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Teachers and Learners' Perspectives towards the Use of the Attribution Theory in Enhancing the Speaking Skill

The Case of Second Year Students of English at Mila University Centre

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the Master Degree in
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Zayneb's Dedication

To the memory of my beloved mother Naima, whose memories of love and support have sustained me to achieve such success;

To the memory of my dear grandfather;

To the greatest father ever and the source of my inspiration, Djamel;

To my stepmother, Farida, who encouraged me to complete this work;

To my lovely sisters Fatiha and Khawla;

To my precious brother Toufik;

To my sweet nieces Neama, Nesrin, and Hadil;

To my dear nephew Adib;

To all my wonderful family members;

To my best friend Wiam, who was my partner in this long journey of hard work;

To all my dear friends;

To all those who believe in me and pray for my success.

Wiam's Dedication

In the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful, all the praise is due to Allah

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I would like to give my entire gratitude and appreciation to my wonderful parents (Messoud and Baya) who gave me their trust, unconditional support, and encouragement to be the person I am today, especially my mother who always prayed for my success. I would not even dream to reach my aspiration without her.

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Abstract

Speaking is one of the most fundamental skills that need to be mastered by students when learning English as a Foreign Language. Speaking English requires motivationwhich is considered a crucial factor in the learning process. However, many students are not motivated to practise the language; as a result, they often face difficulties in their attempts to communicate using English. Therefore, the influence of the Attribution Theory on the students' learning motivation makes it suitable to be implemented in the speaking classes. The current study aims at exploring how teachers and learners do perceive the use of the Attribution Theory and its effectiveness in ameliorating the speaking skill. In order to achieve this aim, two questionnaires are used. The first questionnaire is administered to seventy second year students of English at Mila University Centre. The second one is distributed to seventeen teachers who teach or have already taught Oral Expression to second year university learners. The major research findings reflect students and teachers' positive opinions towards the significance of motivation and effort in overcoming the speaking problems and improving learners' oralabilities, in addition to their awareness of the impact of feedback, instructional strategies, and locus of control on the students' motivation to speak the language. These results reveal positive perceptions, from both teachers and students, towards using the Attribution Theory in Oral Expression classes and its effectiveness in enhancing the speaking skill.

Key words: speakingskill, Attribution Theory, motivation, teachers' perceptions, students' perceptions.

List of Abbreviations

AT: AttributionTheory

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

NA: No answer

OE: Oral Expression

Q:Question

TL: Target Language

List of Tables

List of Figures

Table of Contents

General Introduction

Chapter One: Theoretical Part

Section One: Speaking

Section Two: Attribution Theory

ChapterTwo: Practical Part

Section One: Teachers' Questionnaire

Section Two: Students' Questionnaire

Appendices

الملخص

Résumé

General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

2. Aim of the study

3. Research Questions

4. Research Methodology

5. Structure of the study

General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

It is worth noting that speaking is essential for any language to exist. Speaking is perceived as the most important skill to acquire in ForeignLanguage (FL) learning. Richards (2009, p.19) stated that "the mastery of the speaking is a priority for many second language or foreign language learners". The ultimate goal of learning any FL is to be able to communicate in that language effectively and efficiently.

Reaching the aforementioned goal, however, seems a challenging process. Despite the fact that second year students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have already learned English before, they still encounter many speaking problems due to the difficult nature of the speaking skill which requires intensive effort to master it (Chaney & Burk, 1998). Many EFL students find it hard to accomplish the speaking tasks and achieve proficiency in speaking as they are usually silent and passive in Oral Expression (OE) classes, afraid to participate, and not motivated enough to communicate using English. Therefore, a solution should be adopted in order to address the problem of students' motivation in OE sessions and effectively improve their speaking skill.

2. Aim of the Study

The purpose of the present research is to shed light on the importance of using the Attribution Theory (AT) to ameliorate students' speaking skill. Furthermore, the current study aims at investigating teachers and learners' perceptions towards the use of the AT, as a theory of motivation, in enhancing the speaking skill.

3. Research Questions

In light of what precedes, this study sets out to answer the following questions:

- Do second year EFL learners face problems in learning the speaking skill?

- Are second year EFL learners motivated to speak?

- Do second year EFL learners possess an internal locus of control?

- Do second year OE teachers have positive perspectives towards the use of the AT in enhancing the students' speaking skill?

- Do second year EFL learners have positive perspectives towards the use of the AT in enhancing their speaking skill?

4. Research Methodology

In order to obtain the information required for the completion of this work, two questionnaires have been adopted: teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire. The teachers' questionnaire is administered to teachers who are teaching or have taught OE to second year university students of English. The students' questionnaire is distributed to second year students of English at Mila University Centre. These questionnaires are designed with the purpose of eliciting teachers' and learners' opinions towards the use of the AT in improving the speaking skill.

6. Structure of the Study

This dissertation is made up of two main chapters. The first chapter constitutes the theoretical part of the research while the second one is the practical part of the study.

The first chapter tackles the theoretical background of the two variables: the speaking skill and the AT, wherein a section is devoted to each variable. The first section is initiated with defining speaking according to different scholars, followed by its components and importance. After that, interest shifts to the classroom speaking activities. At the end, the

section highlights the fundamental factors that cause speaking difficulties. The second section starts with definitions of the term attribution and its types. Next, focus shifts to the AT, its framework, and application in education, as well as its influence in enhancing the speaking skill.

As for the second chapter, it deals with the description and analysis of both the students and the teachers' questionnaires, in addition to the interpretations and discussion of the main findings. Finally, a variety of recommendations and suggestions are provided for teachers, learners, and researchers.

Chapter One: Theoretical Part

Introduction

Section One: Speaking

1.1.1. Definitions of Speaking

1.1.2. Components of Speaking

1.1.2.1. Fluency

1.1.2.2. Accuracy

1.1.2.2.1.Grammar

1.1.2.2.2.Vocabulary

1.1.2.2.3. Pronunciation

1.1.3. Importance of Learning the Speaking Skill

1.1.4. Classroom Speaking Activities

1.1.4.1. Discussion

1.1.4.2. Role Play

1.1.4.3. Information Gap Activity

1.1.4.4. Brainstorming

1.1.4.5. Storytelling

1.1.4.6. Communicative Games

1.1.5. Factors that Cause Speaking Difficulties

1.1.5.1. Lack of Knowledge and Interest in the Topic

1.1.5.2. Lack of Vocabulary

1.1.5.3. Mother Tongue Use

1.1.5.4. Feedback during Speaking Activities

1.1.5.5. Affective Factors

1.1.5.5.1. Shyness

1.1.5.5.2. Anxiety

1.1.5.5.3. Lack of Self-confidence

1.1.5.5.4. Lack of Motivation

Section Two: Attribution Theory

1.2.1. Attribution

1.2.1.1. Definitions of Attribution

1.2.1.2. Types of Attribution

1.2.2. Attribution Theory

1.2.3. Framework of the Attribution Theory

1.2.4. Application of the Attribution Theory in Education

1.2.4.1. Implications for Students

1.2.4.2. Implications for Teachers

1.2.5.The Influence of the Attribution Theory in Enhancing the Speaking Skill

Conclusion

1. Chapter One: Theoretical Part

Introduction

Language learners of English learn four skills, namely listening, writing, speaking, and reading. The speaking skill is considered one of the most crucial language skills to be developed as means of effective communication. It is also regarded as one of the most difficult skills of language learning. In most English classes, many students find it hard to express themselves in the spoken English. They may encounter difficulties in speaking Englishdue to either their negative beliefs about their abilities to learn English, or lack of motivation. In order to enhance the speaking skill, many theories of motivation have been emerged. The AT is one of those theories.

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the current study. It is subdivided into two sections in which light will be shed on the speaking skill and the AT. The first section starts with definitions of speaking. After that, it presents its components: fluency and accuracy. Moreover, it casts light on the importance of learning the speaking skill. Furthermore, it covers the classroom speaking activities. This section ends up with discussing the main factors that cause speaking difficulties. The second section begins with definitions and of the term attribution and its types. Then it presents the framework of the AT, in addition to its application in education. The whole chapter ends up with the influence of the AT in enhancing the speaking skill.

Section One: Speaking

1.1.1. Definitions of Speaking

Numerous definitions of the word *speaking* have been suggested by many experts.According to Lindsay and Knight (2000), speaking is the act of producing and generating spoken language in order to deliver a message in a variety of situations and

contexts. In other words, speaking is the act that leads people to communicate with each other by exchanging ideas in different situations. ForNunan, speaking is "the productive oral skill which consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning" (2003, p. 48). This denotes that speaking is the ability to produce systematic verbal utterances to express ideas. In addition to the use of verbal utterances to achieve meaning, Chaney and Burk (1998) added another form of communication which is the use of non-verbal symbols. This indicates that speaking is the act of creating and exchanging meaning to achieve communication in different settings using both verbal and non-verbal symbols.

From all those definitions, it is deduced that speaking is an active form of communication that connects ideas between the speaker and the listener for a specific goal. More particularly, it isone of the four macro skills that known as a productive skill which involves how to express thoughts and feelings through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols.

1.1.2. Components of Speaking

To speak English efficiently,EFL learners need to pay attention to its main components which are: fluency and accuracy.

1.1.2.1. Fluency. Fluency is considered as the main aim of EFL teachers in teaching the speaking skill. It is defined as the ability to speak a language smoothly and easily (Bull, 2008). Richards (2009) defined it as "natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence" (p. 14). Thus, fluency takes place when a speaker interacts meaningfully and retains clear and continuous communication despite his/her level.

There are many ways to describe a fluent speaker. A fluent speaker can convey his/her ideas through understandable, reasonable, and semantically dense sentences. S/he is a person who is capable of expressing ideas in different contexts effectively (Fillmore et al., 2014). In addition, Hedge (2000) stated that fluency means speaking naturally and reasonably quickly without many pauses and stops. In other words, to be fluent in a Target Language (TL) and to speak without any problems, learners should respond in a way that reflects their confidence and ability to link ideas in a coherent way avoiding as much as possible unsuitable pauses or hesitation. However, it does not mean tospeak without any pauses. Thornbury (2005) emphasized the fact that both speed and pauses are important factors in fluency. Therefore, he did not neglect pauses because all speakers need to take breath and pause to let the listeners get the idea.

Considering the definitions mentioned above, fluency can be seen as theability to speak the language naturally and easily, in addition to the capacity to communicate ideas clearly and effectively with avoiding the occurrence of any speech hindrances such as unnatural pauses and hesitations.

1.1.2.2. Accuracy. Another important aspect of speaking is accuracy. Skehan (1996) defined it as referring "to how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language" (as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 139). In addition, Thornbury (2005, p. 6) stated that "speaking English accurately means doing without or with few errors on not only grammar but vocabulary and pronunciation, as well". Thus, accurate speakers are speakers who are able to speak correctly without any grammatical, vocabulary, or pronunciation errors (Byrne, 1986). Therefore, accuracy includes grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

1.1.2.2.1. Grammar. Grammar is considered an important component of accuracy. It is defined as "a system of rules governing the structure and arrangement of language" (Parsons, 2004, p. 6). In the same line of thought, Harmer (2001) defined it as the way in which words and expressions can be altered and combined to form sentences. In other words, grammar is a term used to describe the structure of language and the rules that each learner should follow to conduct correct language.

Spoken grammar has a number of features; Thornbury (2005, p.21) summarized themin the following table:

Table 1

Thornbury's Classification of the Spoken Grammar's Features

Spoken grammar
Clause is the basic unit of construction
Clauses are usually added (co-ordination)
Head + body + tail construction
Direct speech favoured
Vagueness tolerated
A lot of ellipsis
Many question tags
Performance effects, including: Hesitations   Repeats   False starts   Incompletion   Syntactic blends

1.1.2.2.2. Vocabulary. Accuracy in terms of vocabulary refers to the selection of the suitable words in the suitable situations. It is defined by Hatch and Brown (1995) as "a list or set of words that individual speakers of language might use" (p. 1). It is considered as one of the primary building blocks of language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).In addition, it is stated that vocabulary "provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write" (Richards & Renadya, 2002, p. 255).Therefore, speaking any language cannot be separated from learning vocabulary. Thus, it is very important for EFL learners to achieve accuracy in vocabulary.

