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Institute of Letters and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages
Section: English

**Investigating the Effects of Online Learning on Students' Speaking
Skills Performance**

The Case of Third Year Students at Mila University Center

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

Presented by:

1) Rime LAHRECHE

Supervisor:

Dr. Assia AZZIOUI

Board of Examiners:

Chairman: Dr. Oualid NEMOUCHI

Supervisor: Dr. Assia AZZIOUI

Examiner: Dr. Djalal MANSOUR

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Rime LAHRECHE

Department of Foreign Languages, Mila University Center

Dr. Assia AZZIOUI

Dedication

With all the love, I dedicate this work

*To my dearest **father**, the dearest person to my heart for his support, his care, his protection
and encouragement*

*To my beloved **mother**, my sunshine, my source of happiness for her sacrifices, prayers and
endless love*

*To my beloved and gorgeous big sister "**Imene**" and to the most beautiful, adorable and
cutest little sister "**Mimi**" for being around me when no one was*

*To my dearest brothers "**Walid**", "**Hassen**" and "**Youcef**"*

*To my beloved nephew "**Djoud**"*

*To the cutest nieces in the world "**Mayar**" and "**Lina**"*

*To my beautiful best friend and sister "**Oumnia**"*

*To my sister in law "**Khaoula**"*

*To my brother in law "**Djahid**"*

*To my lovely cousin "**Maissa**"*

To myself above all

Rym

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Abstract

The wide spread of the COVID-19 pandemic forces all universities and institutions to shift from the face-to-face learning method to the online learning method which requires a combination of educational technology (ET) to offer a successful online learning experience. The new online learning method has a direct influence on teaching speaking skills since it requires too much interaction and communication. The present study aims at investigating the students' perceptions of the online learning and its effects on their speaking skills performance, and shedding light on the most common challenges that students encounter during the learning process, and lastly, it investigates the most effective tools and strategies for teaching speaking skills in an online environment. In order to achieve the aims of this study, a questionnaire was submitted online to third year EFL students at Mila University Center. The obtained results reveal that students are aware of the positive effect of online learning on their speaking abilities. However, they prefer traditional classroom learning because of the difficulties that they encounter, such as their unfamiliarity with educational technology tools, the lack of interaction opportunities with their teachers and classmates, in addition to the different technical problems. At the end of this work, some pedagogical recommendations are suggested for a better implementation of the online learning process in teaching speaking skills.

Key words: speaking skills, online learning, speaking performance, EFL learners.

List of Abbreviations

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

TL: Target Language.

MT: Mother Tongue.

L2: Second Language.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

FL : Foreign Language.

L1: First language.

E learning: Electronic learning.

CD-ROM: Compact Disk Read-Only Memory.

PDF: Portable document format.

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies.

Q: Question.

%: Percentage.

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Résumé

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Technology plays an important role in all domains, such as business, science, and education. With the continuous development of technology, many efforts have been made to integrate it into the teaching and learning processes since it facilitates the educational system in general and strengthens language learning in particular. The use of the different technology tools in the learning process makes “students more active, creative, increase business and interest in learning”. (Sudarsana et al., 2019, p. 5). In other words, it is important to integrate new technological innovations into the educational system to enhance the learning experience and develop students’ language skills.

Technology integration in language learning is not newborn; it has been under research for a long time. Recently, the unpredictable spread of the corona virus pandemic (COVID-19) all over the world forces the ministries of education to adopt digital learning which leads to the shift from the traditional face-to-face learning method to the online learning method in which learners and instructors are not physically present. Language teachers depend essentially on online tools and applications to deliver information and interact with their learners since learning the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) requires much more effort to be mastered.

In the English teaching and learning process, the four language skills are simultaneously performed. However, the ability to speak usually is considered the most essential and difficult skill to improve since it is the basic for communication. Richards (2008, p. 19) stated that “learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency”. Therefore, students need to work hard to have fluent

speaking ability because it is the indicator of the student's success in learning the English language. Thus, learners need more time and activities to practice their spoken language, especially via the online learning tools, which undoubtedly, has an enormous significance in enhancing EFL learners speaking abilities.

The online learning method has gained more importance due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides both EFL learners and teachers with more opportunities to practice and develop their speaking skills through an unlimited number of software and applications that are designed especially for learning purposes since the face-to-face interaction was impossible.

2. Statement of the Problem

In the spring of 2020, the high spread of the corona virus leads to the obligation of using online learning. As a result, teachers quickly create new strategies for lesson planning and managing the virtual classroom environment while looking for new tools to teach speaking skills and enhance communication with learners during this emergency. The Algerian university was of no exception and decide to lockdown its institutions avoiding traditional methods of teaching and replacing them with the use of online learning. Teachers and learners were not prepared for this emergent transition. Thus, Jumping from a face-to-face classroom into a fully online class was challenging for everyone, learners suffer from the lack of opportunities to practice their spoken language while teachers face many challenges to implement this new method. Hence, this study sheds light on investigating the effects of online learning on students speaking skills performance.

3. Aim of the Study

The present study seeks to investigate the students' perception of the effectiveness of online learning on students' speaking skills performance. Furthermore, it attempts to explore the major challenges and obstacles faced by EFL learners at Mila University Center during the online learning process.

4. Research Questions

The current study aims at answering the following questions

1. What are the perceptions of students of online learning and its effect on their speaking performance?
2. What are the challenges that EFL learners encounter during teaching and learning speaking online?
3. To what extent is online learning effective to enhance EFL learners speaking skills?

5. Tools of Research

In order to provide answers to the above questions, a qualitative research was adopted. Thus, a students' questionnaire has been administered to third-year English students at Mila University Centre to identify the effects of using online learning on students' speaking skills performance.

6. Structure of the Study

The present study consists of three chapters, starting with a general introduction and ending with a general conclusion. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical part, which is divided into two sections; the first section sheds light on the speaking skill definitions, its importance and characteristics. Moreover, it focuses on the most effective methods and activities of teaching speaking, in addition to the main speaking difficulties encountered by

EFL students. The section ends with the integration of online learning in teaching speaking skills. The second section, however, presents the key concepts and definitions related to online learning, its variations and types. It also accentuates online learning tools, advantages and disadvantages, in addition to teachers and learners' roles in the online learning process to end up with the teaching of speaking skills in the online environment. Eventually, the second chapter is the practical one where the data obtained from the students' questionnaire are analyzed and interpreted. It also provides a description of the research tools and population followed by a description of the main findings. The third chapter provides an analysis and discussion of third year English students oral expression module lessons that have been published on the university's Moodle Platform to end up with a list of recommendations for both teachers and students to end up with a general conclusion, which summarizes the major points discussed throughout the dissertation.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter is an overview of online learning and its effects on EFL learners speaking abilities. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses a set of definitions concerning speaking skill, its importance, and its main characteristics. In addition, it highlights the different methods and activities that help in teaching speaking skill, along with the common difficulties that learners face during the learning process. The second section is concerned with the notion of online learning. It started with the historical background of online learning and its definition. Then it introduces several online learning variations, types, the most useful tools implemented in online learning, in addition to teachers' and learners' roles in the online learning process. The section ends up with several advantages and disadvantages of this method.

Section One: An Overview of Teaching and Learning Speaking

In modern times, the mastery of the speaking skills has become the main objective of all foreign language learners. The ability to speak fluently and accurately is thus considered a measure of language proficiency for many learners. This skill is of crucial importance in any language, because it is the main means of communication and sharing ideas and thoughts with others. Speaking involves producing and processing or receiving information to serve both interactional and transactional purposes. In other words, speaking has a significant impact on communication (Shiamaa 2006).

The present section provides deferent definitions of speaking, its importance, and its characteristics. Additionally, it presents the most effective methods and strategies to enhance and develop EFL speaking abilities. Then, it is worth shedding light on EFL learners'

speaking difficulties. The last part of this chapter is devoted to the building of speaking skills in an online community.

1.1.1 Definition of Speaking

Speaking is one of the most important skills in any language. It is an activity used by people in order to communicate with each other. In other words, speaking is the skill of expressing thoughts and ideas in an oral style using words that can be accepted and understood by other people. According to Maxom (2009, p.183), “speaking is the ability to produce sound or words to express, to state, and to show thoughts, ideas and feeling”. Thus, speaking is not seen only as the utterance of sound or words, but it is also a way or a tool for sharing thoughts and feelings with others.

Another definition of speaking was proposed by Chaney (1998, p. 13), who claimed that speaking is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts”. To put it another way, speaking is the process of constructing and sharing meaning by using oral utterances as well as gestures and body language in order to construct and share a message in different real-life situations. Nunan (1991) defined speaking as one of the four skills interlocutors use to exchange information using language. According to him, meaning should be transformed accurately and fluently through the use of the correct language, in addition to communicative competence. Speaking is used as a way to negotiate meanings and reach a common understanding between the speakers.

For Hedge (2000, p.261), speaking is “a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed”. This means that speaking is a very essential part, that people in general and learners in particular have to take into account while using the second language/foreign language since it expresses their views and identities. Additionally, Cameron (2001) claimed that the goal of speaking is to transmit the speaker’s feelings and

ideas using language. Therefore, speaking in real-life interaction does not require producing a spoken version of written language; it requires the use of the appropriate social knowledge of the situation and the topic to represent people's desired ideas and thoughts.

From the definitions above, speaking appears to be a process of exchanging thoughts and ideas, expressing feelings and sharing information through the use of verbal language such as words and voice or non-verbally by using techniques like gestures, body language, and eye contact.

1.1.2 The importance of Speaking in the Language Class

In the whole world, communication is the key for achieving success in all fields. To be a good communicator, one must have a good command of language which is the main tool of communication. We communicate with each other to exchange our different ideas, knowledge, opinions and feelings. In order to communicate, there must be speech, without it we are unable to communicate with one another. The importance of the speaking skills hence is massive for all language learners. More precisely, it is a very important skill that has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills and that must be mastered by all EFL learners. According to Leong & Ahmadi (2017, p. 35),

Human are programmed to speak before they learn to read and write. In any given, human beings spend much more time interacting orally with language rather than using it in its written form. Speaking is the most important skill because it is one of the abilities that is needed to perform a conversation. English speaking is not easy task because speakers should know many significant components like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Ur (1996) considered speaking as the most important of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because those who know a language are called speakers of that language. This reveals that speaking is the most important among the four basic skills of the language, because people need to use that language, not just know about it. Listening, reading and writing cannot assist students' in producing perfect communication. No one can deny the value of the other skills, but learners need more speaking skills to interact and create an image for themselves to others, as it is the most important indicator for students' success in learning a foreign language. Nevertheless, speaking seems to be one of the most difficult skills. This is because speakers have to produce sentences in a few moments, which requires so much practice and development of some aspects of other language skills like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and usage.

Moreover, Nuan (1991) stated that “mastering the art of speaking, is the single most important aspect of learning a foreign language, and success is measured in term of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language”. Thus, speaking is seen as a central skill and a very significant element in the learning process, since it is used in everyday activities and considered as the basic means of communication. People always need to interact and speak in different situations, such as having a face-to-face conversation, chatting with friends, giving instructions, asking and answering questions, and so on. All these situations require a speaker who masters the FL and can carry out a fluent conversation free of breakdowns and misunderstandings. Speaking reflects the speaker; in other words, it shows to what extent the learner masters the language, considering that mastering speaking equals mastering the target language. This is supported by Celce-Murcia (et al, 2001) who argued that knowing a language is can be seen as the ability to speak that language since speech considered as one of the basic means of communication. This reveals that students are primarily judged based on their ability to speak a language.

Generally, the act of speaking opens the door for learners to establish relationships with new people, participate in the classroom discussion, and deliver a speech without fears. All of the above will help learners to build self-confidence and become stronger in decision-making and problem solving.

To sum up, learners are obliged to develop speaking skills, regarded that the majority of communication is done through speech. Moreover, it serves as a stepping-stone to success for students throughout their educational careers and beyond. It is necessary to note that we cannot separate the four language skills; speaking, writing, reading and listening, as they complete one another, in a way that practicing one leads to practicing the other.

1.1.3 Characteristics of Speaking

In the EFL context, the primary goal of teachers is to help their students improve their skills in speaking. For this reason teachers should opt for tasks that balance the needs for fluency and accuracy, because the test of speaking ability is based on these two features. Torres (1997) pointed out that accuracy and fluency are the two major features of language to consider when testing and teaching speaking. For him, teachers can test accuracy through some components such as vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. In the other hand, fluency could be tested through the language use, mechanical and judgmental skills. Accuracy and fluency are very important to the speaker to construct a message that can be understood by the other person as well as to fit into the flow of the conversation.

1.1.3.1 Fluency

Oral fluency could be seen as the major goal that teachers and learners hope to achieve in teaching and learning the productive skill of speaking. Hughes (2002, p.14) defined fluency as, “the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate way without too much hesitation, otherwise the communication will breakdown because listeners will lose their interest”. That is to say that, fluency needs speakers who can produce

utterances speedily, accurately and smoothly. Thus, teachers should allow students to express themselves using their own language, and also provide some classroom activities that help students negotiate meanings and correct misunderstandings to avoid communication breaks downs. Additionally, P.Skehan as quoted in Thornbury (2000, p.3) stated that fluency is the “capability to produce language in real time without undue pausing or hesitation.” In other words, speaking fluently refers to the ability to speak, interact and express one’s ideas, opinions and thoughts smoothly, spontaneously, quickly and automatically without too much hesitation or too many pauses that can cause barriers or breakdowns in the communication. Moreover, many FL speakers tend to speak quickly because they believe that fluency is the ability to speak quickly. However, one of the most important signs of fluency include a reasonably fast speed of speaking and only a small number of pauses that native speakers also use from time to time to let the listener understand and catch the meaning of what the others said. According to Thornbury (2005), speaking rate and pauses are also important factors since speakers need to breathe. In addition, he offers some tricks to fill the pauses in the speech in order to make it sound natural and spontaneous. The most commonly used pause fillers are ‘uh’ ‘um’, ‘well’ or ‘meaning expressions’. These signs indicate that the speaker did not spend a lot of time searching for language items to convey the message.

