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**Investigating Teachers and Learners' Opinions about the Influence of
Emotional Intelligence on Speaking Proficiency**

The Case Study of First Year Students of English at Mila University Centre

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

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Dedication I

With deep love, I dedicate this work

To my mother, Nouara, my eternal love and source of strength;

To my father, Seddik, my first source of inspiration;

To my lovely brothers, Bader Eddine, Mouad, and Oussama, who were always by my side and supported me throughout my academic journey;

To my beloved sisters, Meriem and Amina, the driving forces of my ambitions;

To my brothers' wives, Asma and Mouna, who encouraged me to accomplish this work;

To all my nephews and nieces;

To my best friend, Khawla, who has always stood by my side;

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

Roumaissa

Dedication II

In The Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

I dedicate my work to my first supporter, the person who believes in me in all my cases, the reason behind completing my study, the person who embraced me with her prayers, my beloved mother “Ghanoudja”.

To my real hero, the person who taught me a lot of life lessons without saying a word, the man who sacrifices for me and for my comfort “Boudjemaa”.

To my biggest sister “Youssra” for his moral and physical support and encouragement.

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Abstract

Speaking is one of the most fundamental aspects of language learning. Nonetheless, it presents the greatest challenge for English as a Foreign Language students, as mastering it demands consistent practice. Many students face obstacles such as anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes, which prevent them from participating in the oral expression module. Consequently, emotional intelligence provides a viable solution to overcome these challenges, empowering learners to adeptly manage their emotions and actively engage in speaking classes. The primary aim of the study is to explore teachers and learners' perceptions about the effect of emotional intelligence on speaking proficiency. To achieve the aim of this research, three questions are posed: (1) Do first-year English as a Foreign Language learners face problems in learning speaking? (2) Do first-year oral expression teachers have positive opinions about the influence of emotional intelligence on students' speaking proficiency? (3) Do first-year students hold positive opinions about the importance of emotional intelligence in developing their speaking proficiency? To answer these questions, two questionnaires are designed. The first questionnaire is administered to fifteen first-year oral expression teachers at Abdelhafid Boussouf University centre-Mila, while the second is distributed to seventy first-year students. The results reveal that students encounter many language and affective problems that hinder their speaking. Moreover, both informants hold positive opinions about the effect of emotional intelligence as a solution to minimize students' obstacles in speaking, thus improving speaking proficiency. Lastly, the research recommends that students should focus on developing the fundamental skills of emotional intelligence to overcome speaking problems.

Key words: speaking skill, emotional intelligence, speaking problems, affective factors, teachers' and students' opinions

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EI: Emotional Intelligence

OE: Oral Expression

FL: Foreign Language

FLs: Foreign Languages

%: Percent

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Language is a powerful tool for communication; it facilitates the exchange of ideas, emotions, and information. Among the various skills of language, speaking stands out as one of the most important. For English as a foreign Language (EFL) learners, mastering the art of speaking is essential for academic success, as reaching proficiency allows them to convey their thoughts efficiently, engage in meaningful interactions, and fully participate in classes.

Speaking seems to be challenging for foreign language (FL) learners; “it remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English” (Zhang, 2009, p. 23). This stems from the fact that speaking encompasses various aspects that extend beyond mere grammatical rules. Effective speaking requires a combination of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and the ability to use appropriate non-verbal cues. These aspects demand active participation and engagement, which many students find challenging. Affective barriers such as anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes often inhibit students’ willingness to participate in spoken activities, causing them to remain silent and passive. Hence, fostering skills that help manage these metacognitive challenges enables students to reduce them, become active participants in Oral Expression (OE) sessions, and consequently achieve proficiency in speaking.

2. Aim of the Study

The aim of the present research is to explore the perspectives of both teachers and learners regarding the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on speaking proficiency.

3. Research Questions

The research questions that we attempt to answer through our investigation are:

- Do first-year EFL learners face problems in learning speaking?
- Do first-year OE teachers have positive opinions about the influence of EI on students' speaking proficiency?
- Do first-year students hold positive opinions about the importance of EI in developing their speaking proficiency?

4. Research Methodology

To answer the research questions and achieve the aim of this study, data is gathered using two questionnaires: one for teachers and one for students. The teachers' questionnaire is administered to first-year OE teachers in the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University centre-Mila. The students' questionnaire is distributed to first-year English students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University centre-Mila. These questionnaires aim to discover the problems faced by first year EFL students and to investigate the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the influence of EI on the speaking skill.

