence and establish good relationships between students.
- Teachers are to treat both good students and poor students equally in the sense that they should motivate poor students to speak and maintain good students' motivation. Moreover, they should give all students equal opportunities to take part in classroom talks.
- Teachers should understand students' cultural and social backgrounds to perceive their beliefs and attitudes.
- Teachers should synthesize students to the negative effects of silence on the development of the oral proficiency.
- Teachers are to invite students to speak not oblige them to do so by integrating, for instance, technology in the classroom and establishing a funny atmosphere therein.

3.5. Comparison between Students' and Teachers' Questionnaires

Subsequent to the analysis of both learners' and teachers' questionnaires, an elaborate comparison was in order so as to be conjointly acquainted with their standpoints about silence in the oral language classroom. To be precise, the aim herein is to ascertain students' stances pertaining to the different practices which teachers employ to surmount the barrier of silence, and whether these techniques and strategies are of any effective and fruitful use. Lastly, it goes without saying that the focus within this comparison lies primarily with the most significant of questions, which serve to attain supremely valid results for the study.

At the outset, the two factions involved in our data collection process, i.e., teachers and learners, stressed the unparalleled importance of the speaking skill in developing the language as a whole. Fittingly, this latter communion of perspectives exhibits the high level of

awareness teachers and students boast in regards to the significance and the positive outcomes of the speaking skill, whose development would, not only be of academic benefits, but rather of occupational ones.

In accordance with the statistics, the majority of learners affirmed that it is a problematic feat to speak English within the oral language setting (admittedly, a smaller group of learners refuted the previous opinion, stating that it is by no means arduous). Upon asking the former set of students about the difficulties they face when speaking English, they asserted that anxiousness during speaking alongside having not much to say in relation to the topics discussed in the classroom constitute the major hurdles. Conversely, when teachers were required to answer the same question based on their expertise, they stressed the prevalence of speaking anxiety amongst learners as a major factor which inhibits interaction within the oral sessions.

It is no overstatement to assert that silence in the oral language classroom denotes an adverse phenomenon which casts its shadows, not only on teachers, but also learners; however, the scope of its effects impairs the latter category more as it precisely hinders the development of students' speaking performance. Drawing on the data obtained, both instructors and learners amalgamated their standpoints maintaining the pervasiveness and seriousness of the upper-mentioned phenomenon, which, according to teachers, must not be overlooked, but rather taken into account adopting whichever necessary measures to terminate it.

Much like any prevalent phenomenon, silence in the oral language classroom is the by-product of numerous reasons which led to its sprout and spread. Essentially, these rationales differ in nature, as some of them are psychological, while the others are linguistic as discussed previously in chapter 1. Surprisingly enough, when contestant students were asked a sensitive question pertaining to their psychological inhibitions in relation to silence, most of them freely asserted that shyness constitutes the main reason as they, at all costs, attempt to evade

mockery by being silent altogether lest they commit speaking errors. Contrariwise, teachers opted for a different option stating that lack of confidence is the main cause of silence in the oral sessions. In regard to the linguistic reasons of silence, and based on the statistics and analysis attained beforehand, both teachers' and learners' participants established that low English proficiency level designates the direct linguistic cause of students' silence in the oral language classroom.

Vis-à-vis teachers' attitude towards learners' silence, instructors claimed that a reaction continually transpires on their part to render students interactive. As such, reaction comes in the form of a variety of measures such as, raising students' awareness of the significance of the speaking skill, attempting to unveil the causes behind their silence, and uncover the most suitable of methods to put an end to this widespread phenomenon. Utterly contrary to teachers' prior statements, more than half of the participant students who took part in the inquiry denied any reaction or interference on the part of instructors, which may reveal teachers' apathy to students' silence.