1.1.3.2 Accuracy

The term accuracy refers to the ability to produce sentences with correct grammar and vocabulary to avoid errors in performance. Brown (2007) declared that in order to be accurate, a text must be clear and grammatically correct. In addition, Harmer (2001) asserted that accuracy involves using the right grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. In brief, accuracy is related to the production of correct forms where utterances do not contain any mistakes that can affect language discourse features. Therefore, to be accurate learners should pay attention to the correctness and completeness of the language form and master the

use of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation; otherwise, the listener will lose interest and the speaker will not be understood and fail to transmit his idea.

1.3.2.1 Grammar

Grammar is an important component of any language; it refers to a set of rules that govern the language elements (Purpura 2004). Grammar is a combination of rules that govern the structure and arrangement of language. Grammar rules help learners to improve their speaking skills; they also help to produce well-structured, understandable and correct sentences so that audiences would gain a comprehensive understanding of the message. Grammar is regarded as a whole system and structure of languages, including syntax (rules that govern word sequence and sentence structure) and morphology (rules that govern the construction and structure of words). It should be noted that the grammar of writing is different from that of speaking. Thornbury (2005) listed the following features of spoken grammar:

- Clause is the basic unit of construction.
- Frequent non-clausal units (e.g.: Mmm, No, uh, huh, yeah).
- Direct speech favoured.
- A lot of ellipsis.
- Performance effects (hesitation, repeats, false starts, incompleteness).

1.1.3.4 Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be defined as words and phrases that have a particular meaning. It is considered a very essential part of speaking in all languages since we cannot communicate without having a sufficient vocabulary. Rohmatillah (2017) argued that it is difficult to communicate in a second language without learning the vocabulary. Therefore, the goal of teaching vocabulary is to help students become more confident when expressing their thoughts, ideas and wishes using the appropriate vocabulary. Wilkins (1972, p. 111-112)

stated that “. . . while without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed”. Thus, learners who have good grammar will not be able to engage in and speak any language properly, without mastering vocabulary sufficiently.

1.1.3.5 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is considered as the way of producing sounds and utterances while interacting and communicating with others; it deals with how speakers pronounce words during the conversation. Pronunciation refers to the process of delivering words in a way that is widely understood and comprehended (Redmond, Vrchota, 2007). Thus, accuracy cannot be achieved if the speaker produces incorrect pronunciation and the listener fails to understand what has been said. Learners should be familiar with all speaking aspects of pronunciation including intonation, rhythm, tone and stress because they play a vital role in acquiring an understandable pronunciation that allows them to communicate successfully and effectively.

1.1.4 Teaching the Speaking Skill

1.1.4.1 Methods to Teaching the Speaking Skill

When teaching any language, teachers should follow the most effective approaches and methodologies that can contribute in improving student’s communicative skills which is the ultimate goal of any language teacher or learner. According to Richard & Rodgers (1986, p. 16) “an approach refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching”.

1.1.4.1.1 Grammar Translation Method

The classical method or the grammar translation method as it is known nowadays is considered as one of the most effective approaches in teaching a foreign or second language. Bowen (2013) pointed out that millions of people have successfully learnt foreign languages with a high degree of proficiency without any contact with native speakers of the language

using only the Grammar Translation Method. The GTM is based on learning translation and grammar as the main teaching activities. This method allows students to learn a large number of grammar rules, so they can translate several sentences from their mother tongue (MT) to the target language (TL). Even though GTM is seen as the shortest way of explaining words and phrases' meaning, since instruction is based on the student's mother tongue, which is used to discuss problems and the use of TL grammatical structures. However, many language teachers reject it because they believe that this method pays more attention to the form of sentences than content, so there is no speaking practice. GTM can be a good method for teaching language rules, but it will never be good for teaching language skills such as speaking and listening (Bahar, 2013 as cited in Kaharuddin, 2018).

1.1.4.1.2 The Direct Method

After the failure of the grammar translation method in providing teachers with all the necessary equipment for English language teaching, the direct method came as a reaction to it. The direct method deals with the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), in contrast to the GTM which focuses only on reading and writing. The direct method brought a revolution in the field of teaching. Similarly, Falk (2004 as cited in Awan, 2015) said that the direct method gives students the language's real soul. So, students are going to learn a foreign language in a natural way, much like they are learning the MT without any written rules. This method is based on the principles that foreign languages should be thought without any translation or the use of the mother tongue. It is a shift from a literary language to an everyday spoken language. Teachers need to explain new vocabulary using visual aids and demonstrations while teaching whereas grammar is taught inductively. Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 27) stated that "language is best learned when the learners' attention is focused on understanding, saying and doing something with language, and not when their attention is focused explicitly on linguistic features". Using this method will give

teachers and learners the opportunity to be closer, which allows students to be comfortable and spontaneous when using the FL in the classroom.

1.1.4.1.3 Audio-lingual Method

The audio-lingual method is the most popular one in the history of foreign language teaching since it is the first one that is derived from linguistics and psychology. As Nunan (2000, p.229) admitted that “The Audio-Lingual method has probably had a greater impact on second and foreign language teaching than any other method”. It was, in fact, the first approach which could be said that it has developed a ‘technology’ of teaching and was based on “scientific principles”. The main goal of this method is to teach students how to respond quickly and accurately using the TL. The audio-lingual method focuses on students’ habit formation through dialogues as its main teaching tool; those habits will allow students to develop automatic responses. According to Larsen-Freeman (2000), forming new habits in the target language and overcoming old habits of the native language will help students achieve communicative competence. In other words, mistakes in this method are considered a bad habit and should be avoided. Dialogue repetition and drills are the most important elements in this method because, through repetition, students will be able to use the TL fluently and automatically. In addition, practicing drills will allow students to respond effectively and correctly in spoken language.

1.1.5 Speaking Activities in EFL Classes

Harmer (1998) claimed that students should be encouraged by their teachers to do speaking activities for three reasons: rehearsal, feedback and engagement. Therefore, teachers should design different activities that help to improve learners’ speaking skills and feel comfortable using the language in different real life situations. Speaking activities are a very essential element in foreign language classes. In fact, there are several types of practice activities that can be presented in a fun environment to make language learning easier.

1.1.5.1 Role-Play

Role play is one of the most important techniques for foreign language teaching and learning, as Larsen-Freeman pointed out “role plays are very important in the communicative approach because they give students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social roles” (as cited in Huang, 2008 p.01). The majority of learners consider role-play as a very enjoyable activity that can provide them with the opportunity to use and practice the TL without any fear or embarrassment. According to Yardley-Matwiejczuk (1997) the role-playing concept consists of a range of activities in which participants are involved in ‘as-if’ or ‘simulated’ actions, situations and circumstances. Therefore, role-playing is a process in which learners are assigned different roles of other persons in a particular situation such as a doctor, teacher or a lawyer and act it out with each other’s while trying to behave the exact way that person would. Role-play is an interactive activity that helps learners train and enhances their speaking skills as learners play roles related to their daily life situations.

1.1.5.2 Discussions

Discussions are one of the most commonly used activities in oral skill classes. It is the best way to encourage learners to work in groups, discuss a real life problem, and share and exchange different ideas to reach a common result or offer an acceptable solution. In this sense, Littlewood (1981) argued that discussion provides learners with the opportunity to express themselves through the use of a foreign language. This means that discussion is a helpful activity where students can have the opportunity to develop their communicative ability by expressing their different views while participating in debates within their groups. Lazaraton (2001) sheds light on the point that allowing students to select their own discussion topics and evaluate their peers' performance will motivate them to be more engaged in participating in discussions. Thus, teachers should give learners the chance to select or propose a topic according to their needs, interest and preferences so all learners can

participate and speak freely, which gives the teacher the opportunity to check their speaking skills.

1.1.5.3 Oral Presentation

Oral presentations are one of the most well-known and important activities in language teaching. Girard et al (2011) stated that oral presentations are the best way to have active students who interact and participate in the classroom, as well as help to increase their interest in learning the English language. Oral presentations do not only allow students to practice language skills; they also provide them with a higher level of motivation to learn, since they give them the ability to teach their peers. Students must select a topic that grab their interest or from a list proposed by their teacher, then present it in front of the entire class. When the teacher asks his students to give an oral presentation, it is one of the few occasions in the language classroom that students have control of both the content and the flow of the classroom environment (Apple & Kikuchi, 2007). This activity will give students the chance to practice the four language skills as well as the language elements, including grammar and vocabulary.

1.1.5.4 Games

A game is an entertaining activity in which students can compete, play, challenge, or interact with one another. Cameron (2001, p. 72-73) suggested that “teachers should provide more strategies, including games, in order for learners to develop their speaking skills during their language learning sessions”. Games are a valuable technique to develop the spoken language, given the fact that they can create an enjoyable environment in the classroom that facilitates the teaching and learning process. In this context, Uberman (2002) argued that language games are primarily spontaneous activities in which learners use the English language without feeling judged for the mistakes they make. Thus, language games motivate shy students who do not feel secure using the language in front of others to participate and

share their ideas and thoughts, since it can lower their anxiety and help them avoid the feeling that they are being watched by others.

1.1.6 EFL learners' Speaking Difficulties

Although speaking skills are the most important among all the language skills in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), learners still face many different problems when trying to practice and master this skill. It is considered a difficult task to speak and interact in English in everyday life, especially in the FL context (Li, 2003, cited in Zhang, 2009). In many cases, students have many ideas in their minds that they want to share or the correct answer to the teacher's questions, but they face many challenges communicating them orally. These obstacles can be divided into two types: linguistic problems and psychological problems.

1.1.6.1 Linguistic Problems

Speaking in any language is not an easy task. Speakers should master a number of highly important language elements such as grammar, vocabulary and punctuation at the same time. Therefore, speakers should have linguistic knowledge, Thonbury (2005) declared that linguistic knowledge plays an important role in speaking skill. This reveals that the speaker should have knowledge of all the linguistic elements, or he/she will face many problems, including a lack of vocabulary, pronunciation mistakes and grammar mistakes. In fact students' low academic performance can be influenced by language issues. Students with poor speaking abilities are more likely to have a lack of vocabulary, syntax, and pronunciation, all of which are linguistic issues (Riadil 2019).

1.1.6.1.1 Lack of Vocabulary

Learning a foreign language requires a high level of vocabulary knowledge, since vocabulary is a fundamental part of learning any new language. Speaking provides much of the basis for how learners speak, listen, read and write. Without sufficient vocabulary,

learners will fail to communicate and express their ideas in an understandable way. As McCarthy (1990) admitted that without words to represent a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way, regardless of how well the student learns grammar or how well the sounds of L2 are mastered. The more people master vocabulary, the more they can use the language and express their feelings and ideas in both spoken and written forms. FL learners often face some difficulties when they try to express themselves with their limited words. Therefore, students tend to avoid participation and sharing their different ideas, thoughts and wishes, as they cannot be understood.

1.1.6.1.2 Pronunciation Mistakes

Speaking a language means having the ability to pronounce words correctly and to reproduce items in speech. There is an undeniable link between speaking and pronunciation. It is impossible to communicate without speaking the language, and one cannot speak without the correct pronunciation of that language (Al Yaqoobi et al, 2016). Accordingly, students should pay more attention to pronunciation as it helps to deliver the correct message. Pronunciation errors sometimes lead to misunderstandings and break down communication. Almouslimi (2020, p. 54) declared that “To be intelligible, one is not apt to only depend on good grammar and vocabulary use; still, one needs to sound understood through clear and intelligible pronunciation”. That is to say, with poor pronunciation, students will not be able to have a comprehensible communication. Therefore, teachers should give more attention to pronunciation teaching, since pronunciation mistakes are one of the most crucial elements that prevent students from comfortably performing their speaking tasks.

1.1.6.1.3 Grammar Mistakes

In order to be a good speaker, learners should acquire grammar knowledge. Students who have poor grammar knowledge face many participation problems and lose their motivation to learn the target language. Although teachers give a huge importance to

grammatical elements and spend much more time teaching them, learners still face problems when practicing language orally. Davies and Pearse (2000, p. 82) stated that “Many people do not like speaking in front of large groups of people”. This means that many students refuse to speak and interact in the second language to avoid embarrassment. It is hard to understand what some EFL students are saying since they produce many grammatical errors when speaking (Kasim 2016). Therefore, it is important to correct the student’s grammatical mistakes so they will be able to use the language correctly and confidently.

1.1.6.2 Psychological Problems

Since speaking is the most complex of the four language skills, it requires great effort and a lot of practice from both instructors and learners to acquire the TL appropriately. Despite all the efforts provided, learners still show poor oral performance. In fact, any interaction between learners is likely to be impacted by many difficulties (Al Hosni, 2014). In addition to the linguistic problems, students may experience a number of psychological barriers, including mother tongue use, shyness and fear of mistakes.

1.1.6.2.1 Mother Tongue Use

FL learners often tend to switch to their mother tongue (L1) when interacting with others. The use of L1 seems to be an alternative aid to make up for their incapacity to use the TL appropriately. According to Baker and Westrup (2003, p. 13), “barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language”. Therefore, students often use their mother tongue because it seems to be the safest and easiest way to express themselves in the FL. However, the MT’s use breaks down learners’ communication flows.

1.1.6.2.2 Lack of Motivation

Motivation is an important element in the progress of FL learning. According to Dornyei (2001), motivation is one of the most essential factors affecting language-learning

success. Lack of motivation is a strong reason that discourages and prevents students from participating and speaking in the classroom. In addition, learners will not be able to acquire a useful language if they do not feel motivated. Zua (2008) added that motivation is an inner energy. She claimed that no matter what motivation students may have, their learning interest will be enhanced. Thus, teachers should create a motivational environment where students can speak the TL without any hesitation or fear of being criticized; otherwise, they will not be able to achieve communicative proficiency.