1.1.2.2.3. Pronunciation.Pronunciation is the lowest level of knowledge which learners typically pay attention to (Thornbury, 2005).Redmond and Vrchota (2007) stated that "pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood" (p. 104). In other words, pronunciation refers to the correct way in which words are spoken. Furthermore, Richard and Schmidt (2002) defined pronunciation as the process of producing certain sounds. Pitch, intonation, minimal pairs, sounds, rhythm, and stress are the key features of pronunciation (Harmer, 2001). Therefore, EFL learners who want to improve their oral performance effectively should pay attention to all these features because accuracy cannot be achieved if pronunciation is incorrect.

1.1.3. Importance of Learning the Speaking Skill

It is noteworthy that human beings learn to speak before they learn to write and read. Thus learning the speaking skill is very crucial to language learning. According to Ur (2000), of all the four language skills, speaking is the most essential one that is very necessary for the effective communication. No conversation will be hold without the acquisition of this skill. Thus, it is very important for EFL students to learn this skill in order to express their ideas and communicate effectively. In this regard, Leong and Ahmadi (2017) stated that "speaking

helps learners develop their vocabulary and grammar skills and then better their writing skill. Students can express their emotions, ideas; say stories; request; talk, discuss, and show the various functions of language"(p. 35). This indicates that mastering the art of speaking can improve different language aspects such as grammar and vocabulary which in turn improves their writing skill. Moreover, developing students' speaking skill becomes a necessity in EFL classrooms. As Luoma (2004) said, "speaking skills are an important part of the curriculum in language teaching, and this makes them an important object of assessment as well" (p. 1). This shows the significance of the speaking skill in language learning.

Nowadays, the importance of the ability to speak English has recently increased significantly, not only inside the classroom, but also outside it.It has become popular for business, commerce, cultural reasons, and especially for Internet communications throughout the world. This idea has been supported by Baker and Westrup (2003) who said that learners who speak English very well can have greater chance for better education, finding good jobs, and getting promotion.Henceforth, learning to speak a language is more essential than just knowing about it because "there is no point in knowing a lot about the language if you cannot use it" (Scrivener, 2005, p.146). Thus, speaking English is of vital importance outside the classroom too.

1.1.4. Classroom Speaking Activities

EFL learners need to practise the language regularly inside the classroom in order to achieve a degree of competence. This can be fulfilled through different activities. Therefore, EFL teachers should establish a classroom environment where learners have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that develop oral language (Kayi, 2006).

Scholarsin the field of language learning have designed numerous classroom activities to develop speaking. Among these activities, we shed light on the following:

1.1.4.1. Discussion. The most common activity used in speaking classes is discussion. It is defined by Nilson (2010, p. 127) as "a productive exchange of viewpoints, a collective exploration of issues". This indicates that discussion is the interaction between students through the exchange of their opinions in order to discover and examine topics. For instance, when the teacher presents a topic about working mothers; whether they should work outside or it is better for them to stay at home and take care of their children, s/he will create an atmosphere of debate and interaction among students in the classroom. Each student will give his/her opinion with arguments. Thus, students will discuss and exchange a variety of thoughts about the given topic.

This activity can be seen as one of the most interesting form of oral activities in the classroom since it makes students exchange their feelings, ideas, and opinions; also it enables them to talk about their experience in order to improve their oral production (Harmer, 2001). This type of classroom activities is not only a means to enhance learners' ability to speak but it also helps them make quick decisions and develop their critical thinking (Revell, 1979). Thus, instead of just receiving information, discussion helps students to process it and express their own ideas.

1.1.4.2. Role Play. Role play is one of the major activities that enable students to practise the TL. It is considered as an enjoyable classroom activity for most of the students especially those who like to imitate other people, like playing the role of a teacher, a newscaster, and a doctor. In Harmer (1989) words, "role play activities are those where students are asked to imagine they are in different situations and act accordingly" (p. 92). When playing the role of someone, learners should use the language appropriate to the new

setting (Ur, 1999). Thus, it can be seen that role play is an activity where learners pretend that they are in different social context where they have to act and speak according to this new situation.

This type of activities is of great importance in speaking classes. It gives learners the opportunity to speak appropriatelyin a given context before they do so in real environment (Bailey, 2003). Moreover, role play activity motivates students and helps them reduce their fears and shyness of performing in front of others since they are not responsible for their opinions and behaviours (Harmer, 2001). Hence, such type of activities helps EFL learners practise the language in different contexts, which in turn helps them develop their speaking abilities.

1.1.4.3. Information Gap Activity. Information gap activity is a useful classroom speaking activity that enables EFL students to practise the language. In information gap,students are asked to accomplish the task by using the TL, in which only one student has the information that all other students may not have. As Bailey (2003, p. 56) said, "it is a useful activity in which one person has the information that the other lacks. They must use the TL to share the information". For instance, two students are given two pictures but with subtle differences that they must find by describing to one another what they see in their own picture. To clarify information, students can ask questions to each other. In the same context, Gower et al. (1995) stated that "students use the language they have at their command to bridge the information gap by asking questions, giving information, etc." (p. 211).

Information gap can be regarded as an effective activity as it gives students opportunities to speak in the TL and creates a suitable learning environment by encouraging learner/ learner and learners/teacher interaction (Harmer, 1968). Moreover, it helps students encounter the problem-solving issue (Kayi, 2006).

1.1.4.4. Brainstorming. Brainstorming is another classroom activity that helpsEFL learners in improving their speaking skill. It is defined by Allman (2000) as a technique used to generate a long list of diverse responses without making judgments about individual ideas. The students are not evaluated or criticized for their ideas, which encourages them to express new ideas freely (Kayi 2006).

Brainstorming activities that provide a meaningful learning environment in a relaxed atmosphere can be used as one of the strategies to promote the speaking skill(Yellin et al., 2000).This denotes the significance of such type of activities in improving the students' speaking skill. In addition, Clark and Bamberg (2019) affirmed that brainstorming is aimed at composing speaking ideas to produce good speech. The use of brainstorming activity in speaking sessions can motivate students, and enhance their critical thinking (Srihandayani & Malina, 2019).

1.1.4.5. Storytelling. Many scholars agree that storytelling is the original form of teaching (Pedersen, 1995). "Storytelling is the act of narrating a tale from memory rather than reading. It is one of the oldest of all art forms" (Dujmovic, 2006, p. 1). It is considered the best way to help students learn the second language in the same way as their mother tongue (Sanchez, 2015). Kayi (2006) claimed that storytelling activity helps in developing learners' creative thinking. It also increases accuracy of learners' speaking (Chalack, & Hajian, 2013). For Wajnryb (2003), the meaning and the content of this type of speaking activities are powerful enough to engage students in the learning process and advance their spoken language. Therefore, this activity offers opportunities for EFL learners to practise and improve their spoken language.

1.1.4.6. Communicative Games. Communicative game is another classroom speaking activity which is considered as the best way to reduce stress and anxiety inside the classroom.

According to Harmer (2001, p. 272), "communication games are activities which increase interaction among students through talking to one another in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture, put things in the right order, find similarities and differences between pictures, and so on". Moreover, it "provides an opportunity for real communication" (Hadfield, 1984, p.4). The use of communicative games in speaking classes maintains learners' interest in learning, promotes their motivation, and provides them with opportunities to speak (Zhu, 2012). Hence, this type of activities is mainly useful because it maximizes interaction and minimizes speaking difficulties in the language classroom.

1.1.5. Factors that Cause Speaking Difficulties

Developing the speaking skill is very challenging for EFL students. As Zhang (2009) emphasized, speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. Hence, in their attempts to speak the language, EFL learners face many factors that hinder them from enhancing their speaking skill.

1.1.5.1. Lack of Knowledge and Interest in the Topic. Learners frequently complain that they have nothing to say due to their lack of knowledge and interest in the topic chosen by the teacher. Accordingly, they keep silent and refuse to participate. In this regard, Rivers (1968) claimed that teachers may affect their learners when they select an inappropriate topic for them or the one which they have not enough information about. As a solution, Al-Nouh et al. (2015) suggested that students must be given the freedom to select their own topics to get what to say.

1.1.5.2. Lack of Vocabulary. Lack of vocabulary is another barrier that prevents learners from speaking a language. Gan (2012) stated that "vocabulary problem was the main reason why they [students] sometimes could not express themselves clearly and

appropriately" (p. 49). In line with this, Azlina et al. (2015) claimed that "without sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express his ideas" (p. 5). Thus, this factor prevents EFL learners from communicating and expressing their opinions and thoughts in the TL.

1.1.5.3. Mother Tongue Use. Another factor that leads to difficulties in speaking is the use of the mother tongue. EFL learners use their mother tongue in speaking classes as it is very easy for them (Tuan & Mai, 2015) in order to avoid misunderstanding and criticism especially when they explain ideas to each other. Nevertheless, this habit is one of the major factors that hinder students from practicing the TL. Thus, they may face serious problems in all the aspects of language. EFL learners usually use their mother tongue in oral sessions without any encouragement from teachers (Harbord, 1992). However, if the teacher allows the use of the mother tongue, learners will feel happy to use it; as a result, they cannot improve their oral performance (Ur, 2012) and they can hardly master the FL. Therefore, teachers need to be careful not to be the cause of this habit.

1.1.5.4. Feedback during Speaking Activities. After a speaking performance students expect their teachers to give them the necessary feedback. However, it may cause a problem if it is given in a wrong way. Baker and Westrup (2003) claimed that if learners are always corrected, they will be unmotivated and afraid of talking. In addition, Harmer (1991) asserted that if teachers directly correct their students' mistakes, the flow of the dialogue and the aim of the speaking task will be spoiled. Juhana (2012) added that learners' fear of making mistakes is linked to the issue of correction and negative evaluation. This denotes that the teacher's feedback may negatively affect students' oral performance.

Teachers' feedback can prove demotivating for students during oral sessions.Thus, teachers' decision about how to react to students' performance will depend upon the stages of

the lesson, the activities, and the kinds of mistakes they make (Harmer, 1991). Also, it is important for teachers to convince their students that making mistakes is not wrong because students can learn from their mistakes.

1.1.5.5. Affective Factors. One of the considerable influences on language learning success or failure is probably the affective side of the student (Oxford, 1990). Different affective factors hinder students from practicing their speaking in English classes including shyness, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation.

1.1.5.5.1. Shyness. Shyness is one of the personality factors that many EFL learners suffer from when they are required to speak. It has been approached as a character trait, a state of inhibition, and at times an attitude (Lewinsky, 1941). "Students are often reluctant to speak because they are shy and are not predisposed to express themselves in front of other people" (Harmer, 2007, p.354). According to Al Nakhalah(2016, p. 102), "speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say".

Shyness is a serious issue which makes students lose their speech and prevents them from thinking clearly. This indicates that shyness could be a source of problem especially in speaking classes.

1.1.5.5.2. Anxiety. Anxiety is one of the major factors which influence language learning. It is a feeling of tension, apprehension and nervousness associated with the situation of learning a FL (Horwitz et al., 1986, as cited in Nascente, 2001). In Carlson (1987) words, anxiety "can be defined as an excessive, unreasonable fear of a particular class or objects or situations" (p. 695). EFL students may experience such fear when they are expected to perform in the TL.

Anxiety may cause other related problems with self-esteem, self-confidence, and risk-taking ability in the FL (Crookall & Oxford, 1991). Hence, learners should pay attention to this factor and find ways to reduce it. Also, teachers should assist learners by creating a learning atmosphere which makes students become more comfortable during their speaking performance. As proposed by Harmer (2007), to reduce students' anxiety, teachers should focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each student, so that they can create a teaching strategy that works for every student in the classroom.

1.1.5.5.3. Lack of Self-confidence. Self-confidence is a very essential factor that EFL students should possess. The lack of it may prevent learners from practicing the language especially in speaking classes. Kakepoto et al. (2012, p.71) stated that "confidence is an essential aspect of any good presentation. It provides impetus to speakers to communicate their ideas effectively". Students who lack confidence in themselves and their English necessarily suffer from communication apprehension (Nunan, 1999). Furthermore, learners' self-confidence can be influenced by external factors like teachers. If a teacher does not encourage his or her students, it is possible that the students will lose their confidence when speaking English (Brown, 2001).