It is utterly palpable that differentiating instruction constitutes the key to raising students' engagement seeing that it primarily concentrates on enhancing individual learners and not the classroom as a whole. In reference to the previously attained figures, when contestant students were asked which strategies incite speaking, they affirmed that games, in particular, stimulate communication and interaction considering that they are, not only amusing, and motivational, but also instrumental to developing learners' communicative competence (see chapter 2). What is more, learners also exhibited an inclination towards debates, confirming that this strategy renders them communicative and wilful to share talk. In the same vein, instructors averred their fervent efforts to differentiate their teaching methods and strategies so as to keep learners perpetually motivated and interested. Pertinently, according to participant teachers, some of the most imperative, amply-used, constructive, and

speech-engaging strategies are games, audio-visual media, constructive feedback, role-plays, and debates.

3.6. Pedagogical Recommendations

This part revolves around suggestions for oral expression teachers and EFL learners which are specified based on the results obtained previously from both the teachers' and the students' questionnaires. The recommendations are drawn as follows.

3.6.1. Recommendations for Students

- Students should be aware of the importance of speaking and its practice. That is, they are to practise speaking English inside and outside the oral language classroom by drilling their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation since these activities assist students to enhance their speaking skill.
- Students should work hard to overcome their speaking difficulties; they do not have to be shy or afraid of making mistakes because this may have a negative impact on the process of language acquisition, in general, and on the improvement of the oral proficiency, in specific.
- Students should be aware of the potential harm silence in the oral class may have on their communicative skills.
- Students should recognize the reasons behind their silence, and try to elicit some ways, apart from those suggested by the teacher, in order to subdue silence and its causes all along.
- Students should benefit from teachers' practices in the classroom. To put it differently, teachers' use of motivational and interactive strategies would put students in an advantage as they raise their motivation and render them

interactive in the oral expression session. Hence, students will be able to overcome silence in a variety of ways.

3.6.2. Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers, on the other hand, should help students to build their speaking skill from a quite early stage, wherein students will develop good habits and positive attitudes which may enlarge their knowledge and ameliorate their oral performance.
- Teachers should also detect and solve students' individual problems that inhibit them from speaking in different classroom discussions. Solving such difficulties may require the use of various teaching techniques such as creating a healthy classroom environment which is characterized by the occurrence of humour.
- The teaching and learning process should be learner-centred. That is to say, teachers should provide students with more occasions that maximize the use of English in the classroom, and where students are able to participate more and share talk with the rest of the class.
- Teachers should raise students' awareness of the retrograde influence of silence on the improvement of the speaking skill.
- Teachers should be able to perceive students' reasons of being silent and try to treat them accordingly. Teachers should also ensure that they are not the primary reasons why students commit themselves to silence in the oral class. It means that there are certain practices on the part of oral expression teachers, whether intentionally or unintentionally, that render students silent. These practices may, for example, be in the form of incomprehensible input or negative feedback.

- Teachers should employ various teaching strategies to motivate students and to prompt them to interact in the oral language classroom. The strategies should be various, fun, and interesting so they would meet students' needs, interests, learning styles and preferences.

3.7. Limitations

No research study is downright unencumbered by any limitation. Quite the contrary, the very process of scientific investigation is prone to a constellation of hindrances, and while a number of these hurdles are, admittedly, predictable, the majority of which are unforeseeable. Not dissimilarly, the present study grappled with an assortment of limitations apropos largely to the global outbreak of the Corona virus disease, which was accompanied by a number of precautionary measures that left the academic system and the country ubiquitously crippled.

Initially, a major impediment to our exertions was having to forfeit the opportunity to congregate with either our supervisor, to properly make use of her vastly superior knowledge and guidance, or with one another to synchronize and coordinate our efforts in an academic setting, all due to the present status quo of the quarantine. Arguably, it goes without saying that online contact helped in remedying the situation to a particular extent, yet the process was by all accounts disrupted. What is more, the paucity of the resources on which the study should be based rendered matters even more arduous. Another encumbrance to the study is one which relates to the research methodology. That is to say, the second tool for data collection was intended to be a teachers' interview; however, owing to the set of circumstances the country is undergoing, it was nearly unattainable to employ the aforementioned instrument. Albeit, we aspired to contact a number of teachers through various audible methods of communication to simulate the necessary conditions of an interview, but there was little to no collaboration on that account. Instead, a teachers' questionnaire was

administered to oral expression instructors. This latter measure of last resort rigorously subsided the amount and quality of the data obtained, which, no doubt, would have been more dependable and abundant had an interview been conducted as originally envisioned.