1.1.6.2.3 Shyness and Inhibition

Shyness and inhibition are two of the most common problems encountered by learners in the language learning process. Inhibition is a problem that can be seen when learners fail to participate in the classroom. Unlike other skills, speaking requires confident students who are able to express their ideas freely. However, the majority of students suffer from inhibitions inside classes because they are always worried about being criticized or making mistakes in front of the rest of the class. Littwood (1981, p.93) argued that “it is all too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibitions and anxiety”. That is, inhibition refers to negative feelings manifested within a classroom, such as anxiety and shyness. Shyness is an emotional issue that many EFL learners suffer from, it could be a serious source of problems that affect the students’ speaking progress. Baldwin (2011 as cited in Humaera, 2015) claimed that the fear of public speaking is one of the more common phobias students face, and the feeling of shyness can cause them to forget what they are going to say. In other words, shyness and inhibition are interrelated factors that can play an important role in the development of a student’s speaking performance.

1.1.7 Build-up Speaking Skills in an Online Community

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the educational process all over the world had changed and made several adaptations. This crisis changed the teaching-learning method

from the classroom learning to the online sphere. This platform actually helps students to be more relaxed while learning, and obviously, this can play a major role in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Speaking is an essential skill, which is considered a central part of L2 and FL teaching and learning. Kunning (2019) argued that the mastery of speaking is a priority for second and foreign language learners in any language-learning context. Thus, speaking is an essential skill that should be thought through online educational technologies to enhance learners' speaking performance

Nowadays, we can see that there are hundreds of communication technologies and numerous educational websites that provide learners with the opportunity to develop their speaking skills. Martin (2020, p. 88) clearly stated that "the wide range of technological applications and learners highly developed digital literacy skills allow for a new approach to teaching foreign languages". Thus, FL learners can improve their speaking skills through a variety of online language programs, such as Zoom, Skype, etc. In addition Heng and Linda (2003) asserted that Students believed that online education would be easier for those with poor speaking skills since they would not need to 'speak' in online environments. Therefore, less confident students would also have the opportunity to participate and interact with their friends since the online method help to reduce anxiety in contrast with real time interaction.

Conclusion

To round off, on the basis of what has been said so far, speaking is a crucial skill in EFL teaching and learning. Students cannot communicate and share their feelings, thoughts, and ideas without the mastery of all the characteristics of this important skill, including fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Despite the importance of speaking skills, EFL students still encounter some speaking difficulties, caused even by psychological or linguistic problems. Furthermore, EFL teachers should focus on effective strategies that help to enhance the learners' speaking abilities.

Section Two: Online Learning

Introduction

Recently, online learning plays a very important role in the educational field. Therefore, it is important to understand how this online learning function and affect the learning theories. This section gives a clear image of the online learning field. It begins with the historical background of online learning, its definition along with its different variations. Furthermore, it demonstrates the main types of online learning, the different technological tools for teaching and highlights a number of its advantages and disadvantages. After that, it presents the teachers' and learners' role in this online environment, while the section ends up with shedding light on the most effective tools for teaching speaking skills in the area of online teaching/learning.

1.2.1 The Emergence of Online Learning

Online learning and distance learning are not new ways of teaching; their origins are traced back to the early 18th century. The evolution and advancement of distance and online learning have run in parallel with the development of communication technologies over the last 300 years (Kentnor, 2015). The distance learning evolution began with course delivery through correspondence and via the use of parcel post, to radio and television, and finally to online education.

1.2.1.1 Correspondence

Correspondence education can be defined as a "method of providing education for nonresident students, primarily adults who receive lessons and exercises through the mails or some other device and upon completion, return them for analysis, criticism, and grading". (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2012). That is to say, correspondence education is one form of distance education that has different forms where teachers and students are physically separated.

The correspondence education was first known in the 19th century, when Isaac Pitman delivered his first distance course in history (Ferrari, 2020). According to Subrahmanyam & Ravichandran(2013, p. 5) "Modern distance education initially relied on the development of postal services in the 19th century and has been practiced at last since Isaac Pitman taught shorthand in Great Britain via correspondence in the 1840's". Thus, Sir Pitman was one of the founders of distance education. The principal leader of the University of Chicago, William Rainey Harper, proposed the concept of primary school level correspondence courses via mail in 1899. He established a significant correspondence program in the United States, making the world's first university distance education program.

1.2.1.2 Radio and Television

Distance education took a new turn between the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th with the invention of the radio and television. They were used as both communication and learning tools. It is believed that in 1922, Pennsylvania State University was the first university to use radio in education. In addition (Dousay & Janak, 2018).Schlosser and Simonson (2006) argued that the University of Iowa, Purdue University, and Kansas State College produced experimental television teaching programs in the early 1930's. They were the first to employ television for educational purposes.

Ultimately, the use of radio and television in education became increasingly popular because it was more successful and beneficial than correspondence. As a result, radio and television were crucial to humanity in terms of communication, entertainment, and educational enhancement.

1.2.1.3 Online Learning

By the end of the 20th century, the use of online technologies and computer started spreading among people. Benson (2002) declared that online learning is a modern form of distance learning that allows students to access learning experiences via the use of

technology. Online educational programs emerged when the University of Phoenix launched online educational programs that offered bachelors and masters degrees (Kentnor, 2015). Shortly thereafter, in 1992, the World Wide Web (WWW) appeared. The world-wide-web made remote learning much easier since it allowed creating, storing, and accessing to a number of digital materials. This makes it easy for learners to work at their own places and at any time.

According to Hrastinski (2008, p. 51), "Learning and teaching online through network technologies is arguably one of the most powerful responses to the growing needs of education". Using technology in education is becoming a must all over the world as it facilitates, strengthens, and supports the educational system in general. Working with the web can provide learners with a ton of information in many different formats that facilitate the learning process.

Online learning can be defined as a form of distance education that considers computers and the internet as the delivery mechanism of information. Scalars defined the term "online learning" in different way. According to Shank & Sitze (2004, p. 2), "Online learning involves the use of network technologies (such as the internet and business networks) for delivering, supporting, and assessing formal and informal instruction". Online learning may also be described as learning in an asynchronous or synchronous environment using range of devices with internet access. In this environment, students can interact more easily with their teachers or with other students. In fact, online learning provides more practice opportunities and a wider range of audio-visual aids for learners to practice the language they are learning, as well as more online learning activities to complete (Anderson, 2003). This means that, online learning is an effective way to enhance and develop learners' language. In addition, online learning provides students with more immediate access to a

large range and greater quantity of information whenever they want and wherever they are. According to Curtain (2002, p. 12),

Online learning can be broadly defined as the use of the internet in some way to enhance the interaction between teacher and student. Online delivery covers both asynchronous forms of interaction, such as assessment tools and the provision of web-based course materials and synchronous interaction through email, newsgroups, and conferencing tools, such as chat groups. It includes both classroom-based instruction and as well as distance education modes. Other terms synonymous with online learning are ‘web-based education’ and ‘e-learning.

Distance education and e-learning are two terms that are often used interchangeably with online learning. Berteau (2009) noted that online learning is an alternative to distance learning that combines multiple technologies in addition to the use of the internet that provides the transmission of information to the students, such as testing and assessment, which are essential to the learning process. Thus, both online and distance learning refer to a process of learning in which learners are engaged in a virtual environment where they can interact, communicate and develop their skills using different technologies.

To conclude, online learning have various definitions. However, all these definitions share the same idea that online learning is a type of distance learning where teachers and students are not expected to have face-to-face interaction and the teaching and learning process focus on online educational technologies that help to facilitate the learning process.

1.2.2 The Variations of Online Learning

Due to the development of this later and its relevant technology instruments, there are various terminologies that are associated with online learning. These terminologies include E-learning, distance learning, online learning, blending learning and hybrid learning. All of the

above refers to the use of technology in learning, but it seems to be difficult for students to differentiate between them since all of them can be used interchangeably.

1.2.2.1 Online Learning

Online learning (OL) is considered as a form of distance education that is usually referred to as E-learning. Online learning refers to the use of technology as a learning facilitator where lessons are entirely delivered via internet (Simens et al., 2015). That is, e-learning help students access to various online materials such as presentations, recorded lectures, and assignments through different digital platforms. In addition, it gives the students the choice to schedule their learning freely which helps a hundred busy students. Many people may question the effectiveness and benefits of online learning.

1.2.2.2 Distance Learning

Distance learning has basically the same structure as online learning. It can be defined as a learning process where the teacher and his/her students are geographically distant. Knight (2004) revealed that distance learning is the use of technology to provide learners with different information and a large number of communication opportunities. That means that the use of technology can facilitate the learning process since it allows interaction between learners and teachers and between learners and other students. Distance learning is teaching and learning process where the instructor and the learners are separated by both time and place, and it requires learning technologies for the sake of communication. As Addah, K, et al (2012) put it, distance learning consists of transferring information or skills via computers and the web.

1.2.2.3 Blended Learning

As its name suggests, blended learning is a mixture of face-to-face learning and online learning. BL has been considered as one of the most useful approaches to enhancing the quality of education over the past few decades. According to Graham (2006) blended learning

is a concept that combines face-to-face learning with learning via computer. Thus, we can say that BL combines or blends online activities with the traditional way of instruction. Furthermore, Thorne (2003, p. 16) described blended learning as “a mix of traditional forms of classroom training and one-to-one coaching with Multimedia technology, CD ROM video streaming, Virtual classrooms, Voicemail, email and conference calls, online text animation and video streaming”. Hence, BL is a systematic combination of a variety of technology tools and traditional teaching methods for the purpose of creating a successful teaching and learning experience.

To conclude, online learning variations can occasionally be interchangeable, yet they can differ depending on the learning environment. Therefore, learners should be aware of the minor differences between them before starting using any of these variations.

1.2.3 Types of Online Learning

Understanding the types and classifications of online learning is essential to using it effectively and appropriately. As claimed by Rasmitadila et al. (2020, p. 91) "Online learning emphasizes internet-based courses offered synchronously and asynchronously". That is to say, online learning has been divided in different ways according to many different researchers. Two main types were identified as synchronous and asynchronous learning. Additionally, Huhtanen (2019) asserted that students can be compelled to engage at specific times or can choose to participate whenever they want to. In other words, the way instructions are delivered depends on the content and the communication type (synchronous or asynchronous).

1.2.3.1 Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning is a type of online learning and teaching that happens simultaneously. As indicated by Perveen (2016), synchronous learning is a type of teaching/learning that takes place simultaneously using an electronic mode. Synchronous learning is

real-time learning, which means that both the teacher and the learner are online and interact with each other at the same time using different tools involving online chats and video conferencing. Rahman (2020, p. 181) said that "The synchronous type requires a dynamic real-time communication between instructors and students or between the students and their peers through a live chat, streamed video, or a video conferencing". Synchronous learning is considered a very helpful learning style for second language learners because it enables them to have real-time communication with their instructors and with native and non-native learners of that language. Another benefit of using synchronous technology tools is the ability to get an immediate response from the instructor to clarify their questions and correct their errors.

1.2.3.2 Asynchronous Learning

In contrast with synchronous learning, asynchronous learning is not real-time learning. Learning synchronously and asynchronously differs in the types of interaction and the amount of support required (Ng, 2007). This type of learning does not require direct communication between learners and their structure. Perveen (2016) argued that in the asynchronous learning mode, courses and lectures can be delivered in the form of handouts, PowerPoint presentations, articles, or audio/video lectures. Therefore, asynchronous learning provides learners with the ability to access their lectures anywhere and anytime even if they are separated from their teachers by both time and place via the use of different technical means and internet.

1.2.4 Online Learning Tools

Online learning requires the use of various teaching and learning technologies and tools. Online Management Learning Systems (OMLS) or Course Management Systems (CMS) are the educational platforms that students may use to engage with their instructors and classmates, facilitate the process of learning a new language, and facilitate the delivery of

courses. Ghounane (2020, p. 29) argued that "Many companies competed to create applications and software both for Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)". With the widespread of online learning in the last few years, light has been shed on the useful software and applications that serve the learners' needs, including Moodle platform, Zoom, Google Classroom and Social Networks.

1.2.4.1 Moodle platform

The Moodle platform, or the modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment, is a term used to refer to a web-based application that provides teachers and learners with a virtual learning environment in which they can collaborate with each other to have a successful teaching and learning experience. Moodle is a virtual learning environment and open source software where learning takes place entirely online. It is intended to foster a cooperative learning environment (Oproiu, 2015). This platform offers users the ability to create internet-based courses, upload courses, share links and use communication facilities including forums and chat rooms.

All the Algerian universities have Moodle platforms. Those platforms are used to deliver lectures in different forms, such as PDF/word format and video conferences, in addition to making quizzes and online exams.

1.2.4.2 Zoom

Online learning have made a vital change in the educational sphere. Zoom is an electronic educational tool in which teachers can gather their students in one virtual environment through video conferencing since it can host more than 100 participants at a time. Many teachers find Zoom conferencing useful in the classroom because it allows rich interaction with students, and aids in assessing students' development.

Guzacheva (2020, p. 458) reported that "Zoom is the leader in modern enterprise video communications, with an easy, reliable cloud platform for video and audio

conferencing, collaboration, chat, and webinars across mobile devices, desktops, telephones and room systems". In other words, this application is the choice of many teachers and learners because it is easy to use and offers a simple cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, webinars and chat collaboration. Zoom is a tool that can be used on laptops, phones and room systems (Nadezhda, 2020).

1.2.4.3 Google Classroom

In 2014, Google released a new digital educational platform named Google Classroom. In the beginning, the use of this educational platform was limited to educational institutions. However, in 2017, the new update comes with new features that allow everybody to use it. Okmawati (2020, p. 439) defined Google Classroom as “a free web service developed by Google for schools that aims to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments”. This means that Google Classroom is a platform for both teachers and learners in which they can interact and ask questions more easily.