1.1.5.5.4.Lack of Motivation. Several studies of second language acquisition consider motivation as one of the main factors which affects language learning. Gardner (1985) referred to motivation as "a combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language" (p.10). This indicates that lack of motivation leads to learners' failure in achieving high speaking performances. In this sense, Babu (2010) argued that lack of motivation in learning causes students' hesitation to speak English in the classroom. Hence, Lack of motivation will affect learner's desire to participate in the classroom.

1.2. Section Two: Attribution Theory

1.2.1. Attribution

    1.2.1.1. Definitions of Attribution. Humans have natural desire to understand the reasons for events and behaviours around them. They are always looking for an answer to the question *why*. These answers, explanations, and interpretations that humans provide are known in psychology as attributions (Kasap & Ünsal, 2021).

    In its general sense, attribution means "the causal explanation for an event or behavior" (Harvey & Martinko, 2009, p. 147). ForHeider (1958), the term attribution refers to the causal inferences people make to predict and explain the behaviours of self and others. In other words, attribution is a process in which individuals attempt to explain, interpret, or ascribe reasons to their own behaviours as well as others'. In addition,Wiener (1986) defined attribution as "constructions imposed by perceivers (either an actor or an observer) to account for the relation between an action and outcome" (p. 22). Meaning that attribution is about reasons behind an action where this action will lead to a specific result noting that attribution is something resulted from observation.

    More precisely, Arabski and Wojtaszek (2011) focused their definition on the language learning process claiming that "attributions are explanations learners give to the progress they make in learning the TL" (p. 187). In line with this definition, Weiner (2010) specified attribution to causes provided by language learners for their performances in a specific experience such as a task or a test. It means learners' perceived reasons behind their success and failure in language learning.

1.2.1.2. Types of Attribution. The most common types of attributions are the ones proposed by Heider (1985) who provided a distinction between *external* or *situational* attributions and *internal* or *dispositional* attributions.

Internal attribution is referred to as internal because it reflects factors that lie within the self (e.g. personality, ability), and it is considered dispositional because it interprets personal dispositions towards behaviour and events or dispositions to take action (Heider, 1958). Hence, an internal attribution is when individuals assign the cause of a given behaviour or event to internal characteristics. For example, a student attributes his/her success in the exam to his/her personal effort. Thus, s/he attributes the reason behind his/her success to an internal factor.

External attribution refers to the act of inferring that a person's behaviour is a result of situational factors (Hyland et al., 1976). In simple words, external attribution is the process by which individuals interpret a given behaviour as being caused by external factors or events outside the reach of the individuals' control. For instance, a student attributes his/her poor test performance to the noisy classroom.

1.2.2. Attribution Theory

AT is a theory of motivation which has been considered as the only motivational model that encompasses both the cognitive and affective aspects influencing human behaviour (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). This theory explains how people attribute causes to events and how this cognitive perception affects their motivation (Seel, 2012). Weiner (2004) defined it as the way people envision the success or failure of their own behaviour or others' behaviour. It demands individuals to understand the factors causing an event happening in the past, and help them attain better strategy to solve the problem with better output (Weiner, 1985). Therefore, AT provides a useful insight about how individuals perceive the various

events and how they interpret them which in turn shape their future performances, motivation, and actions.

1.2.3. Framework of the Attribution Theory

It is worth mentioning that Heider (1958) is the founding father of the AT. Yet, it was Weiner and his colleagues (e.g. Jones et al., 1972; Weiner, 1974) who developed its theoretical framework.

Weiner's AT focused on achievement (Weiner, 1974). In his theory, Weiner identified ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck as the main four factors that affect attributions to achievement. These attribution factors are related to three dimensions: locus of causality, stability, and controllability. In Weiner's words (1985), "the perceived causes of success and failure share three common properties: locus, stability, and controllability, with intentionality and globality as other possible causal structures" (p. 548).

Locus of causality refers to the location of the cause. The term was firstly addressed by Rotter (1966) who stated that "people vary in the degree to which they perceive the things that are happening to them as being under their own internal control or under the control of outside forces" (as cited in Darity, 2008, p. 56). For William and Burden (1997), locus of causality refers to whether "the perceived location of causes is internal or external to the learner" (p. 194). Hence, individuals' locus of control can be externally or internally influenced. Based on this dimension, ability and effort are considered as internal attributions that students perceive their achievement to while task difficulty and luck are viewed as external attributions, meaning that the perceived causes of the achievement are controlled by external factors (Williams et al., 2015).

The stability dimension captures whether the cause always exists or it is only present for a short period of time (Weiner, 1985). Heider (1958) explained it as examining the stability of the cause of an outcome (stable or unstable). The need to this dimension in addition to locus of causality is to determine future actions of the learners (Weiner, 2018). Hence, effort and luck can be seen as changeable while ability and task difficulty can be categorized as stable factors despite the fact that they are different in locus of control.

The last dimension refers to the individuals' ability to control the cause. As Weiner (1985) stated "controllability reflects the degree of volitional influence people feel they have over a cause" (p. 555). Controllable causes are causes over which individuals have control while uncontrollable causes could not be regulated. Therefore, students would be likely to consider the amount of effort they exert for a task within their control; however, they consider their ability and luck to do well on this task, and the task itself as outside their control (William & Burden, 1997). To elaborate, effort is controllable and the other three properties, namely ability, task difficulty, and chance are uncontrollable(Weiner, 1986).

Figure 1 summarizes the concept of the three dimensions.

Figure 1

Dimensions of Attributions (Kasap & Ünsal, 2021, p. 115)

Locus of control	Stability	Controllability
Attributions that are internal or external	Attributions are stable or unstable, which can change over time and is related to expectancy for future success	Dimensions between attributions that are or are not under control of the individual
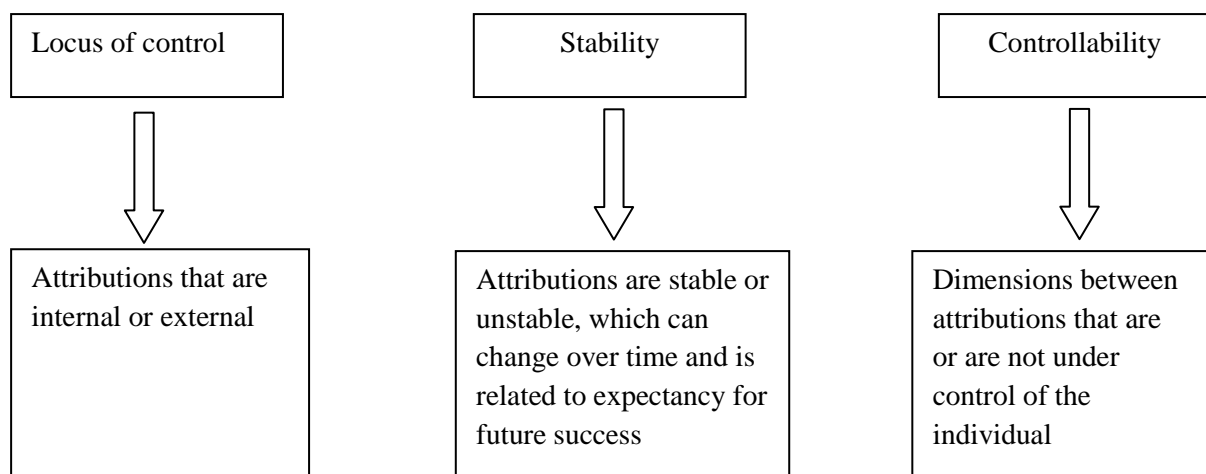
The table below demonstrates the classification of the most common achievements attributions by dimensions of locus, stability, and controllability.

Table 2

Dimensions Classification Scheme for Causal Attributions (Vispoel & Austin, 1955, p. 382, as cited in Kasap & Ünsal, 2021, p. 115)

	Dimensions		
Attributions	Locus	Stability	Controllability
Ability	Internal	Stable	Uncontrollable
Effort	Internal	Unstable	Controllable
Strategy	Internal	Unstable	Controllable
Interest	Internal	Unstable	Controllable
Taskdifficulty	External	Stable	Uncontrollable
Luck	External	Unstable	Uncontrollable
Family influence	External	Stable	Uncontrollable
Teacher influence	External	Stable	Uncontrollable

1.2.4. Application of the Attribution Theory in Education

Weiner's theory has been widely applied in different domains. Hunter and Barker (1987) applied the AT to education in which they examine it in the classroom in relation to the three important characteristics of the perceived causes of students' success or failure: locus, stability, and control. They provided the implications of the AT for both students and teachers.

1.2.4.1. Implications for Students. AT provides an answer to the question why some students always succeed but other always fail? "Part of the explanation lies in their beliefs about the causes of success and failure" (Hunter & Barker, 1987, p. 52).

The first dimension of the AT, which is locus of causality, determines academic self-esteem. As Hunter and Barker (1987) explained:

> If I believe I have ability and can achieve success with effort, I have a positive self-concept as a student. If I believe that no matter how hard I try, I will not be successful; my impression of my ability and my self-concept suffers. If I believe my failure was the result of teacher indulgence or luck, my self-esteem is not enhanced. (p.52)

In other words, the academic self-esteem is influenced by the locus of causality. Students can build a positive self-concept when they believe that they possess the ability, and they can succeed with effort. However, their perceptions of their ability and their self-concept are negatively impacted when they think that there is no sense in trying, and that they will never succeed. Also, when students attribute their failure to external factors such as teacher influence and luck, their self-esteem cannot be improved.

It is deduced, then, that locus of causality shapes the students' future achievement and automatically affects the continuation of their motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). To illustrate, if a student attributes success in accomplishing a speaking task to internal factors, s/he will feel pride and confidence. Thus, his/her self-esteem and expectancy of future success will be enhanced, which in turn increases his/her motivation to participate in oral sessions. However, if the student fails to complete this speaking task and attributes it to external factors, his/her feeling of frustration, anger, and hostility may increase; as a result, his/her expectancy of future success and motivation to participate in speaking classes may be decreased.

The second dimension of AT namely stability "prompts a student to believe either that the future is predetermined or that it can be changed by effort" (Hunter & Barker, 1987, p. 52).For Weiner (2010), stability is the basis of expectancy shifts, and it prevails the future performances more than the other dimensions.Students who succeed because they made effort will continue to try hard. In this case, they believe that their future is predetermined since they repeat the same process that leads to their success in the past. In contrast, students expect less success when they believe that no matter how hard they try they will fail. For example, students who cannot succeed in the speaking tasks despite much effort, they may attribute their poor performance to the lack of ability; as a result, they would feel helpless and unmotivated to undertake any strategies to develop their speaking skill because, as Williams et al. (2015) stated, these learners believe that any kind of effort will never contribute to their success in the future.

The last dimension, controllability of causality, gives students the impression that they are in control of their destiny. Hence, they need to acknowledge that much of what occurs to them is a direct result of their actions (Hunter & Barker, 1987). When students attribute the reasons behind their academic achievement to effort, they can alter their outcomes. However, if they cannot control what happens to them, they become a pawn of others (DeCharmes, 1968). Weiner (2010) illustrated that when a student has failed because s/he could not put enough effort into the exam preparation, s/he might feel guilty and s/he will be motivated to better her/his performance in the future tasks. Alternatively, if s/he has succeeded in the exam because of her/his great effort, s/he will feel pride and will be motivated to study in the same way for the subsequent tasks.

In light of the aforementioned explanations, the relevance of AT to motivation becomes more comprehensible when the three dimensions are taken into account as they can influence learners' future performance and motivation (Weiner, 2018). These three

dimensions elicit different emotional reactions such as pride, self-esteem, hopefulness, hopelessness, anger, gratitude, pity, and shame. In turn, these emotional responses have different motivational impact on students' future actions (Tam, 2020). Figure 2 illustrates the idea.