5. Structure of the Study

The present dissertation consists of two main chapters. The first chapter covers the theoretical part of the research, while the second chapter focuses on the practical part of the study.

The first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical background of the two variables: speaking and EI, with a devoted section for each variable. The first section begins with definitions of speaking, followed by an exploration of its components and importance. After that, it addresses classroom speaking activities, concluding with an examination of the key factors that cause difficulties in speaking. The second section starts with defining the terms emotions and intelligence. Subsequently, an exploration into EI ensues. Next, it covers various models and skills of EI, strategies to enhance it, and the significance of EI in foreign language learning, concluding with the influence of EI on speaking.

The second chapter is concerned with the description, aim, and analysis of both the teachers and students' questionnaires, along with the interpretation and discussion of the main findings. It concludes with a range of recommendations for teachers, learners, and researchers, and ends with limitations of the study.

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Chapter One: Emotional Intelligence and Speaking Proficiency

Introduction

Learning the English language requires the mastery of the four skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Among these skills, speaking is considered the most important as it is used in effective communication that is considered the basic need of the present world. However, acquiring the speaking skill for EFL learners is regarded as a very complicated process because they encounter various difficulties whenever they construct utterances, express their perceptions, their feelings, and their intentions. Anxiety, stress, shyness, lack of motivation, and self-confidence are among the main factors that obstruct learners' speaking proficiency. Thus, the ability to regulate and manage those feelings is called EI, which in turn helps students enhance their speaking.

The chapter in hand attempts to tackle the theoretical background of the current study. It is divided into two sections. The first section introduces one of the most important skills: speaking. It starts with definitions of speaking. Then, it demonstrates the main components of speaking as well as its importance in learning FLs. Besides, it sheds light on some classroom speaking activities. This section ends up with a discussion the main factors that affect students' speaking performance. The second section begins with definitions of the terms emotion and intelligence, then the concept of EI. After that, it covers the most common models of EI. Moreover, it includes the focal skills of EI and strategies for enhancing it. The chapter ends with the significance of EI in learning FLs as well as its influence on speaking.

Section One: Speaking

1.1.1. Definitions of Speaking

Researchers have proposed numerous definitions for the term *speaking*. According to Bailey (2003), speaking is defined as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information” (p. 2). In simple terms, speaking is a way of creating meaning by exchanging and interpreting information in a conversation. Besides, Chaney (1998) explained that speaking is the process of creating and sharing meaning through the use of both verbal and nonverbal symbols. This reflects the holistic nature of speaking; effective communication involves not only the choice of words but also the skillful use of nonverbal cues to convey meaning.

Speaking is the social act of producing, receiving, and processing information within diverse contexts. Nazara (2011, p. 31) claimed that “speaking is a specific spoken discourse that is primarily social and engaged in for social purposes and in social contexts”. In other words, speaking refers to a particular form of verbal communication that is mainly used in social situations. Similarly, Luoma (2004) stated that speaking is a social interaction and a situation-based activity that occurs in people’s daily lives. Thus, communicative exchanges occur within specific situations and environments, such as workplace meetings, classroom discussions, family gatherings, public events, and everyday interactions.

Based on the aforementioned definitions, speaking is an interactive process of creating, exchanging, and interpreting verbal and nonverbal symbols within different contexts to convey meaning, thoughts, and feelings. It involves both the production and reception of information, with speakers creating messages and listeners decoding them to facilitate meaningful interaction.

1.1.2. Components of Speaking

Comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are the focal components of the speaking skill (Peregoy, et al., 2013).

1.1.2.1. Comprehension. Effective communication relies on the reciprocal understanding between speakers and listeners. Speaking extends beyond mere vocalization and grammatical structuring; it entails the adept expression and reception of messages (Harris, 1974). Meaning that proficiency in response and expression indicates a robust comprehension and grasp of the subject matter. Similarly, Richards and Schmidt (2013) suggested that comprehension denotes the accurate interpretation of communicated messages. Hence, effective communication entails mutual understanding where both speaker and listener comprehend and convey messages clearly.

1.1.2.2. Fluency. Fluency is one of the crucial components of effective speaking; it enables individuals to convey their thoughts and ideas clearly. According to Zhang (2009), fluency is speaking at a regular rate without hesitating over words and sounds while using language to convey ideas simply, clearly, and understandably. In other words, fluency involves using language in a manner that simplifies ideas, ensuring clear and comprehensible communication with others. Additionally, Hughes (2002) defined fluency as “the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable, and accurate way without too much hesitation; otherwise, the communication will breakdown because the listeners will lose interest” (p. 14). Thus, fluency demands the aptitude to articulate thoughts and ideas with clarity, coherence, and minimal hesitation. When fluency falters, communication may falter as well, as listeners may lose interest due to disruptions in the flow of conversation.