Teachers and students can communicate, publish, download lessons and assignments, and organize their schedules using Google Classroom's calendar tool (Keeler and Miller, 2015). Within Google Classroom, teachers and learners can create a virtual connection since it provides them with the ability to communicate and upload lessons and teachers can monitor a student's progress using its different features. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that Google Classroom provides a specific area for the teacher and another one for the learner. Each one can use a large number of features while maintaining a high degree of privacy.

1.2.4.4 Social Networks

Social learning is derived from the Conservatism theory. This theory's basic principle is that learners learn better when they have engaged in the course content and the different activities that require collaboration and interaction. Through the integration of different forms of social networking, students can choose the content they want to learn, which will increase

their desire to participate in their own learning. Qureshi et al. (2014, p. 442) noted that “Social media websites have the ability to meet the needs of basic as well as specific academic requirements”. Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram are the most useful social networking applications because of their effectiveness in the field of collaborative learning and their simple way of use.

1.2.4.4.1 Facebook

Facebook is the most popular social network among teachers and students. It is considered as a part of students’ daily life since they use it as a way of communication. The use of Facebook as an online learning tool has greatly increased in recent years due to its ability to help students reach their academic goals and enhance their learning outcomes quickly and easily. In Facebook groups, learners can share links, exchange ideas and make announcements. Fogg et al. (2011, p.3) suggested that “Facebook can provide students with the opportunity to effectively present their ideas, lead online discussions, and collaborate.” In other words, it is a link between teachers, learners and administrations.

1.2.4.4.2 WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a free messenger application. It is widely used among undergraduate students and instructors to send audio, videos, photos and simple text messages. However, many researchers prove its effectiveness in the online learning sphere, especially in language learning since it increases their motivation for learning. This application offers synchronous learning through audio and video calls. In addition, it is a way to share lectures, and assignments and collaborate with a large group of people.

1.2.5.4.3 Telegram

Telegram is software used for messaging and communicating purposes. It was created in August 2013, like WhatsApp, Telegram was not created for educational purposes. However, its great ability to send big-size files makes it the most appropriate application for

the e-learning process. Telegram provides learners and teachers with the ability to create groups and channels for each class or stage. Moreover, it facilitates the process of sending assignments and tasks because it can send and receive any type of file that develops the learning process.

1.2.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning

In the field of education, we have two types of learning: online learning and offline learning. The adoption of online learning has several advantages and disadvantages. Like any other educational program, online learning has a number of upsides and downsides.

1.2.5.1 Advantages of online learning

Today, online learning has become more common and widely used by a variety of teachers and students as well. The COVID-19 pandemic forces all institutions and universities to shift to online learning. This method helps learners and teachers to benefit from its various advantages. In general, online education has many advantages, the main ones are:

1.2.5.1.1 Online Learning Is Flexible

Online learning program provides people with the opportunity to learn from their own places according to their own schedule. Dhull and Arora (2017) asserted that students can learn online from anywhere in the world due to the accessibility of online education. That is to say, the learner is no longer restricted by a specific time or place for learning; he/she can learn anywhere and anytime. One can live his life and carry on his studies from any place without interfering with his everyday activities. According to Thomson (2010), online learning allows students to learn at a time and a place that suites their schedule. Many instructors and learners argue that online learning allows them to focus on the course content and gain the wasted time on the road and traffic issues that may arise when attending traditional classes.

1.2.5.1.2 Cost-Effectiveness

Online learning helps in saving money. The online learning method is cost-effective; learners do not need to spend money on buying books and other school tools. Besides online learning can happen at any location, this can help to avoid travel expenses. All that it requires is a computer with an internet connection. Shank & Sitze (2004) claimed that because online learning is cheaper and faster, students prefer learning from their homes, saving money and time. Thus, this type is more economical for students because it can offer different materials immediately and in a cheaper way.

1.2.5.1.3 Enhancing Communication and Collaboration

Through online learning, learners and teachers can interact and communicate through different social networking applications. As asserted by Shank & Sitze (2004, p. 3) "certain software tools allow learners to communicate with each other, collaborate on projects, and share documents without the need for travel". In other words, the majority of students use different learning platforms such as Zoom and Google platform, in addition to social media applications including Facebook and Telegram, to connect, collaborate and work with each other.

1.2.5.1.4 Self-Pacing

The shift from traditional learning models to online ones permits self-paced learning. This process helps learners choose their own assignments and times of learning. Self-paced learning offers learners the opportunity to learn at their own speed, whether it be, slow or fast. Furthermore, the benefits of online learning include increased satisfaction and reduced stress (Codone et al.,2001). Hence, online learning can remove time pressure and stress of completing the assignment at the same speed as the others.

1.2.5.2 Disadvantages of Online Learning

Besides its infinite number of advantages, online learning also has some disadvantages that both students and teachers should be aware of and avoid.

1.2.5.2.1 Technology Issues

Kumar (2015) confirmed that many learners cannot access online platforms due to inadequate bandwidth and weak internet connections. In some cases, it is very hard to apply the online learning system due to the inaccessibility of online materials and the poor quality of the connection network. Both teachers and learners should acquire knowledge about how to use educational technologies for the sake of ensuring the success of the online learning program.

1.2.5.2.2 Low Motivation

Low motivation is a problem that many online learners suffer from. Not all students are ideal for online learning. Many of them have motivation or procrastination problems and need a lot of individual attention from their teachers. Hence, they will not be able to show any progress after enrolling in the online learning method. The lack of motivation is one of the most common challenges that E-learning professionals and users (teachers/students) face (Pappas, 2016). In other words, educational technologies serve as a means of distraction that can cause a lack of attention and thus difficulties in transferring and understanding lessons. Lack of motivation can lead the students to serious problems such as laziness, which can badly affect the students' progress.

1.2.5.2.3 Lack of Communication

In online learning, it is not easy to interact with classmates and instructors orally. In addition to that, some students are not good at typing, so they often face many difficulties in writing their assignments and replying to their teachers. Dhull and Arora (2017) assumed that online learning does not allow for face-to-face interaction with the teacher, which is very important for establishing a link between student and teacher. The lack of interaction with

teachers becomes an obstacle for some learners who understand better through face-to-face communication with their instructors. Furthermore, online learning can cause some sort of misunderstanding between teachers and students that can affect learners' improvement negatively due to the misinterpretation of the different activities.

1.2.6 Teachers' and Learners' Roles in Online Teaching/ Learning

Human beings face numerous changes in their lifestyles with the continuous development of technology. Therefore, these changes also affect the educational system and learning styles. The transition from traditional learning to the distance mode leads to the shift from a teacher-centered method to a learner-centered one, which leads to a radical change in teachers' and learners' roles.

1.2.6.1 Teachers' Roles

Due to the huge technological development, the role of the teacher has been changed. According to Nedjah (2010, p.74), "The role of teachers has changed and continues to change from being an instructor to becoming a constructor, facilitator, coach, and creator of learning environments". In recent years, the teacher has moved from being the only source of knowledge and the only one who performs responsibilities in the classroom to being an active participant in the teaching and learning process.

With the shift to the new online learning environment, teachers face many unfamiliar tasks and responsibilities. The teacher has a very important role that starting with being an instructor who guides and directs students to the use of educational technologies and being a coach who facilitates learning, to a designer of the learning environment. Mason (1998, as cited in Liu et al., 2005) admitted that the online teacher should act as a manager during the online session. He needs to shape and guide the online interaction, set the objectives, clear agendas for the online course, select the content and design the assessment tools.

Teachers should be aware of the new online learning settings and environment so they can help their learners to adjust and adapt to this new environment. Palloff and Pratt (2007) pointed out that the instructor needs to become comfortable and proficient with the use of different educational technologies, and then transfer them to the students. In other words, online teachers play different roles including providing learners with technical support resources, solving technical issues and engaging learners in different online activities for getting better outcomes.

As asserted by Ryan et al (2000, p. 110) "The main role of the online tutor is that of educational facilitator: to contribute specialist knowledge and insight, focus the discussion on the critical points, to ask questions and respond to student's contributions". Thus, the online teacher should act as a facilitator who creates a collaborative environment in which learners could engage, interact and identify themselves freely. It is important to mention that teachers cannot be replaced by any technology because they are the source of support and motivation for their learners since they are the ones who monitor and push them to learn.

1.2.6.2 Students' Roles

In online learning education, students should take on many responsibilities and be aware of their important role in this process. Given the fact that online learning is a learner-centered approach, the learner is the main responsible for his/her studies. Within the online environment, learners are expected to be self-directed while the teacher is the supporter of that process. Birch (2001, as cited in Borges, 2008) mentioned five main competencies that online learners should acquire. His list includes Operational, Cognitive, Collaborative, Self-directing and Course-specific competencies.

- **Operational Competence**

The online learners should know how to use the ICT tools appropriately. This includes the knowledge of using ICT tools for communication and collaboration, in addition to information search, retrieval, analysis and dissemination.

- **Cognitive Competence**

This competence has to do with the learners' ability to apply their knowledge, learn the course content and ask for help through many skills. The main skills include knowing how to get course materials and benefit from them, providing and asking for help, learning in a reflective way and critical thinking.

- **Collaborative Competence**

Online learning requires a learner with the desire to participate and collaborate with his teachers and classmates. Learners should have the intention to express their ideas and opinions, participate in-class activities, give and receive feedback and negotiate meanings with classmates and teachers.

- **Self-directing Competence**

It is necessary for online learners to have strong self-management, self-monitoring and self-appraisal. The learner is responsible for his/her own learning. Thus, learners have to set their goals, plan for the learning process, learn from mistakes and be prepared for accepting criticism and respecting others' opinions.

- **Course-specific Competences**

Learners are asked to practice what they have already learned, including the use of the newly acquired vocabulary when communicating with classmates and teachers, participating in-class activities, and taking notes of new expressions that could be used in future discussions.

1.27. Teaching Speaking in an Online Environment

Speaking skills are the most essential part of communication accordingly this skill should be given a great importance in the language class. Mounika and Thamarana (2018, p. 6) assumed that “teaching speaking involves teaching vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, basics of communication, socio-cultural information and other sub-skills of teaching listening and speaking. Speaking activities help in teaching all these aspects in different ways”. Speaking in the online area should be taught via many activities; according to Mounika and Thamarana (2018) These activities include voice chats, pictures and many other speaking online learning tools.

Video chats are an effective way to enhance learners’ communicative skills. The video chat tool allows both teachers and learners to hear and see each other despite the geographical distance. Through video chats, the learner will be able to listen to his/her teacher’s pronunciation and repeat after them. In addition, teachers will be able to identify and correct the learners’ mistakes.

When it comes to teaching speaking skills, pictures are one of the most widely used tools. El-khresheh and Al-Ruwaili (2020, p. 298) believed that “learners get dynamic when introducing new teaching aids, previous studies demonstrated that pictures are one of these influential aids, it is useful in terms that it stimulates students’ cognition, improve their comprehension, increase their motivation and interest towards language learning”. A teacher can send some pictures to his learners so they can describe them in recorded audio and send them back to their teachers to correct their mistakes which help to enhance their speaking abilities.

Conclusion

To conclude, online learning is regarded as a form of distance learning that based on the use of internet. It is important to integrate technology with education since it facilitates and improves the teaching and learning process. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online

learning was the only solution to keep the educational process going on and protect both teachers and learners from the spread of the virus.

Chapter Two: Field Work

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the fieldwork of the current study which aims at investigating the effects of online learning on students' speaking skills performance. The research intends to shed light on the importance of the integration of modern educational technologies with teaching speaking skills and identifying the main difficulties that students may face while learning speaking through online tools. The chapter presents a depiction of the research methodology used in this work. Then, it provides a detailed interpretation and analysis of the findings obtained from the students' questionnaire.

2.1 Population and Participants

The population selected for this study consists of third-year students of English at Mila University Centre, Department of Foreign Languages during the academic year 2021-2022. Out of 211 students, 118 participate in answering the questionnaire. Third-year students were chosen as our population because their learning experience includes both pre and post-Coronavirus Pandemic stages, so they are aware of the process and can provide more reliable answers than others. In addition, third-year students are considered advanced learners of English with enough abilities in the spoken language.

2.2. Research Instruments

To obtain answers to our research questions, a students' questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was handed to third year students at the department of English at Mila University Centre in the academic year 2021/2022. The students' questionnaire was created via Google Forms and administered online through emails and different social media applications to one hundred and eighteen students.

2.3 Description of the Questionnaire

For the sake of gaining more information and better understanding of the students' perception of online learning and its impact on their speaking skills performance, a questionnaire consists of nineteen (19) questions was administered to the sample of the study. The questionnaire is arranged into four sections. Section one is entitled "General Information". This section gathers general information about the participants; it consists of two questions (Q1-Q2) that permits to know some personal details about each student. Section two is devoted to "The Speaking Skill". It is meant to collect information about the students' speaking skills. It consists of five questions (Q3-Q7). Section three is dedicated to "Students' Perception of Online Learning"; it aims to collect data about the students' opinions of the online learning system. It is comprised of seven questions (Q8-Q14) while "The Impact of Online Learning on the Speaking Skill" is the fourth section. This last section deals with the students' attitudes toward the integration of the new technologies in Oral Expression sessions. It consists of five questions (Q15-Q19).

2.4-Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire

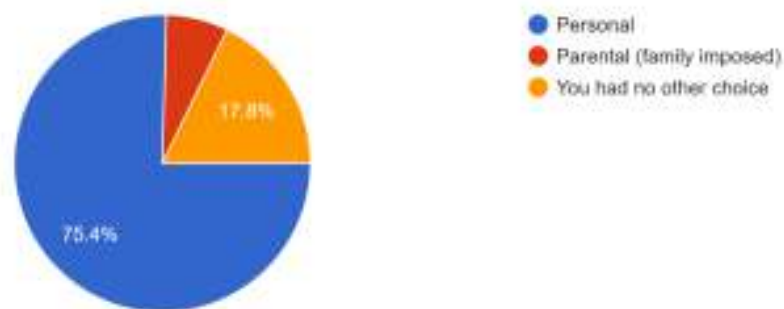
Section One: General Information

Q1. Your choice of English was:

Personal Parental (family imposed) You had no other choice

This question is intended to determine whether students' choice of English was personal, parental, or because they had no other option. In addition, it aims to ask to what extent learners are interested in learning the English language.