Figure 2

An overview of Attribution Theory of Motivation (Tam, 2020, para. 4)

Outcome	Causes	Locus	Emotional	Motivational
Causality		Responses	Consequences	

Outcome → Ability, Effort, Task difficulty, Luck → Locus, Stability, Controllabilit → Pride, self-esteem; Hope, Hopelessness; Shame, gratitude → Motivation, Persistence, Intensity
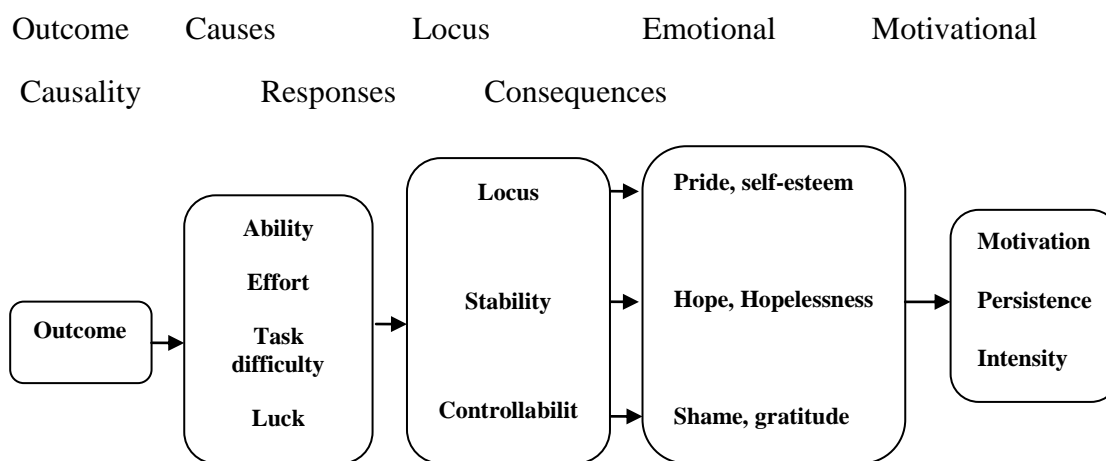
AT claims that students may increase their motivation and persistence to achieve learning goals more successfully when they attribute their success or failure to internal, unstable, and controllable causes (Dörnyei, 2001).Therefore, successful students will generally attempt to maintain a positive self-image by attributing any success to their own effort and ability. However, poor achievers will often attribute their success to external factors such as luck while their lack of ability as the reason for their failure (Smith, 2012). That is to say, students with internal locus of control will achieve better results than those with external locus of control. Hence, learners need to be aware of the factors to which they attribute their achievements.

1.2.4.2. Implications for Teachers. AT also has implications for how teachers respond to their learners' performances. To illustrate, giving the student a positive feedback for accomplishing an easy task teaches the learner not to work hard. However, giving negative feedback for failure on a task that could have been accomplished with effort communicates to the student that s/he has the ability to succeed and should work hard (Hunter & Barker, 1987). Hence, teachers should be aware when providing feedback on students' performances because it has an influence on the students' causal attribution. As Hunter and Barker (1987) said:

> The way a teacher responds to a student's success or failure can signal the teacher's belief as to whether the student is in control of success or failure …. For example, annoyance can say to a student that he had the ability to perform successfully and was responsible for the less-than-satisfactory performance. Sympathy and understanding can communicate that no matter how much effort a student expended, s/he could not have accomplished the task. For a teacher to accept less from a student than she is capable of doing can convince the student of your belief that, even with effort s/he doesn't have the ability to meet expectations. (p. 53)

When applying AT in a classroom setting, the teacher should help students accept their effort as the primary predictor of success and failure (Rubenstein & Thoron, 2014). To do so, teachers are asked to utilize learner-centered instructional strategies. When utilizing learner centered instructional strategies, the teacher becomes a facilitator of knowledge. Thus, students become increasingly autonomous in their learning; as a result, their individual internal locus of control is strengthened (Rubenstein & Thoron, 2014), i.e. students start attributing their achievement to their effort.

In light of the aforementioned explanations, AT has numerous implications for teachers. Teachers should first understand that they have some control over the kinds of attributions that students possess. Teachers affect students' attributions through their comments, feedback, and types of praise they offer (Anderman & Anderman, 2009), in addition to the teaching strategy used in presenting tasks which should assist learners to develop an internal locus of control.

1.2.5. The Influence of the Attribution Theory in Enhancing the Speaking Skill

EFL speaking classes are well known for having two different types of students: those who are motivated to speak and others who are not motivated. It is stated that "motivation is a concept without physical reality, we cannot see motivation; we see effort, interest, attitude, and desire" (Ihsan, 2016, p. 1). Accordingly, students, who are less interested in speaking tasks, afraid to participate, feel boring or uncomfortable in oral sessions, do not practise the language, etc. are actually not motivated. Without motivation, students will certainly fail to make the necessary effort to improve their speaking; as a result, they will face several problems which in turn may lead to failure in the speaking tasks.

The need to apply a theory of motivation to overcome this problem is inevitable. In order to cope with it, the AT might be suitable as it has a great influence on students' motivation to learn the FLs. In line with this, Mali (2015) claimed that "in an educational context, the fact that the attribution on students' learning process has been regarded as a key factor that influences their learning motivation and academic achievement is undeniable" (p. 32).

Considering that students' attributions have an impact on their learning motivation, which is an important factor to enhance the speaking skill, leads to a relation between this skill and the AT. Consequently, knowing about the reasons behind success and failure in

completing speaking tasks can create a positive change on students' future behaviour towards their learning which can affect their motivation to improve speaking. It can assist disappointed students with low self-esteem to discover their strength of learning in order to fight against their weaknesses(Demetriou, 2011). For instance, when a student believes that s/he can do a good speaking performance, s/he will then be motivated to put more effort to complete the speaking task. However, if s/he thinks that no matter how hard s/he tries to perform well, s/he still cannot make it, s/he will then be demotivated to participate in speaking tasks; as Khosrowpour (2014) said , " a lack of effort leads to a lack of success and then a lack of motivation" (p. 1214).

Language learners who are conscious of their attributions are more likely to understand the cognitive underpinnings for their success (Demetriou, 2011). This idea is supported by Weiner (1980) who said that "if we find out why we were successful, we may be able to repeat that success. If we determine what caused our failure, we may avoid it in the future" (as cited in Hunter & Barker, 1987, p. 51). Therefore, Students who attribute their success or failure in speaking tasks to internal, unstable, and controllable factors are more motivated to work hard in order to improve their speaking skill because their self-belief will inspire them to implement a strategy to reduce their speaking difficulties. Most studies show that mostly successful students ascribe their success or failure to effort, meaning that they tend to feel responsible for their performance and have the control over it compared to unsuccessful ones (Weiner, 2010). Henceforth, students who seek to enhance their speaking skill and increase their motivation to succeed in accomplishing the speaking tasks need to attribute their achievements to their own effort.

Likewise, teachers' reactions of students' success and failure can also have a lasting impact on student's motivation to speak through feedback and grades on tests (Anderman & Anderman, 2009). For example, when the teacher says to his/her student: "you perform very

well in this presentation, but you need to avoid the grammar mistakes", s/he communicates to this student that s/he has the ability to make a good speaking performance but s/he just needs to work on the grammar rules by making extensive efforts, like revising the grammar rules and practicing them, to overcome this problem. Hence, when teachers communicate to learners that their failure is due to the use of inappropriate strategies or inappropriate effort, learners are likely to be motivated to try harder or to use more appropriate strategies in future speaking tasks. However, if the teacher criticizes the student performance as s/he will never be able to improve his/her grade, the student will likely be unmotivated to make any changes to the situation.

By applying the AT in speaking classes, teachers should not only be awareof the statements or attributions they make towards students' speaking performances butalso they are asked to utilize learner-centered instructional strategies such as peer work and group work strategies. The use of these cooperative strategies helps in increasing the students' motivation to participate in the speaking classes as they create an atmosphere of interaction between students through exchanging ideas, defending opinions, sharing experiences, asking and answering questions, etc. (Johnson & Johnson, 1994).In addition, these strategies encourage learners to be more autonomous in their learning. As Harmer (2007) stated, when students are working together without any control from their teacher, whose role in this case is limited to a facilitator, they will be active participants and more responsible about their learning. Thus, using such strategies in the speaking classes assists learners in developing an internal locus of control which has a crucial role in ameliorating their speaking skill as it influences their motivation and increases their effort to speak and practise the English language inside and outside the classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the theoretical underpinnings as well as the basic concepts of both variables: the speaking skill and the AT. Moreover, light was shed on how to apply the AT in the field of education, in general, and in the speaking skill, in particular. Hence, a better understanding of the nature and impact of students' attributions to success and failure may enhance their motivation and encourage them to be aware of their capability in controlling their speaking performance.

In light of the foregoing idea, it is recommended for students to attribute their success or failure to internal, unstable, and controllable factors. Likewise, teachers are recommended to help learners develop an internal locus of control that will motivate them to achieve success.

ChapterTwo: Practical Part

Introduction

Section One: Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1.1. Administration of the Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1.2. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

2.1.4. Discussion of the Results

Section Two: Students' Questionnaire

2.2.1. Population and Sample

2.2.2. Description of Students' Questionnaire

2.2.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

2.2.4. Discussion of the Results

 Conclusion

Chapter Two: Practical Part

Introduction

Unlike the first chapter which dealt with what researchers and scholars have noted about both speaking and AT, this chapter is devoted to the practical part of this research work. It is designed to highlight the field work that is done to gather the data necessary to reach the aims of the study and to answer the research questions. To carry out the present research, two questionnaires are used. The first questionnaire is administered to teachers who teach or have taught OE to second year university learners while the second one is distributed to second year students at the English Department of the University Center of AbdElhafid Boussouffor the sake of investigating their opinions towards the use of the AT to enhance the speaking skill.

The present chapter is divided into two main sections. The teachers' questionnaire is the focus of the first section, whereas the students' questionnaire is discussed in the second section. The two sections include the population and sample chosen for this study, description of the questionnaire, in addition to analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results.

Section One: Teachers Questionnaire

2.1.1. Administration of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The target population of this research is second year OE teachers in the department of English at AbdElhafid Boussouf University Centre in the academic year 2022/2023. The questionnaire was administered to 17 teachers who teach or have already taught OE to second year students of English; both full and part-time teachers. It was distributed to them in a paper format and also via e-mail in a Google Document format. The selection of such population is based on the consideration that second year OE teachers will help us more than

other teachers since they are more knowledgeable about second year students' speaking problems and the most effective strategies to motivate them.

2.1.2. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is composed of 20 questions which vary between Yes/No questions, multiple choice questions, agreement questions, and an open-ended request at the end. The questionnaire is divided into four sections:

Section One: General Information (Questions 1-3)

The first section includes questions that seek to gather general information about the teachers.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill (Questions 4-10)

The aim of the second section is to investigate teachers' views concerning their students' speaking skill.

Section Three: Attribution Theory (Questions 11-19)

The purpose of this section is to explore teachers' perceptions towards the use of AT in enhancing students' speaking skill.

Section Four: Further Suggestions (Question 20)

The last section aims at inviting teachers to add furthercomments and suggestions related to the topic.

2.1.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section One: General Information

Q1. What is your academic degree?

Table 3

Teachers' Academic Degree

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Bachelor	0	0%
Master	6	35.3%
Magister	2	11.8%
Doctorate	9	52.9%
Total	17	100%

This question aims at identifying teachers' academic degree and what educational background they have since it is very important in the teaching profession. Concerning the results in table 3, it is noticed that the majority of the teachers have a Doctorate degree making up 52.9% of the whole population. Six teachers (35.3%) hold a Master degree, while only two teachers (11.8%) are Magister degree holders. These results demonstrate that most of OE teachers at Mila University Centre are qualified enough to provide us with more concrete and reliable information that would serve the aim of the study.

Q2. How long have you been teaching English at university?

Table 4

Teachers' Experience in Teaching English at University

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
1-3 years	4	23.5 %
3-7 years	6	35.3%
More than 7 years	7	41.2%
Total	17	100%

Question two seeks to know teachers' experience in teaching the English language at university in order to assess how reliable their knowledge is in filling the gaps of the present research work. The collected answers showed in table 4 demonstrate that four teachers (23.5%) have taught English at university from one to three years. Six teachers (35.3%) reported that the period they have spent in teaching English ranges from three to seven years. The remaining seven teachers (41.2%) have a longer experience for more than seven years. This illustrates that the majority of teachers have enough experience in teaching English. Thus, they may have experienced some useful strategies that can help students in their learning process which would help us to get more concrete information.

Q3. How long have you been teaching Oral Expression to second year university learners?