Fluency in speech is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various characteristics. Harris (1974) stated that fluency refers to the ease and speed of the flow of the speech. It is the smoothness of flow with which sounds, syllables, words, and phrases are joined together when speaking. From this definition, we can understand that one of the main characteristics of fluent speech is speed and smoothness. However, Thornbury (2005) argued that both speed and pausing are important factors in fluency because speakers need to take breath. This denotes that speed and pausing are imperative features of fluency because even native speakers need to pause from time to time in order to let the interlocutors catch what they say.

1.1.2.3. Pronunciation. Pronunciation is another fundamental aspect of speaking. Richard and Schmidt (2013, p. 469) stated that pronunciation is “the way a certain sound or sounds are produced; pronunciation stresses more the way sounds are perceived by the hearer.” In other words, pronunciation involves the way we make the sound of the language and the intelligibility of speech, which assure that the listener comprehends the intended message. Moreover, several elements are associated with pronunciation and sound production, including pitch, intonation, minimal pairs, spelling, rhythm, and stress (Harmer, 2001). Hence, speakers should comprehend the function and form of such aspects, as they collectively contribute to the efficacious communication of spoken language.

1.1.2.4. Grammar. Grammar is considered an important component of speaking. Nunan (2003) defined grammar as a set of rules that govern the structure and arrangement of words within sentences. Thus, grammar is the system of rules that governs how language is organized and used correctly. Moreover, Swan (1997) defined grammar as the study of the classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relations in the sentence. In other terms, grammar entails the systematic examination of word categories, their modifications, and their roles within sentences.

1.1.2.5. Vocabulary. Vocabulary is a central component of speaking; it refers to the set of words used by individuals within a particular language. Hornby (1984) defined vocabulary as “the total number of words in a language, the words a person knows, and a list of words with their meanings” (p. 461). This indicates the use of words that individuals know and understand in different contexts because vocabulary extends beyond mere word knowledge to include comprehension. Additionally, Thornbury (2005) argued that to gain accuracy in terms of vocabulary, one should select the appropriate words in the suitable contexts. Thus, the selection of suitable words is paramount for effective communication.

1.1.3 The Importance of the Speaking Skill

Language is such a fascinating human characteristic. A great proportion of its fascination lies in one of its four skills, which is speaking. Richards (2008) stated that when people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talk, and recount recent experiences because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others. This indicates that speaking fluently or being good at oral communication is a core aspect of humans to stay connected to each other.

Speaking is the most important skill to be mastered when learning a language. Celce-Murcia (2001) declared that “the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication” (p. 203). This posits that mastery of a language is inherently linked to the capacity to converse in it, as speech serves as the fundamental conduit for human interaction. Additionally, Leong and Ahmadi (2017) asserted that “speaking helps learners develop their vocabulary and grammar skills and then improve their writing skills. Students can express their emotions and ideas; say stories; request; talk, discuss, and show the various functions of language” (p. 35). Thus, learning and developing speaking is a

necessity and a crucial need since it acts as a cornerstone for language development; it fosters fluency, creativity, and effective expression across various contexts.

At present, the need for speaking mastery in English has been dramatically increasing due to the strengthening position of EFL for international communication (Nazara, 2011). In this regard, Baker and Westrup (2003) asserted that “a person who can speak English well may have a greater chance for further education, finding employment, and gaining promotion” (p. 5). In other words, English communicators have vast chances to get job opportunities, pursue higher education, and advance in their careers. Therefore, EFL learners should prioritize speaking English because it does not only facilitate academic success but also prepares students for global opportunities and collaboration in an increasingly interconnected world.

1.1.4. Classroom Speaking Activities

One of the primary goals of EFL learners is to develop their speaking skills so that they can clearly express their opinions and thoughts; however, this requires real-time exposure that can be achieved through various classroom activities. The latter can be developed in an interactive environment where teachers skillfully create an enjoyable, comfortable atmosphere that perfectly makes students active, creative, and able to communicate effectively (Kayi, 2006). Numerous classroom activities are designed to meet these objectives. The following are only a few of the most commonly used ones:

1.1.4.1 Discussion. Discussion is the most common activity used in oral classes to teach speaking skills. According to Lazaraton (2001), discussion is an activity that involves learners discussing a particular issue in pairs or groups to provide solutions and responses. Learners are generally divided into groups based on their background, ethnicity, talkativeness, and friendship. Thus, in this activity, students are engaged in debate, where they can exchange ideas and share

different perspectives on a given topic. For instance, in discussing topics relevant to daily life like travel experiences, cultural differences, or current events, students are encouraged to express their opinions, ask questions, and respond to others.