Your choice of English was:
118 responses



Graph 01: Students' Choice of English

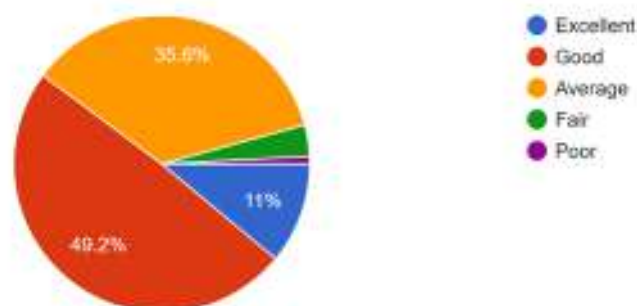
The figure above displays the students 'choice of English. It shows that 75.5% of students choose English for personal interest, while 17.8% of them had no other choice. The rest of the students (6.7%) claimed that their choice of learning English was imposed by their parents or family. That is to say, most English students are very interested in this language, and they are motivated to learn more about it.

Q2. How do you describe your level in English?

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

The purpose of this question is to investigate students' English proficiency.

How do you describe your level in English?
118 responses



Graph 02: Students' English Level

The figure above demonstrated that 49.2% of students consider their English level as good, while 35.6% of them have an average one. 11% of them claimed that they have an excellent level, whereas 3.4% of the participants said that their level in English is fair. The remaining percentage of students (0.8%) admitted that they have a poor level of English. That is to say, the majority of students have a good level of English, which indicate that they could be competent enough in the four skills, and only a few of them have a poor English level, which can be due to the lack of interest in this FL.

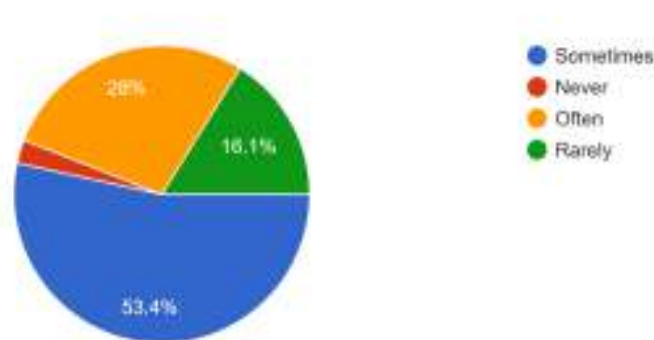
Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Q3. How often do you speak English in class?

Sometimes Never Often Rarely

This question is designed to explore how often students speak English in the classroom, which helps to identify the amount of interaction and communication between learners and teachers during the speaking session.

How often do you speak English in class?
118 responses



Graph 03: Frequency of Speaking of English in the Classroom

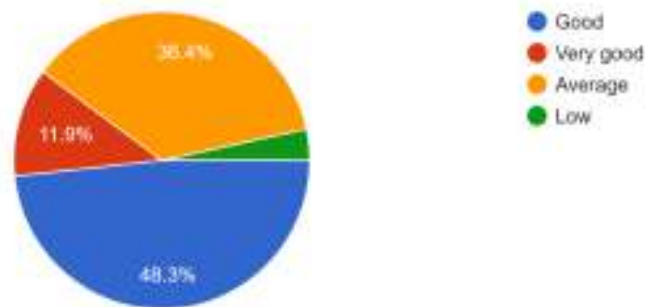
According to the obtained results, 53.4% of the respondents speak the English language sometimes during the classroom session, 28% of them stated that they often speak while learning and 16.1% said that they rarely participate during the speaking session. While only 2.5% of all students answered by never.

Q4.How do you rate your English speaking ability?

Good Very good Average Low

The point behind asking this question is to identify the students' level of speaking skills.

How do you rate your English speaking ability?
118 responses



Graph 04: Students' English speaking ability

The upper graph shows that 48.3% have good speaking ability, whereas 36.4% claimed that their level is average in the speaking skill. On the other hand, 11.9% of participants stated that they have very good speaking ability. The remaining percentage 3.4% admitted that they have poor communicating skills. It can be said that the majority of students have a good level of this important skill.

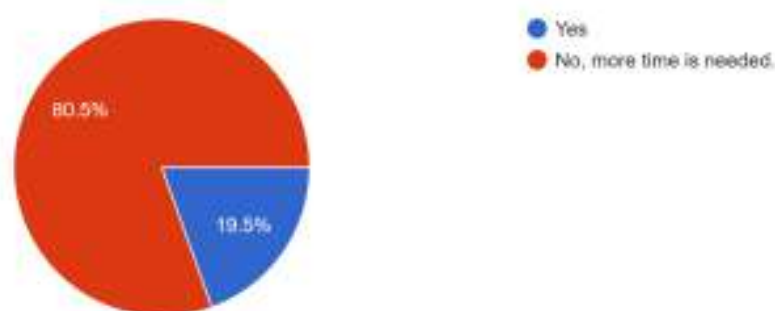
Q5.Does the time devoted to speaking classes seem sufficient to you?

Yes No, more time is needed.

The above question intends to explore students' opinions about whether the time devoted to speaking sessions is sufficient and provide them with opportunities to practice their language or not.

Does the time devoted to speaking classes seem sufficient to you?

118 responses



Graph 05: Time Devoted to Speaking

The majority of students (80.5%) responded that they do not have enough time to speak and practice the language during the Oral Expression sessions, and that they need much more time to practice this important and complicated skill. The remaining percentage (19.5%) believed that the time allocated to practice speaking is sufficient. In other words, the overwhelming majority of learners felt that the amount of time allocated for speaking classes was not adequate and that they needed more chances to interact with their teachers and classmates to enhance their speaking abilities.

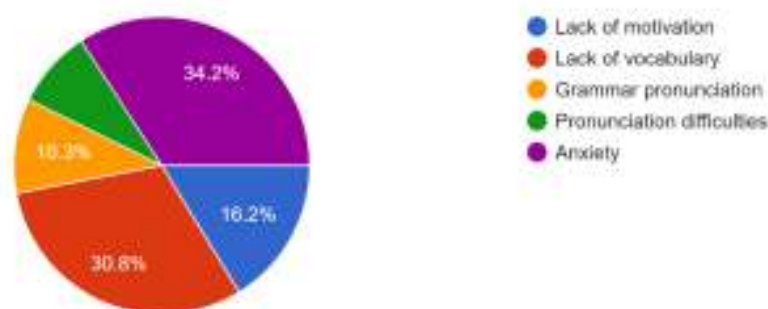
Q6. When practicing speaking, what are the difficulties you encounter?

Lack of motivation Anxiety Grammar
Pronunciation difficulties Lack of vocabulary

The aim of this question is to determine the main difficulties that students may encounter while speaking in order to identify the reasons behind their weak speaking performance.

When practicing speaking, what are the difficulties do encounter?

117 responses



Graph 06: Students' Speaking Difficulties

As indicated in the graph above, 34.2% of the participants considered anxiety as the major problem and the most difficult aspect of speaking. 30.8% of students reported that they face many difficulties while speaking because of their lack of vocabulary and their insufficient language repertoire, while 16.2% stated that the lack of motivation is their major problem. On the other hand, (10.3%) selected grammar as their main difficulty, as they fail to apply grammar rules while speaking. As for the remaining percentage (8.5%), they claimed that they face obstacles in pronouncing the language correctly.

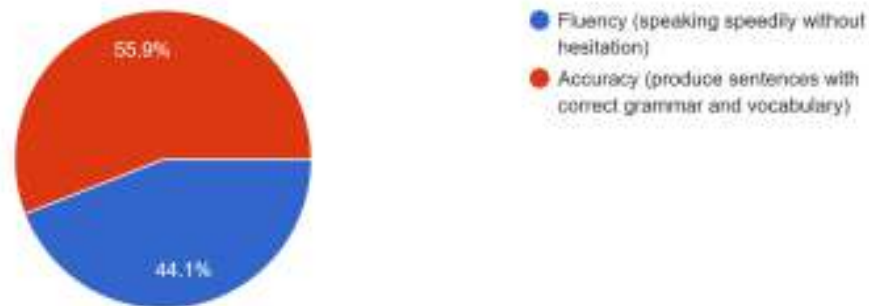
Q7. When speaking English, you are most concerned with:

Fluency (speaking speedily without hesitation)

Accuracy (produce sentences with correct grammar and vocabulary)

This question aims to know whether the participants focus more on fluency or accuracy when using the language.

When speaking English, you are most concerned with:
118 responses



Graph 07: Students' Attitudes towards Accuracy Vs Fluency

This question aims at investigating whether students prefer to be more fluent or more accurate while using the language. The results on the above graph illustrate that 55.9% of the sample selected fluency, whereas 44.1% of them opted for accuracy. This reveals that the majority of learners are more concerned with speaking English fluently and speedily than processing a correct language.

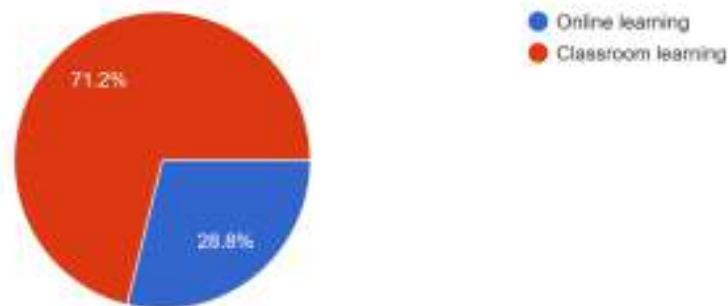
Section Three: Students' perceptions of Online Learning

Q8. Which type of learning do you prefer?

Online learning Classroom learning

This question seeks to know the method of learning students prefer. The traditional classroom learning or the new online learning that necessitates the use of modern educational technologies.

Which type of learning do you prefer?
118 responses



Graph 08: The Type of Learning Preferred by Students

The above results show that almost the entire sample population (71.2%) prefers classroom learning. However, only 28.8% of the participants chose online learning. In other words, the majority of learners prefer classroom learning rather than online learning.

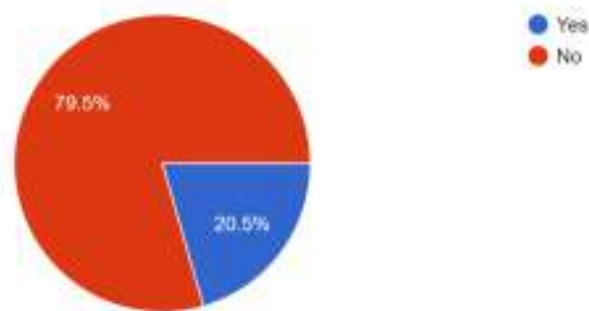
Q9. Have you ever prepared yourself for online learning?

Yes No

If yes, explain how?

In the question above, students asked to specify whether they have been prepared for online learning or not in order to know whether they are familiar with the new tools of teaching and learning or not. Those who answer by (yes) are requested to explain how this preparation was made.

Have you ever prepared yourself for online learning?
117 responses



Graph 09: Students' preparation for online learning

The results indicate that the majority of students (79.5%) have not been adequately prepared for the use of online learning; however, the minority of them (20.5%) stated that they were prepared for the new online learning method. Regarding the second part of the question, some students declared that they have downloaded applications that are made specifically for online learning, while others said that they have worked more in gaining more knowledge about how to use the computer and prepare the digital materials needed.

Q10. How does online learning affect your learning experience?

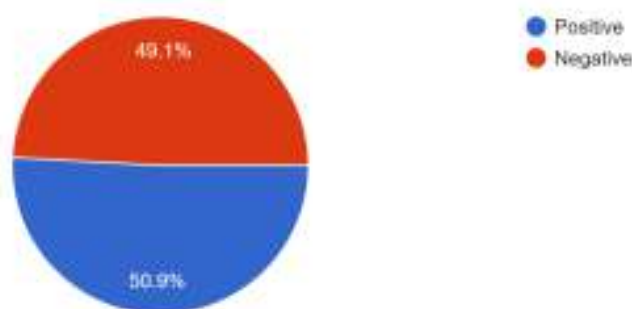
Positive Negative

Justify your answer.....

The objective behind this question is to explore the effectiveness of online learning on students' education to indicate whether it is a negative or a positive effect.

How does online learning affect your learning experience?

116 responses



Graph 10: The effects of online learning on students' learning experience

According to the results obtained from the graph above, more than half of the sample (50.9%) declared that online learning has a positive impact on their learning process. In contrast, 49.1% said that they had a very negative experience with online learning.

Students' justifications:

Some students agreed that online learning has a positive effect on students learning experience especially if we know how to best integrate it into our educational system. I quoted some of their justifications:

“The appropriate use of online tools can help the students to improve their level not only on speaking, but also the other skills because there a large number of websites which are available for free so the learners can benefit from them”.

“It affects us positively because it provides opportunity of engagement to all students even those who are shy or have lack of confidence”.

The other group of students had a different point of view toward the effectiveness of online learning. They believe that online learning has a negative impact on the learning process.

Here are some of their justifications:

“I did not learn anything new. Like if we were in class we'll have much more things to learn like new vocabulary, the new expressions, new terms in different domains, we will

have more courage to speak louder and practice our English more and more than the online learning”

“Personally, online learning is a poor experience I was faced with. This is mainly because of the bad access to the internet, and that there is no face-to-face interaction between teachers and learners, as it should be”.