Table 5

Teachers' Experience in Teaching Oral Expression to Second Year Students

Options	Number of teachers	Percentages
1-3 years	13	76.5%
3-7 years	2	11.8%
More than 7 years	2	11.8%
Total	17	100%

The aim of this question is to know the teachers' experience in teaching OE to second year learners in order to know to which extent the questioned teachers would offer us with dependable information based on their experiences in dealing with students' speaking difficulties. According to the results demonstrated in table 5, the majority of the questioned teachers (76.5%) have taught OE to second year students for a few years, ranging from one to

three years. Two teachers (11.8%) have taught it between three to seven years, while the two other teachers (11.8%) have been teaching it for more than seven years.

Section Two: Speaking Skill

Q4. How do you rate your students' level in speaking?

Table 6

Teachers' Assessment of Students' Level in Speaking

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Good	0	0%
Average	13	76.5%
Below average	4	23.5%
Total	17	100%

Through this question, we intended to know how teachers perceive second year students' speaking abilities based on their prior knowledge of them, and to clearly identify their level when it comes to OE. Table 6 reveals that the majority of the questioned teachers (76.5%) agreed that their students have an average level in speaking. The other four participants representing 23.5% claimed that their students' oral performance is below average, while no one (0%) opted for "good" option. The results give a hint that second year EFL students are suffering from serious problems in speaking that must be detected and worked on.

Q5. Do you attribute your students'speaking problems to:

a. The process

b. The product

Table 7

Teachers'AttributionsforStudents'SpeakingProblems

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
The process	17	100%
The product	0	0%
Total	17	100%

The aim of this question is to find out to what teachers attribute their students' speaking problems, to better understand the root causes of them. Table 7 denotes that all the respondents (100%) attribute their students' speaking problems to the process. The data above implies that second year students face various difficulties in their attempt to speak English which indicates that they do not exert much effort to practise the language. Thus, they lack the motivation to participate in OE sessions. Accordingly, students cannot succeed in the product which will affect their speaking skill negatively. Hence, an effective strategy is needed to assist them in the process of learning the speaking skill and overcome their problems.

Q6. Whatare the frequent language problems that your students face in the speaking sessions?

a. Lack of vocabulary

b. Pronunciation

c. Grammar mistakes

d. Mother tongue use

Table 8

Students' Language Problems in the Speaking Sessions

Options	Number of teachers	Percentages
a+b+c+d	8	47%
a+b+c	3	17.6%
a+c	3	17.6%
a	1	5.8%
c+d	1	5.8%
a+c+d	1	5.8%
Total	17	100%

The purpose behind this question is to know learners' most frequent language problems in oral sessions based on their teachers' evaluation. It is highly noticeable in table 8 that all the teachers opted for more than one option except one teacher who opted for only one problem, which is lack of vocabulary, as the main typical language problem faced by his/her students. Eight teachers (47%) out of 17 reported that their students suffer from all the mentioned problems. Lack of vocabulary and grammar mistakes take the first position of the most difficult aspects for second year students (16 teachers) followed by pronunciation and mother tongue use. Therefore, it can be deduced that second year EFL students at Mila University Centre face many language problems in their speaking performance which require solutions to assist them in overcoming these difficulties.

Q7. Whatare the frequent affective problems that your students face in speaking sessions?

a. Inhibition (shyness, fear)

b. Anxiety

c. Lack of confidence

d. Lack of motivation

Table 9

Students' Affective Problems in Speaking Sessions

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
a+b+c+d	9	52.9%
a+b	2	11.8%
a+b+c	2	11.8%
a+d	2	11.8%
a+b+d	1	5.8%
c+d	1	5.8%
Total	17	100%

The aim of this question is to identify students' most frequent affective problems in speaking sessions based on teachers' observation. The data in table 6 show that all the participants opted for more than one option in which 52.9% of them agreed that second year students suffer from all the mentioned problems when speaking the English language. The answers of the other teachers varied between three and two options. Their answers show that the most affective problem encountered by students while speaking is inhibition (16 teachers) followed by both anxiety and lack of confidence (13 teachers), and then lack of motivation (nine teachers). From the results, it is figured out that the learning atmosphere in the speaking sessions is not comfortable for students. Thus, they face many metacognitive problems that hinder them from learning and speaking the English language.

Q8. Do you think that learners are aware of how to solve their problems in speaking?

Table 10

Learners' Awareness of How to Solve their Speaking Problems

Options	Number of teachers	Percentages
Yes	3	17.6%
No	14	82.4%
Total	17	100%

Question eight seeks to investigate teachers' views about their students' awareness concerning ways of solving their speaking problems. The data indicate that the majority of the respondents (82.4%) reported that their learners are not aware of how to overcome their speaking challenges. Only three teachers (17.6%) claimed that their students are conscious of this issue. According to these results, it is deduced that second year EFL students at Mila University Centre do not know effective strategies to deal with their speaking problems. Hence, the need to be introduced to the AT and use it to improve the speaking skill is required.

Q9. Do you use certain strategies to solve their problems?

Table 11

Teachers' Use of Strategies to Solve Students' Speaking Problems

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%
Total	17	100%

This question targets whether the teachers use certain strategies to overcome their students' speaking problems. Table 11 shows that all the questioned teachers answered in a positive manner. This result suggests that OE teachers are fully aware of their students' speaking difficulties, and they are using certain strategies to help learners reduce them.

Q10. If "yes", what are those strategies?

a. Promoting cooperation among students

b. Giving students topics of their interest

c. Presenting tasks and activities in a motivating way

_Others

Table 12

Type of Strategies Used by Teachers to Solve Students' Speaking Problems

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
a	1	5.8%
b	1	5.8%
c	2	11.7%
a+b	3	17.6%
b+c	3	17.6%
a+b+c	7	41.1%
Total	17	100%

This question is designed to know the teachers' strategies used to solve students' speaking problems. Teachers' responses ranged between those who use only one strategy, and those who use a variety of strategies.The percentage of teachers who use cooperation

among students as a strategy to solve students' speaking problems is 64.7%. The second strategy (b) is used by 82.4% of the teachers, and the last one (c) is used by 70.6% of them. Furthermore, the questioned teachers added the following strategies:

- Peer assessment.

- Opening up the lines of communication through CLT activities.

- Give students some learning strategies to promote fluency and increase self-confidence.

- Pushing them to speak through language games.

- Advice them to focus on understanding the topics and represent them in their own words.

- Advice them to read, engage them to debate or perform in groups.

- Attract the students' attention to their mistakes and ask them to correct them by themselves in order to increase their autonomy.

The given answers show that OE teachers use different motivational strategies to improve their students' speaking skill. Among these strategies, they actually use the principles of the AT like using learner-centered instructional strategies,increasing students' autonomy, and pushing them to practise the language and make effort.

Section Three: Attribution Theory

Q11. To what factors you think students attribute their success?

a. Ability

b. Effort

c. Task difficulty

d. Luck

Table 13

Factors to which Students Attribute their Success

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
a	2	11.7%
b	6	35.2%
a+b	3	17.6%
b+d	2	11.7%
a+b+c	2	11.7%
a+b+d	1	5.8%
a+b+c+d	1	5.8%
Total	17	100%

The aim of this question is to determine the main factors to which students attribute their success according to teachers' views. It is highly noticeable in table 12 that the teachers' answers vary betweenthose who opted for several factors and those who chose only one factor. By analysing the results, we find out that an overwhelming majority of the participants (88.2%) stated that their students attribute their success to effort, followed by ability with 52.9%, luck with 23.5%, and then task difficulty with 17.6%. These results suggest that second year EFL students attribute their success mostly to internal factors which indicates that they try to maintain a positive self-image by attributing it to their own effort and ability. Hence, concerning success, second year students of English possess an internal locus of control.

Q12. To what factors you think students attribute their failure?

a. Ability

b. Effort

c. Task difficulty

d. Luck

Table 14

Factors to which Students Attribute their Failure

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
b	1	5.8%
c	5	29.4%
a+b	1	5.8%
a+c	2	11.7%
c+d	6	35.2%
a+b+c	1	5.8%
a+b+c+d	1	5.8%
Total	17	100%

The point from question 12 is to determine the main factors to which students attribute their failure based on the teachers' views. Table 14 illustrates that six teachers (35.2%) opted for both task difficulty and luck as the main factors to which students attribute their failure. 29.4% of them considered that their students attribute their failure to the task difficulty. Therefore, task difficulty is chosen by 88.2% of the questioned teachers as the main factor to which students attribute their failure, luck is chosen by 41.2% of them. However, a few number of the respondents (29.4%) opted for ability and effort as factors which students attribute their failure to. These results show that the majority of second year

EFL students attribute their failure to external factors, i.e. they have an external locus of control so they may think that they have no control over this situation, they cannot change it in the future, and they are not motivated to do so. Hence, OE teachers need to apply the AT in the speaking classes to increase their students' motivation and strengthen their internal locus of control.

Q13. Do you think that motivating learners is the prime factor towards improving their speaking skill?

Table 15

Teachers' Views towards Motivating Learners to Improve their Speaking Skill

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Yes	14	82.4%
No	3	17.5%
Total	17	100%

Since the AT is a theory of motivation, question 13 is designed to investigate teachers' perspectives towards the role of motivation in improving students' speaking skill. The results in table 15 show that 82.4% of the questioned teachers believe that motivating learners is the prime factor towards enhancing their speaking skill whereas only three of them (17.6%) do not think so. This indicates that the majority of second year OE teachers are aware of the significance of motivation in oral sessions which denotes their positive perspectives towards the use of the AT to improve students' speaking skill.

Q14. Do you think that taking the role of a participant in oral sessions motivates second year university students to speak?

Table 16

Teachers' Views about Being a Participant in Oral Sessions

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%
Total	17	100%

The aim behind question 14 is to figure out teachers' perspectives towards taking the role of a participant in oral sessions to motivate their students to speak. The table reported above shows that the entire informants (100%) responded in a positive manner. They all agreed that second year university students will be motivated to speak when the teacher takes the role of a participant. This result reflects teachers' positive point of view towards the use of the AT to enhance students' speaking skill because being a participant signifies a learner-centered classroom which is one of the AT's principles.

Q15. Do you think that taking the role of a controller in oral sessions motivates second year university students to participate?

Table 17

Teachers' Views about Being a Controller in Oral Sessions

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Yes	2	11.8%
No	15	88.2%
Total	17	100%

This question aims to collect teachers' opinions towards taking the role of a controller in oral sessions to motivate their students to participate. The data indicate thatonly two teachers out of 17 responded with yes. However, the majority of OE teachers (88.2%) claimed that taking the role of a controller in oral sessions does not motivate FL students to take a part in completing speaking tasks. This denotes that when the teacher assumes this role in OE classes, students' motivation to speak will be reduced.

Q16. Which type of strategies do you believe are effective to complete tasks in order to motivate second year university students to speak?

Table 18

The most Effective Strategies to Motivate Students

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Cooperative strategies	15	87.5%
Individual strategies	2	12.5%
Total	17	100%

The question is asked mainly to determine teachers' views about the most effective strategies to complete tasks in order to motivate students to speak. Among two types of strategies, cooperative and individual strategies, 87.5% of the questioned teachers (15 teachers) asserted that cooperative strategies are the most effective ones to motivate second year university students to speak, whereas only two teachers opted for individual strategies. Since the use of the AT involves the use of cooperative strategies (group work and pair work) that motivates students to interact and participate in speaking tasks, the results above reflect

OE teachers' positive perceptions towards the use of this motivational theory to improve students' speaking skill.

Q17. Praise for success resulting from little effort teaches the learner not to participate in oral sessions.

Table 19

Teachers' Views about Praise for Success Resulting from Little Effort

Options	Number of teachers	Percentages
Strongly agree	8	47.1%
Agree	5	29.4%
Undecided	3	17.6%
Disagree	1	5.8%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	17	100%

The purpose behind this question is to investigate teachers' opinions about praising students for success resulting from little effort in speaking tasks and its negative impact onstudents. As the table indicates, 76.5% of the respondents expressed their agreement (strongly agree or agree) on this idea while only one of the teachers disagreed on it. The remaining teachers (17.6%) were not sure as they opted for undecided. These results show that the majority of OE teachers are aware of their praise's impact on students' speaking performances when they do not exert much effort as it teaches them not to work hard in the future tasks. Hence, when agreeing with this point, OE teachers show their positive views

about the application of AT in oral classes for the sake of helping students to improve their speaking performances.