Conclusion

Upon analysis, interpretation, and comparison between the teachers' and the students' questionnaires, it is clear that silence in the oral language classroom is a tiresome dilemma that teachers struggle to solve. That is why they should raise students' awareness of the harmful drawbacks of this phenomenon. It is also confirmed that oral expression teachers strive to solve the said issue through the use of various motivational and interactive strategies.

General Conclusion

Acquiring a FL requires the learner to develop the four skills of that language. However, the overall aim of language learning, nowadays, is to enable students to become good language speakers who are able to communicate effectively and efficiently in different contexts. Thus, various researchers have conducted studies on how to improve this skill using disparate solutions. Nevertheless, our research is mainly concerned with the phenomenon of classroom silence and the strategies teachers adopt to boost students' motivation to interact in the oral expression session. That is, students in the oral language classroom are reluctant to speak and the frequency of participating in classroom talks is at a low percentage. Therefore, our hypotheses are primarily based on the assumption that in order to push students to speak more, teachers' use of motivational strategies to raise their motivation to speak, and interactive strategies to prompt them to interact more in the oral class is highly recommended, because this may help students to surmount their speaking difficulties, on the one hand, and the reasons of their silence, on the other. To test these hypotheses, we conducted a study in the Department of Foreign Languages, at Mila University, Abd Elhafid Boussouf, with second-year L.M.D students representing the whole population that were chosen randomly to be the subjects of our study. Furthermore, we opted for the teachers' questionnaire to check teachers' attitudes toward classroom silence, how they react to it, and whether they really employ interactive and motivational strategies to break students' silence. We selected also the students' questionnaire to see whether oral expression teachers use various strategies to motivate them to interact in the classroom, and whether these strategies are effective to solve the intended problem.

The findings of our research clearly exhibit that silence in the oral language classroom constitutes a serious problem that renders teachers helpless. In addition to

that, teachers are willing to surmount such an issue through the aforementioned strategies.

It is worth saying that we should not restrict ourselves to the current findings of this research. Although our study has its limitations, it can be a basis for further research on the relation between classroom silence and the instructional strategies on the part of oral expression teachers. So, we hope that future researchers would benefit from our study and accomplish more in this area of research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

You are kindly invited to respond to this questionnaire which considers the problem of silence within the oral language classroom and investigates the strategies utilised on the part of oral expression teachers for the purpose of motivating their students and increasing their interaction.

We would very much appreciate it if you could provide an answer to the following questions as they are of great importance for the validity of this research study. Your answers will remain confidential and will serve the only purpose of this research.

Please, tick (✓) where appropriate.

Section One: Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

1. How do you consider your level in speaking English?

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Poor

2. Please, indicate how far you agree with the following statement:

“Speaking is an important skill to develop in learning English”

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly Disagree

3. As a learner of the English language, do you want to improve your:

- a. Fluency
- b. Accuracy
- c. Both

4. How often do you share talk in the oral expression session?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

5. In your opinion, is it difficult to speak English?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. If yes, is it due to :

- a. Speaking anxiety (when you feel afraid of making mistakes or being embarrassed in front of your classmates)
- b. Teacher's wait time (when your teacher does not give you enough time to think about appropriate answers to the proposed questions)
- c. Lack of listening practice
- d. Nothing to say

7. Is silence during the speaking class a widespread phenomenon among EFL learners?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. How do you consider silence in the oral class, is it:

- a. Positive
- b. Negative

9. Please, justify your choice.

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10. Which of the following could be the reason for being silent in the session of oral expression?

1. Psychological reasons :

- a. Lack of self-confidence
- b. Shyness
- c. Lack of motivation

2. Linguistic reasons :

- a. Low English proficiency level
- b. Incomprehensible input
- c. Negative feedback

11. Does the teacher of oral expression react to students' silence during classroom discussions?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. If yes, please explain how.