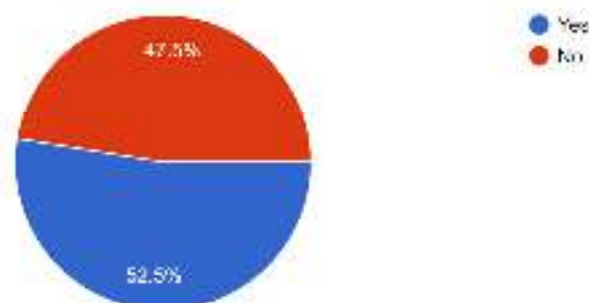
This question is meant to reveal students’ opinions about whether online learning affects their learning experiences positively or negatively. Many justifications were given they were almost divided into two groups. The first group agreed that online learning is more effective than traditional learning, while the other group claimed that this new teaching and learning experience had a negative impact on their learning progress due to its wrong implementation, the lack of appropriate materials and the poor internet connection.

Q11.Does your teacher interact with you online?

Yes No

The question’s objective is to determine if there is any online interaction between teachers and students.

Does your teacher interact with you online?
118 responses



Graph 11: Teacher's Online Interaction with Students

The graph above illustrates that 52.5% of the participants reported that they have an online interaction with their teachers where they can explain to them the online lectures and

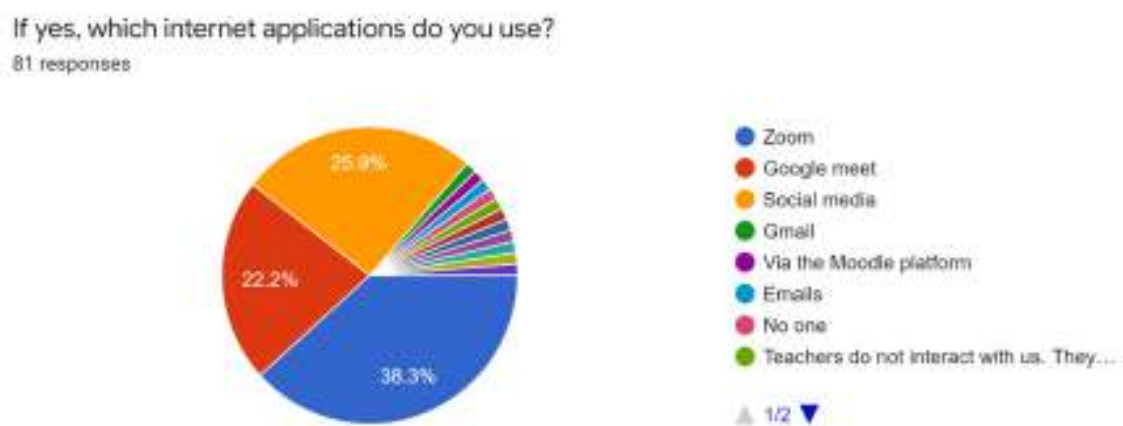
provide them with different clarifications of the online assignments. Whereas, the remaining percentage (47.5%) claimed that they do not have any online interaction with their teachers.

Q12. If yes, which internet applications do you use?

Zoom Google meet Social media

Others.....

Students are asked in this question to identify the online tools they use to interact and communicate with their teachers. Thus, we can determine how EFL teachers at Mila University implement online learning.



Graph 12: Types of internet applications used for interaction

Students were asked about the different online applications used by their teachers when interacting with them. The results above show that 38.3% of the sample indicated that their teachers use Zoom to deliver lessons and assignments. 25.9% of the participants stated that they use Google meet as a tool for teaching online lessons. While 22.2% assumed that their teachers use social media to give instructions and explain lessons. Regarding the second part of the question, some participants said that most of their teachers use Emails as the main online interaction tool, while others declared that they use Google meet and Moodle platform for interaction purposes. This means that Zoom is the dominant application that is mostly used by Mila University Centre teachers.

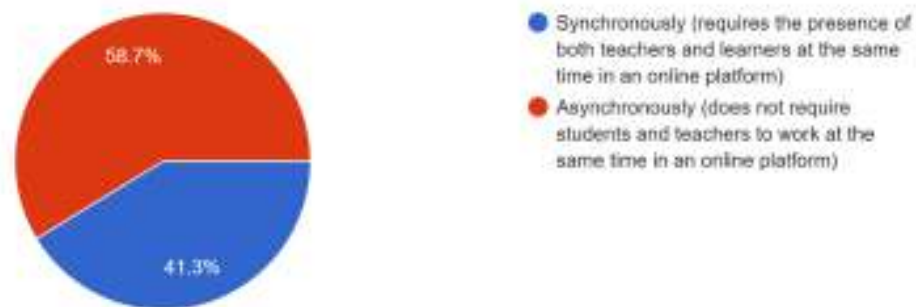
Q13.What is the mode of delivery that your teacher uses?

Synchronously (requires the presence of both teachers and learners at the same time on an online platform)

Asynchronously (does not require students and teachers to work at the same time in an online platform)

The purpose of asking this question is to determine the mode that the teachers use to deliver the lessons to their students in the online learning environment.

What is the mode of delivery that your teacher uses?
109 responses



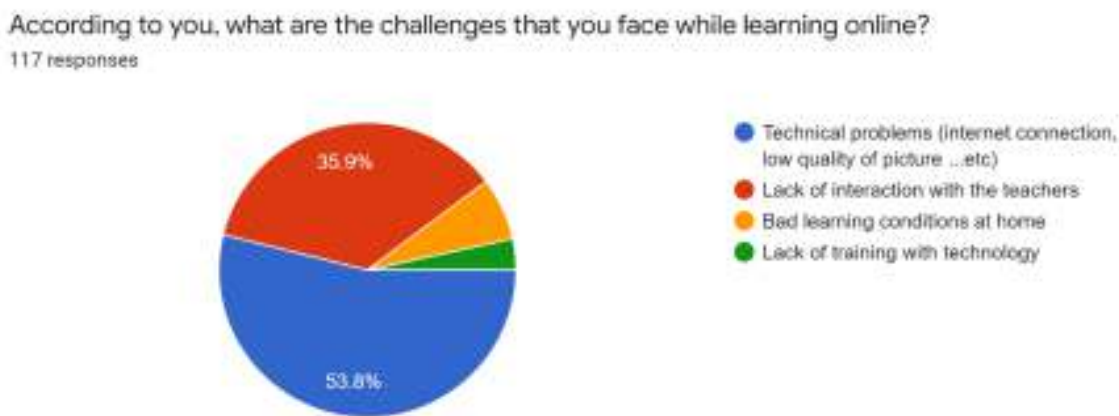
Graph 13: The Mode of Delivery used by Teachers

As it is clearly shown in the results above, the majority of students with the percentage of 58.7% reported that the asynchronous mode of learning is the most widely used by their teachers. On the other hand, 41.3% of the sample argued that their teachers almost all the time use the synchronous mode.

Q14.According to you, what are the challenges that you face while learning online?

- Technical problems (internet connection, low quality of picture ...etc)
- Lack of interaction with the teachers
- Bad learning conditions at home
- Lack of training with technology

The last question of this section aims at identifying the challenges that learners faced during the adoption of online learning.



Graph 14: Online learning challenges encountered by students

In the above question, students were asked about the difficulties they encounter in practicing their speaking. The results represented in Graph 14 showed that 53.8% of the respondents consider technical problems such as the poor internet connection as the major challenge in online learning, while 35.9% of them claimed that their major problem with online learning is the lack of interaction with their teachers. For 6.8% of the students the bad learning conditions at home as one of the main problems that encounter them. Only 3.4% of all participants think that the lack of training with technology is the challenge with online learning.

Part Four: The Impact of Online Learning on Speaking Skills

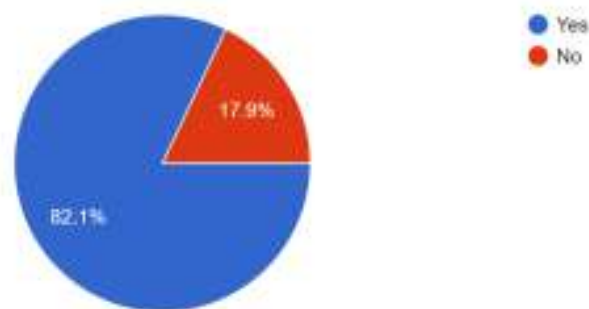
Q15. Do you think that online learning have an impact on your speaking performance?

Yes

No

question, students are asked ify whether they find that online learning has any kind of impact on their speaking skills performance or not.

Do you think that online learning have an impact on students speaking performance?
117 responses



Graph 15: The impact of online learning on students speaking performance

The results on the graph illustrate that a high percentage of students 82.1% think that online learning affects students' speaking abilities. However, a small percentage 17.9% of students stated that online learning has no impact on their speaking skills abilities.

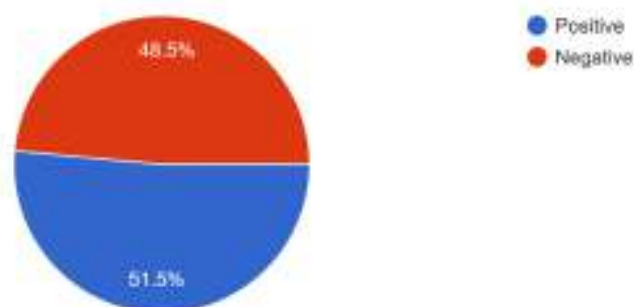
Q16. If yes, do you consider it as positive or negative impact?

Positive Negative

Explain.....

The purpose behind this question is to check the impact of online learning on students speaking abilities to explore if it is a positive or a negative impact. In the second part of this question, students are asked to give some explanations and clarifications to their answers.

If yes, do you consider it as positive or negative impact?
103 responses



Graph 16: Students' attitudes toward the impact on online learning on speaking skills

Students were asked about their opinions about teaching speaking in the online environment, whether it affects it positively or negatively. As it is noticed in the graph above, 51.5% think that the shift to online learning has a positive impact on their speaking skills performance; however, 48.5% indicated that the new online learning method has a negative impact on their speaking performance. Concerning this question, students were asked to justify their answers. It seems that this question has divided the participants into two groups. The first group assumed that online learning has a positive impact on their speaking performance since it offers different materials that can help in enhancing and improving their speaking skills such as videos and applications. In addition, they mentioned that through online learning, they would be able to interact more easily with their teachers, classmates and even native speakers, which will help all students even the shy ones to become more fluent in the spoken language. Some of the participants' answers are given

“It enhances the language proficiency especially at the level of oral performance through teacher-student interaction.”

“Because there are some students who are shy to talk in front of people in the class, but behind the camera, in the online application they are free and talking fluently”.

In contrast with the first group, the second one argued that online learning affect their speaking performance negatively because they need a face-to-face interaction with their teachers where the teacher can guide the learning process and provide them with direct feedback. One of the participants mentioned that “Generally the students' speaking performances depend on visual interactions where the teacher play the role of guide and an instructor of the performance and correcting errors, so if there is no interaction there will be no real performance and no real learning”. Other students assumed that they need real interaction with teachers and classmates to develop their speaking abilities.

Q17. What type of interaction does your teacher create in an online speaking class?

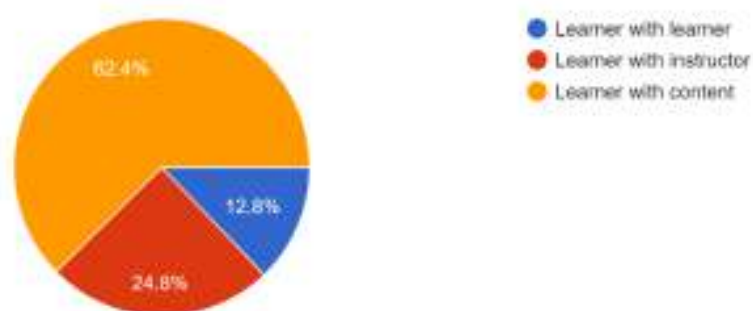
Learner with learner

Learner with instructor

Learner with content

The reason behind this question is to find out the types of interactions that teachers create when having online speaking lessons.

What type of interaction does your teacher create in an online speaking class?
109 responses



Graph 17: The kind of interaction in the online speaking class

From the figure above, we notice that a high percentage of participants 62.4% responded with “learner with content” when they were asked about the kind of interaction that their teachers create in online speaking courses, while 24.8% selected “learner with instructor”. Moreover, only a small number of participants 12.8% selected the option “learner with learner”. Hence, we can notice from the obtained results that most of the teachers prefer to create an interaction between learners and the content when teaching speaking skills.

Q18. How does your teacher assess your performance in an online speaking course?

➤ Video recording through applications

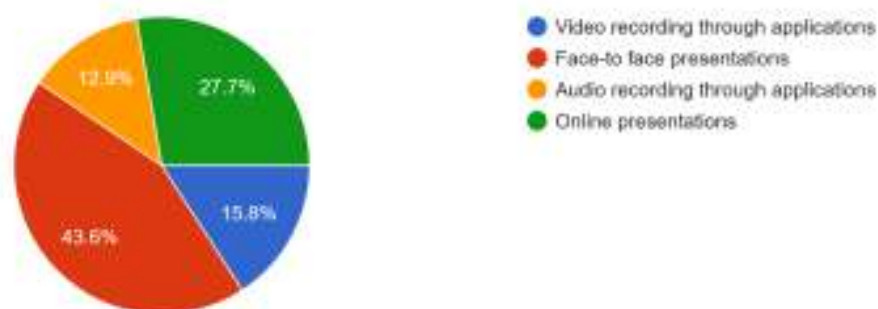
➤ Face-to face presentations

➤ Audio recording through applications

➤ Online presentations

How does your teacher assess your performance in an online speaking course?

101 responses



Graph 18: Types of assessment used by teachers in online speaking course

This question specifically aims at discovering the different types of assessments used by teachers to evaluate their students' speaking performance in the online sphere. The results in Graph 18 indicate that 43.6 of the sample declared that their teachers use the face-to-face presentation to assess their speaking performance. This means that they do not use online tools to assess the learners' progress; they prefer using the traditional way even if the lectures are delivered through online learning tools. 27.7% of participants stated that their speaking performance was assessed via online presentations, while 15.8% of them said that they have sent recorded videos through different applications to their teachers, so they could evaluate their speaking skill progress. The remaining percentage (12.9%) claimed that audio recording through applications is the type of online assessment that their teachers use to assess their speaking performance.