Q18. Criticism for failure on a speaking performance that could have been accomplished with effort, by emphasizing that "you can do it if you try", communicates to the student that s/he has the ability to succeed and should have put forth effort.

Table 20

Teachers' Views about Criticizing Students' Speaking Performances

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Strongly agree	6	35.3%
Agree	11	64.7%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	17	100%

This question seeks to know whether OE teachers agree on the idea that links the way of criticism with what it can communicate to students. It is clearly indicated in table 20 that all the questioned teachers expressed their agreement (strongly agree or agree) on the statement in question 18. This can be implicitly interpreted that OE teachers attribute their students' failure in speaking tasks to effort. Accordingly, they are aware ofusing the appropriate feedback which communicates to learners that ability plus effort equals success. This indicates that OE teachers hold positive perceptions towards the use of the AT to motivate students in speaking sessions.

Q19. If you give your students a task below their level, they will reduce their effort in speaking sessions

Table 21

Teachers' Views about Giving Students a Task below their Level

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentages
Strongly agree	5	29.4%
Agree	10	58.8%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagree	2	11.8%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	17	100%

Question 19 aims at eliciting teachers' opinions about the impact of giving the learners tasks below their level. The data gathered in table 21 indicate that 88.2% of the informants showed their agreement on the above statement whereas only two teachers disagreed on it. Hence, it can be deduced that OE teachers are aware that their students will be unmotivated to exert effort in the future speaking tasks when they give them tasks below their level. This reflects their positive perceptions towards assisting students to strengthen their internal locus of control in order to achieve better grades in speaking tasks.

Section Four: Further Suggestions

Q20. Please, add any suggestion you see relevant to the aim of the questionnaire.

Question 20 is meant to elicit teachers' suggestions concerning the issue of using the AT in speaking classes. Only four teachers responded to this question. They suggested the following:

- OE requires effort and practice; it is about speaking and presenting not about reading and memorizing from papers.

- Teachers' feedback may cause negative impact on students' speaking performances when it is given in a wrong way.

- Motivation is necessary to improve the speaking skill and effort is required (listening to native speakers, collaborative work, reading, etc.).

- Students' oral performance is likely to be enhanced if their linguistic is solidified and strengthened through making extensive tasks in an entirely autonomous fashion.

2.1.4. Discussion of the Results

The present questionnaire intended to investigate teachers' perspectives towards the use of the AT as a strategy to motivate students and solve their problems inside speaking classes. The majority of the questioned teachers are experienced ones which gives us a chance to obtain valid answers that work best for our research.

The answers provided by teachers portray that the majority of their learners are of an average level in speaking which indicates that they are facing some speaking problems. This latter was attributed by teachers to the process stating that their students face many language problems like grammar mistakes and lack of vocabulary, as well as many affective problems such as inhibition and lack of motivation. Besides, teachers reported that their students are, in general, not aware of how to overcome these problems. In an attempt to reduce the aforementioned hindrances, OE teachers are using certain strategies that they believe would be effective to improve students' speaking skill. The indicated results lead us to infer that

they adopt the principles of the AT through using strategies that motivate students to speak and interact, make efforts, and rely on themselves.

In light of discovering students' locus of control, teachers asserted that not all the students have an internal locus of control especially when failing; the majority of them attribute their failure to external factors. Therefore, we can deduce that attributing their speaking achievements to external factors is an urge for using the AT to strengthen their internal locus of control.

From the analysis of the results, it can be seen that the majority of the questioned teachers tend to have a positive perception toward AT since they agreed that motivating learners is the prime factor towards improving their speaking skill. To confirm their perception, three questions were asked to determine which type of roles and strategies they believe would be better applied in oral classes to increase students' motivation and improve their speaking skill.

Teachers see that, in speaking classes, it is preferable to take roles that shift the focus of instruction from the teacher to the students and offer more space for them to speak the language as they expressed their agreement towards taking the role of a participant, as well as using cooperative strategies to motivate students which, in turn, reflects their positive perceptions towards utilizing learner-centered instructional strategies. Besides, three other questions were addressed to know if they are aware of how to deal with students in a way that leads them to put forth effort and achieve better results in the coming performances, not the opposite. Teachers' responses to these questions, as well as their suggestions, have proven their positive perspectives towards the use of the AT and their tendency to use it in OE sessions

Section Two: Students' Questionnaire

2.2.1. Population and Sample

The population chosen for investigation in this study is second year students in the department of English at Mila University Centre in the academic year 2022/2023. From the whole population (203 students), who are divided into six groups, we deal with 70 students. The selection of such population is based on the consideration that second year students have already experienced the interaction with their teachers and peers in the first year which enables them to determine the speaking areas where they face problems and the most effective strategies that motivate them to participate in speaking classes. The questionnaire was distributed through Facebook groups in a Google Document format.

2.2.2. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire consists of 18 questions which vary between closed ended questions, agreement questions, and an open-ended request at the end of the questionnaire. The questions are grouped into four sections:

Section One: General information (Question 1 and 2)

This section aims at gathering general information about the questioned students.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill (Questions 3-9)

The main aim behind this part is to explore students' difficulties in speaking, their awareness of them, and how they manage to overcome them.

Section Three: The Attribution Theory (Questions 10-17)

Section three investigates students' perceptions towards the use of AT in developing their speaking skill.

Section Four: Further Suggestions (Question 18)

The aim of the last section is to give learnersthe opportunity to add further suggestions related to the topic being studied.

2.2.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section One: General Information

Q1. Was English your first choice?

Table 22

Students' English Choice

Options	Number	Percentages
Yes	53	75.7%
No	17	24.3%
Total	70	100%

This question is for the sake of knowing whether the students have chosen to study English at university. The table above shows that the majority of the students (75.7%) affirmed that English was their first choice whereas only 24.3% of them said the opposite. The results assume that the majority of second year learners of English at Mila University Centre have the desire to study English.

Q2. How do you consider you level in English?

Table 23

Students' English Level

Options	Number	Percentages
High	8	11.4%
Average	58	82.9%
Low	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

The aim of question 2 is to determine learners' level in English. The results in table 23 demonstrate that 82.9% of the respondents have average levels in English. Eight of them (11.4%) declared that they have a high level. The last percentage (5.7%) refers to the students who claimed that their level is low. These findings show that the majority of the questioned students have an average level in English indicating that they have average grades which can be improved by using appropriate strategies.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Q3. Is your spoken English:

    a. Good

    b. Average

    c. Below average

Table 24

Students' Speaking Level

Options	Number	Percentages
Good	20	28.6%
Average	39	55.7%
Below average	11	15.7%
Total	70	100%

This question aims to identify students' level in speaking the English language. From the percentages in table 24, it can be seen that more than half of the respondents (55.7%) declared that their speaking level is average. However, 28.6% of the participants claimed that their spoken English is good. The rest of them (15.7%) stated that their speaking level is below average. These results display that more than the half of learners face some difficulties when speaking which requires remedy.

Q4. What are your preferable speaking activities?

a. Games

b. Discussion

c. Storytelling

d. Role-play

Table 25

Students' Preferred Speaking Activities

Options	Number	Percentages
a	10	14.2%
b	20	28.5%
c	1	1.4%
d	2	2.8%
a+b+c+d	1	1.4%
b+d	6	8.5%
a+c	3	4.2%
a+b	6	8.5%
b+c	10	14.2%
a+b+c	4	5.7%
a+d	5	7.1%
a+b+d	2	2.8%
Total	70	100%

The purpose behind this question is to determine the speaking activities that second year students of English find the most enjoyable. The results recorded in table 25 show that each student has his/her preferable speaking activity and some of them prefer more than one activity. In the first position comes discussion with 70% followed by games with 44.3%. Moreover, 27.1% of the respondents declared that storytelling is the best activity. Finally, the rest of the participants (22.9%) chose role-play as the most favorite activity for them. These outcomes show that the majority of the students prefer discussion activities, which indicates

that they prefer collaborative learning in which they interact with each other that leads to a learner-centered classroom. However, the variety in answers show that learners have different interests and needs which should be taken into consideration.

Q5. Do you face problems while speaking?

Table 26

Students' Encountering of SpeakingProblems

Options	Number	Percentages
Yes	69	98.6%
No	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

This question seeks to know whether second year students of English face problems in oral production. The above table shows that almost all the learners (98.6%) face problems while speaking whereas only one student claimed that s/he has not any problems in speaking. These responses prove that speaking is such a challenging skill that needs to be developed by adopting the most appropriate strategies and tasks.

Q6. If "yes", what are the language problems you face while speaking?

    a.   Lack of vocabulary

    b.   Pronunciation

    c.   Grammar mistakes

    d. Mother tongue use

Table 27

Students' Language Problems in Speaking

Options	Number	Percentages
a	19	27.5%
b	3	4.3%
c	6	8.6%
d	3	4.3%
a+c	12	17.3%
a+b	7	10.1%
a+d	4	5.7%
c+d	2	2.8%
b+c	1	1.4%
a+b+c	4	5.7%
a+c+d	2	2.8%
a+b+c+d	6	8.6%
No answer (NA)	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

For the sake of finding the suitable solutions to the speaking obstacles, we need first to specify the language problems that second year students of English face while speaking which is the aim of this question. The results in table 27 show that there are students who suffer from one or two problems while others suffer from many language problems and one of the students preferred not to answer the question. Lack of vocabulary comes in the first position with 78.3% as the most challenging problem that prevents students from mastering

the speaking skill. Besides, 47.8% of the respondents claimed that they suffer from grammar

mistakes. Moreover, 30.4% said that they have problem with pronunciation. The rest of the

sample (24.6%) declared that their language problem is the mother tongue use. These results

may indicate that second year EFL learners at Mila University Centre face serious problems

with the language in which lack of vocabulary is the most frequent one. This indicates their

lack of effort and practice.

Q7. What are the affective problems you face while speaking?

a. Inhibition (shyness, fear)

b. Anxiety

c. Lack of self-confidence

d. Lack of motivation

Table 28

Students' Affective Problems in Speaking

Options	Number	Percentages
a	7	10%
b	4	5.7%
c	3	4.2%
d	19	27.1%
a+b	6	8.5%
a+d	4	5.7%
d+c	6	8.5%
c+d	2	2.7%
b+c	2	2.7%
a+b+c	5	7.1%
a+c+d	1	1.4%
a+b+c+d	10	14.2%
Total	69	98.5%

The aim of question seven is to figure out the affective factors that prevent second year students from developing their speaking. Table 28 shows that the responses differ between those who suffer from all the mentioned problems and those who suffer from some of them. Lack of motivation takes the first position of the most frequent affective problems with 59.6% followed by inhibition with 46.9%, lack of self-confidence with 41.4%, and finally anxiety with 38.6%. These results prove that second year EFL learners suffer from many affective problems, in which lack of motivation is the most frequent one. These affective factors can be the biggest barriers towards developing the learners' communicative skills. Thus, it becomes compulsory to search for effective strategies to overcome those problems and increase the students' motivation to speak.

Q8. Do you think about solutions to solve your speaking problems?

Table 29

Students' Awareness of Ways to Solve their Speaking Problems

Options	Number	Percentages
Yes	68	97.1%
No	2	2.8%
Total	70	100%

The point from this question is to know whether students are thinking of ways to solve their speaking problems. As for the results, an overwhelming majority of the participants (97.1%) said *yes* while only two students (2.8%) of the whole sample opted for *no*. This elucidates that almost all the students think about solutions to solve their speaking problems which indicates their interest in improving their speaking skill.

Q9. What strategies do you use to solve your affective speaking problems?

    a. Social/affective strategies (interact and cooperate with peers)

    b. Prepare talk before class

    c. Using criticism as a challenge

    _ Others

Table 30

Students' Strategies to Solve their Affective Problems

Options	Number	Percentages
a	17	24.2%
b	18	25.7%
c	7	10%
a+b	13	18.5%
a+c	2	2.8%
b+c	9	12.8%
a+b+c	2	2.8%
NA	2	2.8%
Total	70	100%

The aim of this question is to point out the strategies that are used by learners to solve their affective problems. As it is shown in table 30, the students' answers vary between those who use just one strategy and those who use more than one. Concerning the results, for about 60% of the participants stated that they prepare talk before class as a strategy to overcome their affective speaking problems. Social/affective strategies (cooperate and interact with

peers) are used by 49.3% of the respondents and the last strategy, which is using criticism as a challenge, is used by 29% of them. Moreover, the questioned students added the following strategies:

- Listening to English songs and reading books.