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Section Two: Overcoming Silence Through the Use of Motivational and Interactive Teaching Strategies

13. In the oral expression class, do you feel:

a. Motivated

b. De-motivated

14. Are you satisfied with the way you are taught the oral expression module?

a. Yes

b. No

15. If no, please say why.

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.....

16. Does your teacher use various teaching strategies to raise your motivation to speak?

a. Yes

b. No

17. If yes, which of the following motivational strategies do you deem as effective?

a. Games

b. Audio-visual media

c. Constructive feedback

d. Rewards

18. What are the strategies that actually make you more willing to interact in the oral classroom?

a. Circle talk

b. Role-plays

c. Cooperative learning

d. Debates

19. Do you believe that through using the aforementioned strategies (both motivational and interactive strategies), the teacher would be able to break prolonged silence during oral expression session?

a. Yes

b. No

20. Please, add any further suggestions or comments.

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Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 2: The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly invited to yield a portion of your precious time and respond to this questionnaire which aims to discuss the subject of silence among EFL learners in the oral language classroom and investigate the strategies, if any, employed by teachers in an effort to surmount such a barrier. Your collaboration will be of great value to this research.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation.

Section One: Background Information

1. How long have you been teaching "Oral Expression"?

..... year (s).

2. Is it difficult to teach Oral Expression?

a. Yes

b. No

- Please explain how?

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3. Have you ever received any kind of training concerning teaching oral expression?

a. Yes

b. No

Section Two: Silence in the Oral Language Classroom

4. To what extent you consider speaking as an important skill to be developed?

a. Very important

b. Important

c. Slightly important

d. Not at all important

5. Based on your experience, what are the difficulties that learners usually encounter when speaking?

a. Speaking anxiety

b. Teacher's wait time

c. Lack of listening practice

d. Nothing to say

6. Do you consider learners' silence in the oral language classroom as a serious problem which must be addressed and handled?

a. Yes

b. No

7. In your opinion, which of the following could be the reason behind learners' propensity towards silence in the oral class?

1. Psychological Reasons:

a. Lack of self-confidence

b. Shyness

c. Lack of Motivation

2. Linguistic Reasons:

a. Low English Proficiency Level

b. Incomprehensible Input

c. Negative Feedback

8. How do you react to students' silence during the oral session?

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Section Three: Overcoming Silence through the Use of Motivational and Interactive Strategies

9. Generally speaking, do you differentiate your teaching strategies?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. Which of the following strategies do you often employ in an attempt to motivate your learners to share talk?

- a. Games
- b. Audio-visual media
- c. Constructive feedback
- d. Rewards

11. What are the strategies that make your students more interactive in the oral class?

- a. Circle talk
- b. Role-plays
- c. Cooperative learning
- d. Debates

12. What other solutions do you recommend for the purpose of overcoming silence in the oral language classroom?

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المخلص :