Q19. Do you prefer the traditional method of learning speaking skills or the online method? Which one suits you best?

The aim of this question is to reveal the learners' opinions about the two teaching and learning methods; whether, they prefer the traditional face-to-face learning method where they are obliged to be physically present in the classroom or the new one that requires the integration of technology and the use of online learning tools with the ability to learn from

their homes or any other place and anytime. From the students' answers, it is clear that the participants are divided into three groups.

The first group claimed that online learning suits them more than traditional learning. They provide some explanations including:

- “I do prefer the online method in learning speaking because I feel more comfortable in participation in the online lessons”.
- “Personally, I prefer the online method because it helps to learn anywhere and everywhere”.
- “The online one because online learning is not limited to a specific group or subject you may interact with anyone and choose whatever you want to learn which will increase the learners' motivation”.

In other words, many participants prefer online learning because it provides them with the opportunity to learn wherever and whenever they want to. In addition, online learning offers all kinds of students' the ability to interact with others from the entire world without being shy or anxious which will create a sense of curiosity to learn more.

The second group argued that the traditional method of learning is a better way than the new one. Their justifications are summarized below:

- “I prefer the traditional one because the teacher and the learners are in the same place, and they are not interrupted by poor internet connection”.
- “I personally prefer the traditional method, because it gives more chances for the verbal interaction where the teacher assessment and guidance is obviously present”.
- “I prefer the traditional learning method. It suits me more due to the amount of motivation we get from interacting with the teacher and at the same time with the other students”.

From the justifications above, we can say that a large proportion of students prefer traditional learning since it gives them the opportunity to interact directly with teachers and classmates. Furthermore, by using the traditional method of learning, students have more opportunities to collaborate and practice their language, which leads to the development of their speaking skills.

The third and last group stated that the integration of traditional methods of learning with online learning would provide them with a successful learning experience. Some of their explanations:

- “I prefer both of them because each method has positive results on the learners”.
- “We must do both. The traditional method is more effective; however, online learning can help us to have more classes”.

Hence, some students think that a mixture of both traditional and online methods of learning can have a positive impact on their speaking skills development because they can get more opportunities to practice their language via face-to-face and online interaction.

2.3.4 Interpretation and Discussion of the Results

The students' questionnaire was administered to gather information concerning EFL learners' attitudes toward the effects of the online learning method on their speaking skills performance. According to the previously mentioned results, we can draw several interpretations through making a correlation between the students' answers in the four sections of the questionnaire.

The results indicate that the majority of English learners choose to study this language for their personal interest, without any obligation from their families, in an attempt to enhance their level and gain more knowledge about this language. Additionally, the obtained results reveal that most of the students have a fairly good English level. The findings of the present

study also indicate that most of the students speak only sometimes during the speaking sessions and only a few of them speak more frequently while learning, even though the results show that a huge percentage of learners have good speaking ability, while only the minority of them claimed that they have poor speaking skills. Moreover, the study shows that students are unsatisfied with the time allocated to the speaking sessions. This is because speaking is a complex skill that requires a lot of practice and interaction, especially with teachers, so they can guide learners and provide them with the necessary feedback on vocabulary as they assess their progress.

Despite the fact that the majority of students have good speaking abilities, according to their answers, they encounter many linguistic and psychological difficulties when practicing English due to anxiety caused by the lack of confidence or shyness. Moreover, a large number of students suffer from a lack of vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties, which negatively affect their ability to express their thoughts and feelings. The data obtained from the questionnaire reveals that students are more concerned with speaking the English language fluently and quickly without hesitation than producing grammatically correct and error-free sentences. Thus, the major aim of English students is to be fluent speakers of the language that will allow them to interact with people all over the world.

Almost all students agree that classroom learning is better than online learning. In other words, they are more likely to reject it as a learning method. It was found that the overwhelming majority of participants have never been prepared for online learning, which can explain why most of them are more into classroom learning. Even though most of students do not prefer online learning as their major learning method, they found that it affects positively their learning experience since it offers more materials and opportunities to learn also it increases the quality of learning because it is more interesting and flexible the traditional learning. Students, teachers, and administrators must be prepared to use online

learning technologies and tools to have a positive experience and reap the benefits of this learning method.

A large number of third year EFL learners at Mila University Centre experienced the synchronous mode of learning through the use of different learning technologies and applications, especially Zoom, with which teachers can deliver and explain the lessons while interacting and assessing the learners' progress to make the learning process more productive. However, many students state that technical issues are the most difficult obstacles they face in the online learning environment. Interaction with their teachers and classmates was interrupted because of the poor internet connection, which led to developing negative attitudes toward the use of online learning. The online learning method could be a very effective way of teaching the English language if it is applied in good circumstances.

The obtained results also illustrate that almost all the participants believe that online learning affects their speaking performance. Concerning the type of this effect, more than half of students' state that online learning has a positive effect since the use of modern technologies in EFL classes will enhance their speaking abilities because it gives them the opportunity to interact with native speakers and watch educational videos via the internet. In addition, the results show that online learning of the speaking skills helps shy students to engage and share their thoughts and ideas without any embarrassment. On the other hand, many of our participants prefer face-to-face interaction with teachers because it allows for asking for direct clarifications and increases their motivation to speak.

In addition, an overwhelming number of students choose learner with content interaction as the type used by their teachers, whereas only a small number of learners select learner with instructor option, which indicates that there was not too much interaction between students and their teachers when learning speaking in the online sphere. Finally, the results from the questionnaire analysis demonstrated that face-to-face presentations are the method that is

mostly used by teachers to assess their learners' speaking development. However, the online assessment tools such as online presentation and video recording are less commonly used because of the technical problems that may arise during the assessment session.

In summary, most of third-year English students at Mila University Centre argue that the traditional method of learning the speaking skills suits them better than the online one because it makes them feel more comfortable while learning since they grow up using this method compared to the new online way of teaching. In fact, the university, the teachers and students as well are not ready enough for online learning; our homes and our universities lack the necessary equipment of online learning, and even if we have the technological tools, the internet connection is a serious problem that will interrupt our online learning.

Conclusion

The results yielded from the students' questionnaire show that most of third-year students believe that using online learning could affect positively their speaking performance. Most of the students prefer face-to-face learning of speaking skills rather than online learning because it offers more opportunities to practice the English language through direct interaction with both teachers and learners. The importance and efficacy of online speaking classes cannot be denied because they really help in a way or another in improving our learners' speaking performance. However, the online speaking classes, firstly, should not replace the face to face speaking class; it must be an additional aid. Furthermore, universities, teachers and learners have to be well-equipped with the necessary tools of online classes.

Chapter Three

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to analyzing and describing the oral expression lessons module that has been delivered to third year students at Mila University Center through the university's Moodle Platform to improve and enhance their speaking skills abilities. Thus, the analyses of the delivered lessons will provide the needed data about whether those lessons could help in developing third year students speaking abilities or not. Moreover, this chapter will provide an analysis of third year English students' oral expression lessons followed by a discussion of the results to end up with some limitations of the study, pedagogical implementations, and a general conclusion.

3.1 Description and Analysis of Oral Expression Lessons

The entire oral expression lessons module were delivered for third year EFL students in the form of YouTube videos.

1 The First Video



Global pollution: seeking solutions: BBC News Review



Figure 1: Global Pollution

The main aim behind this YouTube video is to help English students acquire some new words and expressions to talk about global pollution. The video provides three important words that could be used by learners to talk about this issue. The words are “Armageddon”, “Pact” and “Rampant”. These new words help students to enrich their vocabulary and express their thoughts more easily.

Many students agreed that this video is very beneficial and helps them improve their English language skills and acquire new vocabulary that they may use in their daily lives to express their ideas correctly. I quoted some of their comments:

“I literally loved the way you guys are explaining with so ease and in an understanding manner Thanks for the valuable videos”.

“I like the lessons very much. It’s informative and useful I can both learn the vocabulary and social environmental related news”.

“I am studying English and your videos are very useful for me”.

2 The Second Video



Figure 2: The Importance of Listening to International Students

This video focuses on the importance of listening skills for international students who are non-native speakers of the English language. This lecture aims to answer the following questions: How we resolve listening comprehension problems? Why listening matters for international students? In addition to the ways of making lectures more accessible to them. The professor responds to the questions above, as well as some language teaching adjustments that should be implemented to help students better understand; otherwise, they

will remain audience rather than participants. During the lecture, the professor focuses on the importance of using different expressions to talk about one thing so the student can understand the meaning and gain more vocabulary. According to the video, EFL students should be encouraged to practice their language inside and outside the classroom by talking and listening to other people, which will help them to enhance their speaking abilities. Moreover, the professor emphasized the importance of making more materials available online so students could have sufficient time to learn the language before or after the lecture, since it is impossible to cover everything during the limited time of the face-to-face learning process.

3 The Third Video



The Celts - BBC Series, Episode 4 - From Camelot to Christ - Full Episode



Figure 3: The Celts

Oral expression teacher for third year English students at Mila University Center uploaded the above video. The video contains the history of “The Celts” who were a collection of Indo European peoples in Europe and Anatolia, Identified by sharing a similar language, religious beliefs, and traditions. This program looks at who the Celts were, their origins and what makes their culture so unique. The unlimited amount of information in this video can help FL students learn new vocabulary that can be used to talk about the different historical events.

4 The Fourth Video



Figure 4: M.E and me

This video is a documentary that focuses on the ME disease. The documentary investigates how young people suffer from this illness that has a wide range of symptoms.

The most common symptoms of Myalgic encephalomyelitis, also called chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), include devastating fatigue, digestion issues, and brain fog. ME disease can affect any one, including children. This documentary provides learners with the opportunity to learn more about this unknown disease through the patients' stories, which will help them to acquire new medical terms that they may use to talk about the different medical issues and treatments with the appropriate pronunciation.

5 The Fifth Video



Upper-class Accent Examples

1,9 M de vues · il y a 1 a

Figure 5: Upper class Accent Examples

The video contains some examples of upper class people's English accents. This video could be very helpful for EFL students as it provides them with the opportunity to listen to a number of native speakers who talk about different subjects and learn from them

how to use and pronounce the English language correctly and appropriately. The majority of learners write positive comments under this video. They claimed that the language was very clear and understandable, which helps to improve and enhance their listening and speaking performance. The comments include:

“Well, I have to admit as a non-English person I understand everything. I always struggle to understand the pronunciation of other English people but they pronounced every word.

Great ! “.

“Excellent and helpful video”.

“Surprisingly, they all sound very clear and easy to understand”.

“As a non-native I wish all English natives could speak as clearly as them”.

Thus, many of the students agreed that the video was very helpful since the language was clear and easy to understand which facilitated the learning process.

6 The Sixth Video



Figure 6: First Omicron Science

The aim of this video is to explain more to people the effects of the newly emerged virus (COVID 19) especially its new variant “Omicron”. The unpredictable spread of corona virus pandemic effects all the domains in people’s lives, so it was necessary to know what this virus is and how it works. This video explains the process of one variant of this virus, which is “Omicron”. It provides the audience with the necessary information and balances out the hysteria caused by the media. This video could be very interesting for EFL students because it includes a number of important pieces of information that students can learn and use to talk about this pandemic with others, especially during this time since it is still affecting many people’s lives.

7 The Seventh Video



Figure 7: Philosophy of Language and Mind

The above video discusses the philosophy of language and mind. The video aims at answering the following questions: what is meaning? How do we actually understand each other? Moreover, how do words refer to objects? The video includes very interesting and deeply philosophical questions. The video explains how people can understand what others are saying using the language and how they can process sentences and words that could have meaning and could be understood by other people. This video's content can assist students in understanding how to construct a meaningful sentence that others can understand and in more easily expressing their thoughts.

8 The Eighth Video



Steven Pinker: Linguistics as a Window to Understanding the Brain | Big Think

2,9 M de vues · il y a 9 a

Figure 8: Linguistics as a Window to Understanding the Brain

This video provides a deeper definition of language. Language is considered as a miraculous gift that distinguishes humans from other species and is an essential part of humanity since it is the mean for sharing knowledge and ideas. The video also includes the study of how languages work, including grammar (the study of words, sentences and phrases), phonology (the study of sounds), semantics (the study of meanings) and pragmatics (the study of the use of language in conversation). It also studies how the language is processed, how it is acquired by children, and how it is computed in the brain. The video contains an excellent lecture that could be very helpful for EFL students to have a deep

understanding of the English language use and structure and that will lead to a better understanding of the language items that facilitate the teaching and learning process.

9 The Ninth Video



Mountains (Full Episode) | Hostile Planet

26 M de vues · il y a 1 a

Figure 9: Mountains/ Hostile Planet

The whole video is about the highest mountains on earth that the snow leopards, mountain goats, golden eagles, gelada monkeys and barnacle goslings considered their homes. The video shows that in these mountains, the extreme weather, scant food, and limited oxygen can overwhelm even the strongest. The video is full of new information that students can learn, especially for those who are interested in the animal world and the life up in the mountains. There is more than anyone might expect. EFL students may gain a lot of

new vocabulary and expressions that might help them to talk with others about nature and animals and participate in many conversations concerning these topics without any hesitation.