- Practicing how to speak without fear.

- Speaking with myself.

- Thinking about a specific topic, talking about it to yourself, and using the dictionary whenever you struggle to find the right word. This will improve your speaking skill.

- Believing in yourself and your abilities and ignoring all what make you anxious.

From the results, it is deduced that second year EFL students use different strategies to solve their affective speaking problems. They rely on themselves and make efforts to enhance their speaking, which indicates that they have positive perspectives towards the use of AT in improving the speaking skill.

Section Three: Attribution Theory

Q10. You succeed in completing speaking tasks because:

a. You exert enough effort in studying

b. You have the ability to achieve success

c. The task is easy (questions, knowledge)

d. You are a lucky person

_Other

Table31

Students' Attributions of their Success

Options	Number of Students	Percentages
a	22	31.4%
b	12	17.1%
c	5	7.1%
d	1	1.4%
a+b	23	32.8%
a+c	3	4.2%
b+c	3	4.2%
b+d	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

The aim of this question is to discover the factors to which students attribute their success. As it is shown in table 31, students' answers ranged between those who selected just one factor and those who opted for two factors. The results show that effort was chosen by the majority of the questioned students (68.6%) as the main reason behind their success in the speaking tasks. Besides, 51.4% of them attributed their success to their ability while 14.3% of them attributed it to the easiness of the task. The remaining students (2.8%) claimed that they have a good luck. These results are consistent with the findings of question 11 from the teachers' questionnaire, in which we interpreted that the majority of second year EFL students attribute their success to internal factors in order to maintain a positive self-image. Hence, they tend to have an internal locus of control as they attribute their success to their effort and ability.

Q11. You fail in completing speaking tasks because:

a. You do not exert enough effort in studying

b. You have not enough ability to achieve success

c. The task is difficult (questions, knowledge)

d. You have a bad luck

_Others

Table 32

Students' Attributions of their Failure

Options	Number of Students	Percentages
a	9	12.8%
b	2	2.8%
c	25	35.7%
d	16	22.8%
a+c	3	4.2%
b+c	2	2.8%
b+d	1	1.4%
c+d	12	17.1%
Total	70	100%

This question is devoted to know the main factors to which students attribute their failure in completing the speaking tasks. By analysing table 32, it is found that task difficulty is the most chosen factor by students (60%). Besides, 41.4% of them claimed that they have a bad luck. However, the results show a small percentage of students who blame themselves for

not exerting enough effort (17.1%) or for not having the ability to achieve success (7.1%). In addition, two students added other reasons for their failure which are: lack of vocabulary and the teacher's way of teaching. In light of what has been said, it canbe deduced that the majority of second year EFL students attribute their failure in speaking tasks to external factors which they have no control over. This indicates that they have an external locus of control; hence, their motivation to change the situation and improve their speaking skill is low. Therefore, the need to apply the AT in speaking classes is recommended.

Q12. How do you describe your motivation in Oral Expression sessions?

Table 33

Students' Motivation in Oral Expression Sessions

Options	Number of Students	Percentages
High	11	15.7%
Average	35	50%
Low	24	34.3%
Total	70	100%

The purpose of this question is to find out the extent to which students are motivated in OE sessions. As for the results, half of the participants (50%) described their motivation as being average. 24 students, who represent 34.3% of the whole sample, claimed that their motivation is low. Only 15.7% of them affirmed that they are highly motivated in OE classes. Therefore, most of second year EFL students are not highly motivated in speaking sessions. This result confirms the interpreted idea in the previous question which states that since the majority of students tend to have an external locus of control, their motivation to improve

their speaking is weak. Accordingly, second year students of English need a motivational strategy to overcome this problem in OE sessions.

Q13. If you believe you have ability and you exert enough effort, you will succeed in improving your speaking skill.

Table34

Students' Beliefs about whether Ability plus Effort Will Result in Success

Options	Number of Students	Percentages
Strongly agree	42	60%
Agree	27	38.6%
Undecided	1	1.4%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	70	100%

The purpose behind asking this question is to discover learners' points of view towards the idea derived from the AT that links success with both ability and effort. The data gained in table 34 show that 60% of the informants pointed out that they are strongly agree on the given statement. Also, 27 students, who represent 38.6% of the whole sample, asserted that they agree on it while only one student opted for undecided. These results display that second year EFL students are aware that, besides their ability, effort is important in order to succeed in developing their oral performances. This reflects their positive perspectives towards the use of the AT to enhance their speaking skill.

Q14. When the teacher gives you positive feedback for accomplishing an easy task, you will reduce your effort (reduce participation, interaction, and not doing homework).

Table35

Students' Perspectives towards the Impact of Positive Feedback on their Effort

Options	Number of Students	Percentages
Strongly agree	25	35.7%
Agree	32	45.7%
Undecided	9	12.8%
Strongly disagree	1	1.4%
Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

By this question, we seek to know students' opinions about whether receiving positive feedback for accomplishing easy tasks makes them reduce their effort. The data obtained in table 35 indicate that the majority of the participants (81.4%) expressed their agreement on the given statement (agree/strongly agree) while 7.1% of them showed the opposite (disagree/strongly disagree). Moreover, nine students (12.8%) were not sure as they opted for undecided. The results suggest that the majority of second year EFL students reduce their effort when receiving positive feedback for accomplishing easy tasks because it communicates to them that they are good and have no need to exert effort in future speaking performances. This reflects the need to use the AT in order to cope with such problems in speaking classes. Therefore, OE teachers need to be aware when giving positive feedback as it has a negative effect on students' motivation to speak.

Q15. When the teacher gives you negative feedback for accomplishing a difficult task, you will reduce your effort (reduce participation, interaction, and not doing homework).

Table 36

Students' Perspectives towards the Impact of Negative Feedback on their Effort

Options	Number of Students	Percentages
Strongly agree	27	38.6%
Agree	31	44.3%
Undecided	6	8.6%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	6	8.6%
Total	70	100%

The aim of this question is to investigate students' opinions about whether receiving negative feedback for accomplishing difficult tasks reduces their effort. As it is shown in table 36, an overwhelming majority of the questioned students (82.9%) showed their agreement (strongly agree/agree)on the given statement. In contrast, 8.6% of the sample disagreed on the statement. The remaining students (8.6%) were not sure as they opted for undecided. The results prove that receiving negative feedback for accomplishing difficult taskscommunicates to learners that they do not have the ability to achieve success; no matter how hard they try, their future is predetermined. This suggests the need to apply the AT in OE classes and recommend teachers to be aware of how and when to give students negative feedback.

Q16. If the teacher gives you tasks below your level, you will reduce your effort.

Table 37

Students' Perspectives towards the Negative Effect of Having Tasks below their Levels

Options	Number of Students	*Percentages*
Strongly agree	24	34.2%
Agree	33	47.1%
Undecided	9	12.8%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

This question seeks to demonstrate students' opinions about the impact of having tasks below their level on their effort. The data above show that the majority of students (81.3%) expressed their agreement (Strongly agree/ agree) on the given statement. However, 5.7% of them disagreed on it. Nine students (12.6%) were not sure whether to agree or not, so they opted for undecided. The results prove that giving students tasks below their level reduces their effort, i.e. they get used not to make effort. Thus, their motivation to participate in the coming speaking tasks will be reduced.

Q17. If you believe that much of what happens to you is a result of what you do, you will rely only on yourself to enhance your speaking skill.

Table 38

Students' Perspectives towards Relying on themselves to Improve their Speaking Skill

Options	Number of Students	Percentage
Strongly agree	56	80%
Agree	14	20%
Undecided	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	70	100%

The purpose behind this question is to know students' perspectives towards relying on themselves to enhance their speaking skill. The table above shows that 80% of the students strongly agreed on the given statement and 20% of them agreed on it. Thus, all the participants supported the idea. According to the AT, to obtain better results, students need to attribute their achievements to internal, unstable, and controllable factors. Therefore, students' agreement on this idea reflects their positive perspectives towards the use of the AT in enhancing their speaking skill.

Section Four: Further suggestions

Q18. Please, add any suggestion you see relevant to the aim of the questionnaire.

The last question is intended to know what students want to add in regard to the topic. Only six participants answered this question, they suggested the following:

- Motivation is needed in oral sessions in order to feel comfortable and improve our speaking skill.

- Improving the speaking skill depends on the effort the speaker makes, such as reading, talking to foreigners, watching movies, listening to podcasts, etc.

- Speaking is the most important and the most difficult skill. What the teacher offers is not enough to master it. We must rely on ourselves and exert as much effort as we can.

- The basis of success is positive thinking and continuous effort.

- No pain, no gain; you must make effort to improve your level.

- It is good if the teacher use a strategy that motivates us in the speaking sessions and teaches us how to ameliorate our levels.

It is highly noticeable that all the suggestions lead to the participants' positive perspectives towards the importance of effort in improving the speaking skill.

2.2.4. Discussion of the Results

The analysis of the students' questionnaire serves in drawing a set of results concerning the significant role of the AT and the improvement of the speaking skill. The analysis reveals that most of second year learners independently chose to study English at university which illustrates their desire to learn it. However, the speaking skill seems to be difficult for them since they confirmed that they have an average level and that they encounter many difficulties when practicing it. Most of these problems are affective such as lack of motivation and lack of self-confidence, besides other language ones like lack of vocabulary and grammar mistakes.

The findings show that most of second year students are willing to overcome these hindrances through the use of various strategies like preparing talk before class, interact with peers, practicing the language outside the classroom, etc. These strategies were based on

exerting much effort to develop their oral abilities which reflects the students' positive perceptions towards the importance of effort in ameliorating the speaking skill.

Concerning their locus of control, a large number of students attribute their success to their own effort and ability; however, when it comes to their failure, they attribute it to external factors such as task difficulty and lack. This result indicates that they tend to have an external locus of control, which in turn interprets their low motivation in oral sessions. Over and above, the results demonstrate that teachers' feedback and instructional strategy may affect the students' motivation in speaking classes when it does not assist them to increase their effort. Besides, second year students supported the idea that they will succeed in improving their speaking skill when they believe in their abilities, exert enough effort, and rely on themselves. This agreement leads to the students' positive points of view towards the significance of their ability and effort in improving their speaking skill and obtaining better results.

On the whole, the results obtained from this questionnaire elucidate that the majority of students believe in the positive impact of AT as a theory of motivation on learning the speaking skill. Hence, they have positive perspectives about the use of AT in the development of the speaking skill.

Conclusion

For reminder purposes, this chapter is concerned with the practical part of the current study that aims at investigating students and teachers' perspectives towards the use of the AT to improve EFL learners' speaking skill. In this chapter, we analyzed, interpreted, and discussed the distributed questionnaires to both teachers and learners. From the questionnaires' results, we deduce that both teachers and students have positive perspectives

towards the use of the AT in speaking classes for the sake of assisting students to overcome their speaking difficulties and thus motivating them to enhance their speaking skill.

General Conclusion

Among the four language skill, speaking is considered the toughest skill to be mastered by EFL students. It demands experience and extensive effort on a regular basis. The AT of motivation comes as one of the various theories that motivate learners and help them improve their oral abilities. The main aim of our research is to shed light on the importance of using the AT to ameliorate learners' speaking skill. Thus, an attempt was made to investigate EFL students and teachers' perspectives towards the application of this theory in OE classrooms to enhance the speaking skill.

In search of achieving the aims of this study, two questionnaires are used as a data collection tool. They are administered to seventeen second year OE teachers and seventy second year EFL students from the department of English at Mila University Centre. The obtained findings from the research instruments provided answers to our research questions.

This research is made up of two chapters. The first chapter offers theoretical insights into the two variables of the current study which are the speaking skill and the AT. In turn, a description of the current research's field work is provided in the second chapter. This latter provides the research methodology, the analysis, the interpretations, and the discussion of the main findings.