Discussion fosters the development of students' language proficiency and enhances their confidence in expressing ideas and opinions. In this activity, the student's confidence will grow little by little as they successfully share ideas and experiences when they work together (Jones 2007). This indicates that discussion enables students to become more confident about what they are saying and helps in their development of decision-making and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, Littlewood (1981, p. 47) claimed that "discussion provides learners with opportunities to express their own personality and experience through the foreign language." Meaning that discussions provide students with real-world language experiences that require them to apply their speaking skills.

1.1.4.2. Role Play. Role-play is one of the most enjoyable activities to incorporate in EFL classrooms to enhance learners speaking skills. Harmer (2001) defined role-play as a common classroom activity where students perform real-life situations by taking on new identities and imagining themselves at another time and place, depending on the context. Thus, in this activity, students are asked to embody the roles of different characters using their imagination. For example, students can engage in a role-play scenario where one acts as a customer ordering food at a restaurant while the other takes on the role of a waiter/waitress. However, this process requires using the appropriate language that fits the new context (Ur, 1999).

This special speaking activity has many positive impacts on learners in the classroom. It encourages class interaction and enhances communication skills as students work together, listen

actively, and correct one another (Shastri, 2002). Moreover, Partin (2009) affirmed that role-playing can arouse interest in a topic as well as encourage students to empathize with differing viewpoints. Hence, role-plays give students empathy as they examine others' ideas, feelings, and points of view, and it helps them develop their confidence in expressing themselves as they are engaged in different topics, which in turn fosters their motivation and develops their speaking.

1.1.4.3. Information Gap Activity. Information gap activity is one of the essential speaking classroom activities designed to foster interactive communication among students. It is an activity “where two speakers have different parts of information making up a whole; because they have different information, there is a gap between them” (Harmer, 2001, p. 88). Meaning that this activity involves two individuals holding different pieces of information necessary to complete a task. Their differing knowledge creates a gap that can only be filled through interaction. Hence, by the end of the interchange, each student will possess complete information.

The use of information gap activities enhances students' speaking skills and fosters active communication. It provides students with the opportunity to practice FL because they have a genuine reason to talk (Harmer, 2001). Additionally, “it provides negotiation of meaning and the conversational adjustment that pushes students toward more accurate output” (Hedge, 2000, p. 281). This indicates the significance of such types of activities in promoting students' speaking proficiency.

1.1.4.4. Storytelling. Another activity that teachers can use in their English classrooms to develop students' speaking skills is storytelling. The latter is the act of retelling a story that one has read or heard using his own words based on his understanding of the story (Safdarian, 2013). Therefore, this activity entails expressing the story in one's own words and interpretation. It involves an interaction between the storyteller and the audience (Zaro & Saberri, 2013).

Storytelling is incredibly beneficial for students. It is very useful to develop students' vocabulary and pronunciation; it fosters creativity, critical thinking, and imagination (Cameron, 2001). In addition, retelling a story helps students to progress their speaking ability, empower their memory while recalling the details and making reasonable connections between the events, and contribute to noticing the use of proper structures (Fitzgibbon & Wilhelm, 1998). Therefore, this type of activity offers valuable advantages for students, like fostering language development, cognitive skills, and awareness of language use.

1.1.4.5. Communicative Games. Communicative games are a unique and engaging classroom activity that is most accepted by students as it offers variety from the routine of other types of activities. Wright (2006) defined communicative games as “an activity that is entertaining and engaging, often challenging, and an activity in which learners play and interact with others” (p. 1). This activity is based on challenges and competitions between students, and it encourages interaction among them. The main activities of communicative games are to draw a picture (describe and draw), put materials in the correct order (describe and arrange), and find similarities and differences between pictures (Bygate, 1987).

Engaging in communicative games proves highly beneficial for language learners. They can increase motivation for speaking the language, as students feel a real sense of achievement when they manipulate a game, as well as increase students' communication and cooperation with each other (Hubbard, 1987). Therefore, this activity is essential for enhancing speaking skills because it offers interactive opportunities to practice communication in an enjoyable way.