10 The Tenth Video



Oxford London Lecture 2012: "21st Century -- The Last Century of Youth" ▼

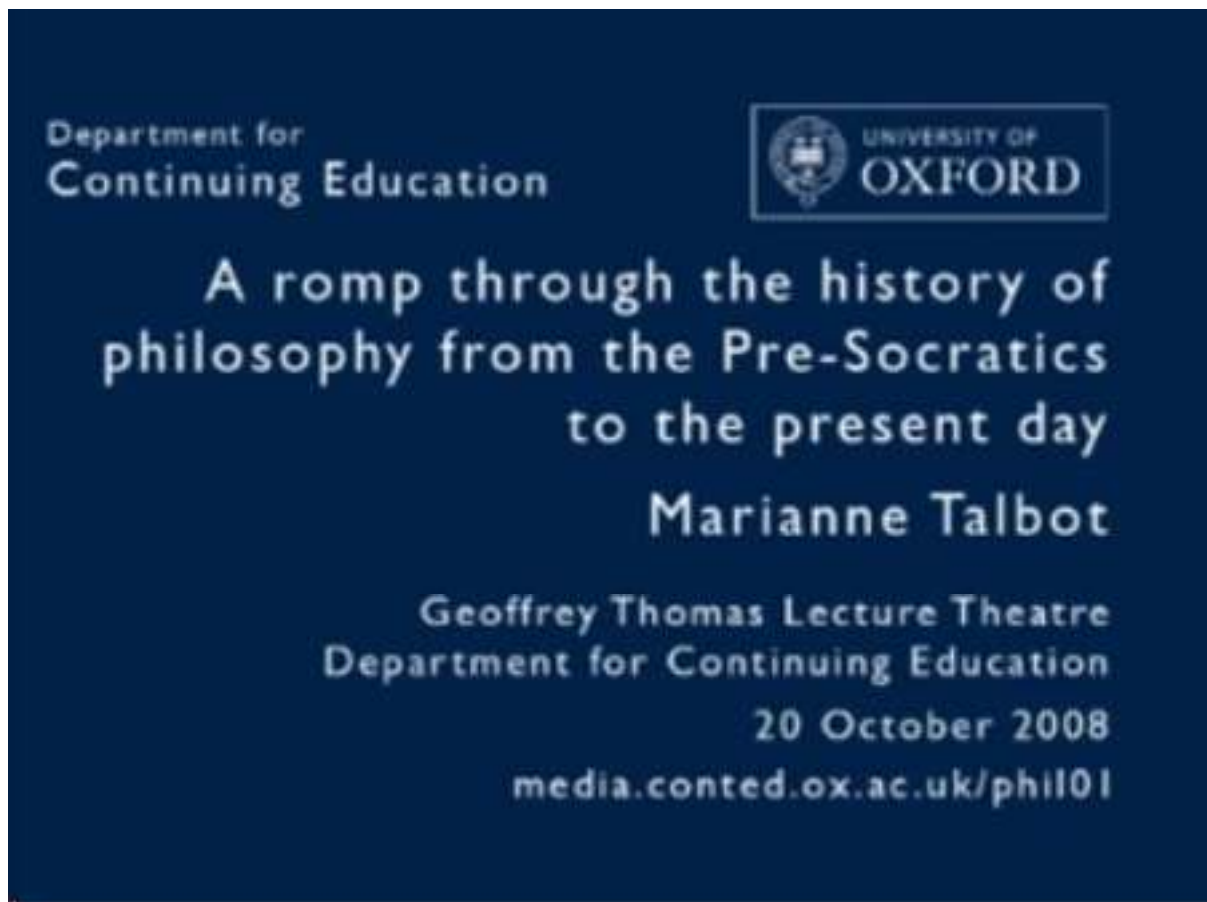
233 k vues · il y a 10 a

Figure 10: 21st Century-The Last Century of Youth

The video discusses the issue of the rapid declining percentage of young people around the world. The aim behind this video is to discover why the fertility rate has come down in most countries. According to the video, in the few coming years, there will be more old people over 65 than young in the world and the youthful demography will stop. This video includes many new things that EFL learners could learn and use in their daily lives. The video discusses a very interesting subject that learners might talk about and discuss the

issue with others, which can help them to enhance their language skills and share their ideas at the same time.

11 The Eleventh Video



A romp through the history of philosophy from the Pre-Socratics to the present day



118 k vues · il y a 8 a

Figure 11: A Romp through the History of Philosophy

The video provides the history of philosophy from the pre Socratics to the present day. The content of the video shows a deep and detailed explanation of philosophy from its beginning until the current time. In addition, it demonstrates some philosophers' lives development and ideas for a better understanding of the topic. The content of this video could

help EFL learners understand better what philosophy is and gain more knowledge about it since it is a very good subject to discuss with others while practicing the language using the new vocabulary that might be acquired through this video.

3.2 Interpretation and discussion

On the basis of the analysis of third year English students' oral expression module lessons at Mila University Center, it has been noticed that all the published lessons on the university's Moodle Platform are in the form of YouTube videos. The analysis indicates that the videos discuss a wide range of topics, not all of which are related to language teaching and learning.

Teachers depend only on those YouTube videos to teach speaking skills for their learners. It could be a good way to help them acquire new vocabulary and listen to the appropriate pronunciation. However, it is impossible for learners to be fluent speakers without practicing the newly acquired language. EFL students' need to interact and discuss with their teachers and classmates in order to enhance their speaking abilities. They need to use the language in order to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas because it is impossible to be a good speaker if you do not use the language for communication purposes.

Depending only on YouTube videos to teach speaking skills for FL learners cannot be an effective way to develop learners' speaking abilities, especially with the long videos that may make the learners bored if the video's subject is not interesting to them. Teachers should use the different technological education tools such as Zoom, Google Meet and Telegram that provide both teachers and students with the opportunity to interact with each other directly. Through these tools, learners will be able to practice the new vocabulary that they have acquired through watching the YouTube videos, and teachers will be able to evaluate their learners' speaking performance progress while correcting their mistakes at the same time.

In summary, enhancing learners' speaking skills performance requires more than just listening to different videos. However, we cannot deny the importance of watching videos that help learners acquire new words and listen to correct pronunciation, which can greatly develop listening skills; yet, speaking requires direct interaction between learners and teachers, as well as the learner with his or her classmate, in order to practice the newly acquired vocabulary.

3.3 Pedagogical Implementations

In light of the previous discussion and results, some pedagogical implications are suggested for both EFL teachers and students at the English department of Mila University Centre in order to provide a better online experience for learning speaking skills.

- Students should be aware of the importance of using online learning tools to improve their speaking performance.
- All educational institutions should be provided with the necessary technological materials to create a more productive learning environment for both teachers and students.
- Both teachers and learners should be trained in the use of technological tools that enhance and avoid the technical difficulties encountered in online learning.

It is recommended that online speaking lessons should be done through audiovisual tools to provide students with more opportunities to engage and interact with their teachers and classmates.

- Teachers should provide time to answer their learners' questions to increase their motivation concerning learning online and use different strategies in teaching speaking to attract the learners' attention.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

Like any other research, the present study encountered some difficulties and obstacles that hampered its successful implementation and led to some limitations.

- The first weakness is the lack of primary resources on online learning and its effect on students speaking performance since it is a new subject that has not been much researched previously due to its relativity to the newly discovered pandemic.
- The non-free books and articles lead to the change of some elements of the content.
- Most of the students did not answer the open-ended questions, which lead to some difficulties in collecting data.

Conclusion

The analysis of third year students' oral expression module lessons shows that teachers depend only on YouTube videos to teach speaking skills; they do not use any educational technological tool that provides them with the opportunity to interact directly with their learners so they can evaluate their progress and correct their mistakes. Learning from YouTube videos could be helpful for learners to be good listeners and speakers, but they need to practice and use the acquired knowledge to interact directly with their teachers and classmates through the different online learning tools.

General Conclusion

The implementation of online learning tools in foreign language teaching and learning has become a must since it provides learners with new opportunities to enhance their language learning process through the use of its different types and tools that suits all kinds of learners. Therefore, many researchers seek to investigate new methods and techniques to integrate educational technologies to teach speaking skills. Online learning tools for speaking skills seem to be more interesting and motivating rather than traditional learning boring methods. This assumption led to the integration of online learning in teaching speaking skills. The main aim behind the current study is to investigate the effects of online learning on third-year students of English speaking skills performance.

The findings of this research revealed that most third-year EFL learners at Mila University Centre experience the online mode for teaching speaking skills. The results demonstrate that the shift to online learning in teaching speaking skills has a positive impact on students' speaking performance. According to the students, learning to speak in the online environment has provided them with more opportunities to practice their language through different tools. Furthermore, they indicate that online learning of speaking skills is more interesting and enjoyable, and that the amount of interaction increases, which improves their speaking skills performance.

Bringing this to an end, teaching speaking in the online sphere is not an easy task. Thus, it is necessary to provide good learning conditions for both teachers and learners for better achievement. It is hoped that this work will be used for further investigations.

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Appendix

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is a part of a Master dissertation that aims at investigating the effects of online learning on students speaking skills performance. We would be very thankful if you spare few minutes of your time to fill out this questionnaire. You are kindly requested to complete this questionnaire by putting a tick (✓) in the corresponding box or by making a full statement whenever necessary.

Section One: General Information

Q1. Your choice of English was:

Personal Parental (family imposed) You had no other choice

Q2. How do you describe your level in English?

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Q3. How often do you speak English in class?

Sometimes Never Often Rarely

Q4. How do you rate your English speaking ability?

Good Very good Average Low

Q5. Does the time devoted to speaking classes seem sufficient to you?

Yes No, more time is needed.

Q6. When practicing speaking, what are the difficulties you encounter?

Lack of motivation Anxiety Grammar pronunciation

Pronunciation difficulties Lack of vocabulary

Q7. When speaking English, you are most concerned with:

Fluency (speaking speedily without hesitation)

Accuracy (produce sentences with correct grammar and vocabulary)

Section Three: Students Perception of Online Learning

Q8. Which type of learning do you prefer?

Online learning Classroom learning

Q9. Have you ever prepared yourself for online learning?

Yes No

If yes, explain how?

Q10. How does online learning affect your learning experience?

Positive Negative

Justify your answer.....

Q11. Does your teacher interact with you online?

Yes No

Q12. If yes, which internet applications do you use?

Zoom Google meet Social media

Others.....

Q13. What is the mode of delivery that your teacher uses?

Synchronously (requires the presence of both teachers and learners at the same time in an online platform)

Asynchronously (does not require students and teachers to work at the same time in an online platform)

Q14. According to you, what are the challenges that you face while learning online?

Technical problems (internet connection, low quality of picture ...etc)

Lack of interaction with the teachers Learning conditions at home

Lack of training with technology

Section Four: The Impact of Online Learning on Speaking Skill

Q15. Do you think that online learning have an impact on students speaking performance?

Yes

No

Q16. If yes, do you consider it as positive or negative impact?

Positive

Negative

Explain.....

.....

Q17.What type of interaction does your teacher creates in an online speaking class?

Learner with learner

Learner with instructor

Learner with content

Q18. How does your teacher assess your performance in an online speaking course?

Video recording through applications face-to face presentations

Audio recording through applications presentations

Q19.Do you prefer the traditional method of learning speaking skills or the online method? Which one suits you best?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your collaboration

المخلص

أجبر الانتشار الواسع لوباء كورونا COVID-19 جميع الجامعات والمؤسسات على الانتقال من طريقة التعليم الحضوري إلى طريقة التعليم عبر الإنترنت، الأمر الذي يتطلب مزيداً من التقنيات التعليمية لضمان نجاح تجربة التعلم عبر الإنترنت. لطريقة التعليم الجديدة عبر الإنترنت تأثير مباشر على تدريس التعبير الشفهي، لأنها تتطلب الكثير من التفاعل والتواصل. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في آثار التحول إلى مجال التعليم عبر الإنترنت على مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب، بالإضافة إلى تسليط الضوء على التحديات الأكثر شيوعاً التي يواجهها الطلاب أثناء عملية التعلم، وأخيراً، تدرس أكثر الأدوات فعالية واستراتيجيات تدريس المهارات الشفوية عبر الإنترنت. ولتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة تم تقديم استبيان عبر الإنترنت لطلاب السنة الثالثة من اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المركز الجامعي ميله. تكشف النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن الطلاب يدركون التأثير الإيجابي للتعلم عبر الإنترنت على مهارات التحدث. ومع ذلك، فإنهم يفضلون التعلم في الفصول الدراسية التقليدية بسبب التحديات التي يواجهونها، مثل عدم إلمامهم بأدوات تكنولوجيا التعليم، وعدم وجود فرص للتفاعل مع معلمهم وزملائهم في الفصل، بالإضافة إلى المشكلات التقنية المختلفة. في نهاية هذا العمل، تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات التربوية من أجل تنفيذ أفضل لعملية التعليم عبر الإنترنت في تدريس المهارات الشفوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المهارات الشفوية، التعليم عبر الإنترنت، الأداء الشفهي، متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Résumé

La large propagation de la pandémie COVID-19 oblige toutes les universités et institutions à passer de la méthode d'apprentissage en face à face à la méthode d'apprentissage en ligne, qui nécessite une combinaison de technologies éducatives (TE) pour offrir une expérience d'apprentissage en ligne réussie. La nouvelle méthode d'apprentissage en ligne a une influence directe sur l'enseignement de l'expression orale, car elle exige trop d'interaction et de communication. La présente étude vise à étudier les effets du passage à la méthode d'apprentissage en ligne sur les performances des étudiants en matière d'expression orale, ainsi qu'à faire la lumière sur les défis les plus courants que les étudiants rencontrent au cours du processus d'apprentissage, et enfin, elle étudie les outils et les stratégies les plus efficaces pour l'enseignement des compétences orales dans un environnement en ligne. Afin d'atteindre les objectifs de cette étude, un questionnaire a été soumis en ligne aux étudiants de troisième année d'EFL du centre universitaire Mila. Les résultats acquis révèlent que les étudiants sont conscients de l'effet positif de l'apprentissage en ligne sur leurs capacités d'expression orale. Cependant, ils préfèrent l'apprentissage traditionnel en classe en raison des difficultés qu'ils rencontrent, telles que leur méconnaissance des outils technologiques éducatifs, le manque d'opportunités d'interaction avec leurs enseignants et leurs camarades de classe, en plus des différents problèmes techniques. A la fin de ce travail, quelques recommandations pédagogiques sont proposées pour une meilleure mise en œuvre du processus d'apprentissage en ligne dans l'enseignement des compétences orales.

Mots clés : compétences orales, apprentissage en ligne, performance orale, apprenants EFL