To conclude, EFL students do face serious problems while speaking. The findings reveal that students' main problem in OE sessions is the lack of motivation. In addition, they attribute their failure in oral tasks to external factors which call for teachers' involvement to apply a strategy that motivates students to develop an internal locus of control and improve their speaking abilities. Teachers and learners have positive perspectives towards the use of the AT in enhancing the speaking skill. They see that motivation and effort are important factors in improving the students' speaking level. In this respect, it is worth noting that the

current research work can assist teachers and learners to reflect upon the extent to which they orient attention towards the importance of applying the AT in the speaking classrooms for the sake of overcoming the students' speaking problems and ameliorating their oral communication skills.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on the research findings, we shall present a set of recommendations and suggestions to EFL teachers and students. This is meant to enable teachers and learners to gain much familiarity with the issue of using the AT in the speaking classroom in order to devote more space and interest to it in their pedagogical practices. Also, future researchers are addressed with some suggestions for further research.

➢ **Recommendations for EFL Teachers**

- Due to the various difficulties that teachers face to motivate students and improve their speaking skill, we suggest the application of AT in OE sessions.

- Teachers are recommended to help learners develop an internal locus of control through utilizing learner-centered instructional strategies and giving them tasks in which they insist on accomplishing them in an entirely autonomous style.

- Teachers are recommended to motivate their students to speak and interact in oral sessions by using cooperative strategies and selecting interesting tasks.

- Teachers need to be aware of the feedback or the marks they give for their students' speaking performances as it influences their motivation to participate in the future tasks. Hence, they need to convey to them that they have the ability to improve their speaking and just need to exert enough effort.

➢ **Recommendations for EFL Students**

- Students need to realize the importance of the speaking skill and work hard to improve it through the use of certain strategies like the AT.

- Students need to believe that they have the ability to achieve success in the speaking tasks, and all what they need is to exert enough effort (practicing the language inside and outside the classroom, collaborating with peers, preparing themselves before class, etc.).

- Students are recommended to develop an internal locus of control by attributing their achievements to internal, unstable, and controllable factors (their effort).

➢ **Recommendations for Future Researchers**

- We suggest for future researchers to conduct a research study about the effectiveness of AT in enhancing the other language skills (listening, reading, and writing).

- We suggest carrying out the current study again relying on other case studies to offer a larger sample or using different research methodology.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Teachers' Questionnaire

Appendix II: Students' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is a part of a research work. It aims at investigating your perspectives towards the use of the attribution theory in enhancing the speaking skill. We would be grateful if you answer the following questions.

Please put a tick (✓) in the box corresponding to your answer.

Section One: General Information

1. What is youracademic degree?

    a.   Bachelor   ☐

    b.   Master   ☐

    c.   Magister   ☐

    d. Doctorate ☐

2. How long have you been teaching English at university?

    a.   1-3 years   ☐

    b.   3-7 years   ☐

    c. More than 7 years ☐

3. How long have you been teaching Oral Expression to second year university learners?

    a.   1-3 years   ☐

    b.   3-7 years   ☐

    c. More than 7 years ☐

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

4. How do you rate your students' level in speaking?

    a. Good   ☐

    b. Average   ☐

    c. Below average ☐

5. Do you attribute your students'speaking problems to:

    a. The process ☐

    b. The product ☐

6. What are the frequent language problems that your students face in the speaking sessions? (you may choose more than an option)

    a. Lack of vocabulary☐

    b. Pronunciation   ☐

    c. Grammar mistakes ☐

    d. Mother tongue use ☐

7. What are the frequent affective problems that your students face in speaking sessions? (you may choose more than an option)

    a. Inhibition (shyness, fear) ☐

    b. Anxiety   ☐

    c. Lack of confidence   ☐

    d. Lack of motivation   ☐

8. Do you think that learners are aware of how to solve their problems in speaking?

    a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

9. Do you use certain strategies to solve their problems?

    a. Yes☐

    b. No ☐

10. If "yes", what are those strategies?

    a.   Promoting cooperation among students   ☐

    b.   Giving students topics of their interest   ☐

    c.   Presenting tasks and activities in a motivating way ☐

_Others:……………………………………………………………………………

Section Three: Attribution Theory

11. To what factors you think students attribute their success?

    a.   Ability   ☐

    b. Effort   ☐

    c. Task difficulty ☐

    d. d. Luck   ☐

12. To What factors you think students attribute their failure?

    a.   Ability   ☐

    b. Effort   ☐

    c. Task difficulty ☐

    d. Luck   ☐

13. Do you think that motivating learners is the prime factor towards improving their speaking skill?

    a. Yes□

    b. No □

14. Do you think that taking the role of a participant in oral sessions motivates second year university students to speak?

    a. Yes □

    b. No □

15. Do you think that taking the role of a controller in oral sessions motivates second year university students to participate?

    a. Yes □

    b. No□

16. Which type of strategies do you believe are effective to complete tasks in order to motivate second year university students to speak?

a. Cooperative strategies (pair work, group work) □

b. Individual strategies □

17. Praise for success resulting from little effort teaches the learner not to participate in oral sessions.

a. Strongly agree □ b. Agree □c. Undecided □ d. Disagree □ e. Strongly disagree□

18. Criticism for failure on a speaking performance that could have been accomplished with effort, by emphasizing that "you can do it if you try", communicates to the student that s/he has the ability to succeed and should have put forth effort.

a. Strongly agree ☐ b. Agree ☐ c. Undecided ☐   d. Disagree ☐   e. Strongly disagree☐

19. If you give your students a task below their level, they will reduce their effort in speaking sessions.

a. Strongly agree ☐ b. Agree ☐ c. Undecided ☐   d. Disagree ☐   e. Strongly disagree☐

Section Four: Further Suggestions

20. Please, add any suggestion you see relevant to the aim of the questionnaire.

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Thank you ☺

Dear student,

This questionnaire is a part of a research work. It aims at investigating your perspectives towards the use of the attribution theory in enhancing the speaking skill. We would be grateful if you answer the following questions.

Please put a tick (✓) in the box corresponding to your answer.

Section One: General Information

1. Was English your first choice?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

2. How do you consider your level in English?

    a. High   ☐

    b. Average ☐

    c. Low   ☐

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

3. Is your spoken English:

    a. Good   ☐

    b. Average   ☐

    c. Below average ☐

4. What are your preferable speaking activities? (you may choose more than an option)

    a. Games   ☐

b. Discussion ☐

c. Storytelling ☐

d. d. Role-play ☐

5. Do you face problems while speaking?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

6. If "yes", what are the language problems you face while speaking? (you may choose more

than an option)

a. Lack of vocabulary ☐

b. Pronunciation   ☐

c. Grammar mistakes ☐

d. Mother tongue use ☐

7. What are the affective problems you face while speaking? (you may choose more than an

option)

a. Inhibition (shyness, fear) ☐

b. Anxiety   ☐

c. Lack of self-confidence   ☐

d. Lack of motivation   ☐

8. Do you think about solutions to solve your speaking problems?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

9. What strategies do you use to solve your affective speaking problems?

a. Social/affective strategies (interact and cooperate with peers) ☐

a. b. Prepare talk before class ☐

b. Using criticism as a challenge ☐

_Others: …………………………………………………………………………………

Section Three: Attribution Theory

10. You succeed in completing speaking tasks because: (you may choose more than an option)

a. You exert enough effort in studying ☐

b. You have the ability to achieve success ☐

c. The task is easy (questions, knowledge) ☐

d. You are a lucky person ☐

_Other: …………………………………………………………………………………

11. You fail in completing speaking tasks because: (you may choose more than an option)

a. a. You do not exert enough effort in studying ☐

b. You have not enough ability to achieve success☐

c. c. The task is difficult (questions, knowledge) ☐

d. d. You have a bad luck ☐

_Others: …………………………………………………………………………………

12. How do you describe your motivation in Oral Expression sessions?

a. Low ☐

b. Average ☐

c. cHigh ☐

13. If you believe you have ability and you exert enough effort, you will succeed in improving your speaking skill.

a. Strongly agree ☐ b. Agree ☐ c. Undecided ☐   d. Disagree ☐ e. Strongly disagree☐

14. When the teacher gives you positive feedback for accomplishing an easy task, you will reduce your effort (reduce participation, interaction, and not doing homework).

a. Strongly agree ☐ b. Agree ☐c. Undecided ☐   d. Disagree ☐   e. Strongly disagree☐

15. When the teacher gives you negative feedback for accomplishing a difficult task, you will reduce your effort (reduce participation, interaction, and not doing homework).

 a. Strongly agree ☐b. Agree ☐ c. Undecided ☐   d. Disagree ☐ e. Strongly disagree ☐

16. If the teacher gives you tasks below your level, you will reduce your effort.

a. Strongly agree ☐   b. Agree ☐ c. Undecided ☐   d. Disagree ☐ e. Strongly disagree☐

17. If you believe that much of what happens to you is a result of what you do, you will rely only on yourself to enhance your speaking skill.

a. Strongly agree ☐   b. Agree ☐ c. Undecided ☐   d. Disagree ☐ e. Strongly disagree☐

Section Four: Further Suggestions

18. Please, add any suggestion you see relevant to the aim of the questionnaire.

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………………………………

Thankyou☺

ملخص

يعتبر التحدث من المهارات الأساسية التي يجب على الطلاب إتقانها عند تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، حيث يتطلب التحدث باللغة الانجليزية وجود التحفيز الذي يعتبر عنصرا محوريا في عملية التعلم. رغم هذا فإن العديد من الطلاب ليس لديهم دوافع لممارسة هذه اللغة. نتيجة لذلك، فإنهم غالبا مايواجهون صعوبات عند محاولتهم التواصل باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية. ومن هذا المنطلق نجد أن تأثير نظرية الإسناد على تحفيز الطلاب من أجل التعلم يجعلها مناسبة للتطبيق في حصص التعبير الشفهي. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى سبر آراء الأساتذة والطلبة حول استعمال نظرية الإسناد ومدى فعاليتها في تحسين مهارة التحدث. ولغرض الوصول إلى هذا الهدف تم استعمال استبيانين. الأول موجه لسبعين طالب لغة انجليزية في السنة الثانية بالمركز الجامعي ميلة، والثاني موجه لسبعة عشر أستاذ ممن يدرسون أو سبق لهم تدريس التعبير الشفهي لطلبة السنة الثانية بالجامعة. تعكس نتائج البحث الرئيسية الآراء الايجابية للطلاب والمعلمين تجاه أهمية التحفيز والجهد في التغلب على مشاكل التحدث وتحسين القدرات الشفوية للمتعلمين، بالإضافة إلى وعيهم بتأثير الملاحظات والاستراتيجيات التعليمية وموقع التحكم في تحفيز الطلاب على تحدث اللغة. تظهر هذه النتائج أن كلا من الأساتذة والطلبة ينظرون إلى استعمال نظرية الإسناد في حصص التعبير الشفهي وفعاليتها في تطوير مهارة التحدث نظرة ايجابية.

Résumé

La compétence orale est l'une des compétences de base que les étudiants doivent maîtriser lors de l'apprentissage de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère. Parler la langue anglaise exige la motivation qui est considérée comme un facteur crucial dans le processus d'apprentissage. Cependant, de nombreux étudiants ne sont pas motivés pour pratiquer la langue ; C'est pourquoi, ils rencontrent souvent des difficultés lorsqu'ils essaient de communiquer en anglais. Par conséquent, l'influence de la théorie de l'attribution sur la motivation des étudiants lors de l'apprentissage la rend appropriée pour être mise en œuvre dans les séances de l'expression orales. La présente étude vise à explorer comment les enseignants et les étudiants perçoivent l'utilisation de la théorie de l'attribution et son efficacité dans l'amélioration de la compétence orale. Pour atteindre cet objectif, deux questionnaires ont été utilisés. Le premier questionnaire a été administré à soixante-dix étudiantes de deuxième année, spécialité langue anglaise, au Centre Universitaire de Mila. Le deuxième a été distribué à dix-sept professeurs qui enseignent ou ontdéjà enseigné l'expression orale aux étudiants de deuxième année universitaire. Les résultats principaux de la recherche reflètent les opinions positives des élèves et des enseignants quant à l'importance de la motivation et de l'effort pour surmonter les problèmes d'élocution et améliorer les capacités orales des apprenants, en plus de leur prise de conscience de l'impact de la rétroaction, des stratégies pédagogiques et du locus de contrôle sur la motivation des élèves à parler la langue. Ces résultats révèlent une perception positive des deux; Enseignants et étudiants, vers l'utilisation de la théorie de l'attribution dans les séances d'expression orale et son efficacité dans l'amélioration de la compétence orale.