من المتوقع أن تجعل المشاركة الفعالة عملية التدريس/التعلم ذات مردود أعلى حيث تمنح المتعلمين فرصة لتحسين كفاءاتهم في التحدث. و على الرغم من هذا البيان الذي يتوافق مع سياق تعليمي مثالي، يُظهر الطلاب في الحقيقة موقفا متوانيا إزاء قسم اللغة الشفوية بتبني الصمت بشكل شائع ما ينجم عنه ظهور عدد كبير من النتائج السلبية لدى الطلبة دون إدراكهم لعواقبها. بالتوافق مع ما سبق ذكره، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء أسباب انتهاج المتعلمين نهج الصمت داخل الفصل الدراسي للغة الشفوية بالإضافة إلى سلوك المعلمين اتجاهه و الاستراتيجيات المتبعة للتغلب على هاته الظاهرة. في محاولة لتخمين النتائج النهائية لهذه الدراسة، تم وضع فرضيتين : في البداية افترضنا انتهاج معلمي التعبير الشفهي مجموعة أساليب و استراتيجيات متنوعة (تحفيزية / تفاعلية) للحد من ظاهرة صمت المتمدرسين داخل الفصل الدراسي لقسم اللغة الإنجليزية. علاوة على ذلك، افترضنا أن هذه الاستراتيجيات من شأنها أن تحفز المتعلمين و تعزز تفاعلهم. لغرض التحقق من صحة الفرضيات، تم توزيع استبيانين، أحدهما على طلاب السنة الثانية لغة انجليزية (75) في جامعة ميلة، و الآخر على مدرسي التعبير الشفهي (10) من الجامعة ذاتها. تُظهر نتائج هذا البحث اتفاق معظم الطلاب على صعوبة التحدث داخل الفصل و مرد ذلك التعرض للعديد من العوائق أثناء محاولة مشاركة الحديث ما يؤدي تراكميا إلى اتخاذ الصمت مهربا، يعزى ذلك إلى العديد من الأسباب أبرزها الخجل، و انعدام الثقة بالنفس و انخفاض مستوى الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية. في المقابل، تم التوصل إلى نتيجة مفادها أن المدرسين لا يدخرون جهدا في استخدام أكثر الاستراتيجيات نجاعةً لتحفيز الطلاب على التحدث و زيادة تفاعلهم و تعزيز مشاركتهم للحد من تداعيات الصمت المزعجة على أداءهم و تطورهم. و بناءا على النتائج المذكورة سلفا، طرحت مجموعة من الاقتراحات لكل من الطلبة و الأساتذة من أجل تبني مواقف وممارسات بناءة أكثر تجاه هذه الظاهرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهارة التحدث، الصمت، قسم اللغة الشفوية، الاستراتيجيات التحفيزية، الاستراتيجيات التفاعلية.

Résumé :

On s'attend à ce que la participation active rende le processus d'enseignement / apprentissage plus productif et donne aux apprenants l'occasion d'améliorer leur maîtrise de la parole. Nonobstant cette affirmation particulière qui concorde avec un contexte éducatif idéaliste, en vérité, il est plus courant pour les apprenants de montrer une attitude passive et préfèrent garder le silence dans la classe de langue orale. Une telle posture induit les élèves en erreur à une pléthore de résultats indésirables dont ils ne sont pas conscients. Il est vrai que cette étude vise à examiner les raisons du silence des apprenants au sein de la classe de langue orale, ainsi que la réaction des enseignants à ce sujet, et quelles stratégies ils pourraient utiliser pour surmonter ce phénomène. Afin de postuler les conclusions finales de cette étude, deux hypothèses ont été retenues. Initialement, nous avons émis l'hypothèse que les enseignants d'expression orale utiliseraient une variété de méthodes et de stratégies d'enseignement (motivationnelles / interactives) pour éradiquer le silence des apprenants dans la classe EFL; en outre, nous avons supposé que ces stratégies stimuleraient la motivation des apprenants et amélioreraient leur interaction. Afin de vérifier la validité des hypothèses, deux questionnaires ont été distribués; l'un a été dispensé à **75** étudiants de deuxième année de l'EFL à l'Université de Mila, tandis que l'autre a été administré à **10** professeurs d'expression orale de la même université. Les résultats de cette recherche montrent que la majorité des apprenants sont d'accord sur le fait que parler est une tâche difficile car la plupart d'entre eux font face à une multitude d'obstacles lorsqu'ils tentent de partager un discours, ce qui, en temps voulu, déclenche leur silence. De manière pertinente, les résultats révèlent également que le silence des apprenants est attribuable à une multiplicité de raisons, principalement la timidité, le manque de confiance en soi et un faible niveau de maîtrise de l'anglais. De plus, il a été dévoilé que les enseignants n'épargnent aucun effort pour utiliser la plus efficace des stratégies afin d'encourager les élèves à parler, à accroître leur engagement, à maximiser leur interaction et à minimiser les ramifications encombrantes du silence sur leurs performances et leur développement. Sur la base des conclusions établies, un certain nombre de recommandations ont été adressées aux élèves et aux enseignants afin d'adopter des attitudes et des pratiques plus constructives à l'égard de ce phénomène.

Les Mots Clés : Maîtrise de la parole, silence, classe de langue orale, stratégies de motivation, stratégies interactives.