1.1.5. Factors that Cause Speaking Difficulties

Mastery of speaking in FL is a complex process for students, as they encounter numerous factors that impede their speaking development.

1.1.5.1. Lack of Topical Knowledge. An essential hurdle encountered by many students is the notable lack of knowledge about specific topics. In this respect, Rivers (1968) affirmed that learners often have nothing to say, probably because their teachers selected a topic that is not appropriate for them or they do not have enough information about. Baker and Westrup (2003) further explained that learners find it difficult to respond to their teachers when they lack sufficient opinions or ideas to express about the given topic. Hence, learners may struggle to engage in discussions due to inappropriate topic selection by teachers or insufficient information available to them.

1.1.5.2. Lack of Vocabulary. Among the various barriers that cause speaking difficulties is a lack of vocabulary, which is the prominent factor that students complain about the most. Azlina et al. (2015) claimed that “without sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express his ideas” (p. 5). This indicates that a large repertoire of vocabulary helps students to be involved in any kind of conversation as well as express their intentions and thoughts effectively; however, when vocabulary is insufficient, it negatively affects students speaking performance.

1.1.5.3. Mother Tongue Use. Another obstacle that FL students face is the use of their mother tongue. Learners usually tend to use their mother tongue when talking or discussing a topic, as it is easy and simple to use (Tuan & Mai, 2015). However, mother tongue use is measured as one of the main barriers that hinder speaking because it limits the opportunity to participate the language (Atkinson, 1987). In the same way of thought, Howatt (2004) affirmed that using the mother tongue would not help learners reach fluency in speaking. Thus, the tendency to revert to the mother tongue poses a significant obstacle to the development of speaking.

1.1.5.4. Affective Factors. EFL students struggle to communicate in English due to many affective factors. In this regard, Rebecca (1990) stated that one of the important factors that impact language learning is the affective side of learners. Numerous studies have found that motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety are key factors influencing learners' performances.

1.1.5.4.1. Lack of Self-confidence. Lack of self-confidence in learning can hinder students from participating in the classroom. It may bring students into a threat of believing that they are not going to be good English speakers (Xinghua, 2007). They become afraid to make mistakes or be criticized; these negative expectations make them prefer to be quiet rather than begin a conversation (Nunan, 1999). One of the main reasons behind lack of confidence is teachers' encouragement. According to Brown (2001), when the teacher does not prioritize convincing students and nurturing their belief in their English-speaking abilities, it causes students to lose hope in themselves. This indicates that support and encouragement play a major role in boosting and enhancing the students' confidence.

1.1.5.4.2. Lack of Motivation. Motivation is one of the most influential factors in learning FLs. Alizadeh (2016) declared that low motivation can result in reduced confidence, limited practice, and lack of interest. Consequently, students with low motivation may struggle to develop fluency, pronunciation, and comprehensibility in their spoken English (Hussain, 2018). Besides, Gu (2009) asserted that motivated learners demonstrate higher levels of excitement and eagerness to work diligently, which helps reduce the necessity for additional encouragement. Consequently, lack of motivation results in learners failing to achieve high speaking performance and perpetually relying on external support.

1.1.5.4.3. Anxiety. Many researchers attribute learners' obstructions and complications in speaking English to anxiety. Kanar (2011) described anxiety in speaking as the pressure experienced when

required to deliver a speech or presentation in the presence of a group. Similarly, Light and Spada (2003) claimed that “anxiety that interferes with the learning process affects most speaking activities and is simply related to specific situations, such as oral presentations in front of the whole class” (p. 60). That is, anxiety in speaking situations can be particularly daunting, as individuals feel pressured to perform in front of others. Besides, Young (1986) detailed the behaviors exhibited by anxious students, which encompassed distortions in speech, struggles in maintaining proper intonation and rhythm while speaking, instances of forgetting intended words or sentences during performance, and instances of choosing silence over speech. Therefore, anxiety acts as a part of the negative, influential affective factors that intercept the learners’ ability to master their speaking skills.

Section Two: Emotional Intelligence

1.2.1. Definitions of Emotions

Psychologists have suggested diverse definitions of the term emotion. The latter refers to the operation of a set of fundamental psychological modalities that determine and guide the interaction of any organism with its environment (Fridja, 1987). Similarly, Leeper (1948) viewed emotions as “processes which arouse, sustain, and direct activity” (p. 17). Meaning that emotions have a force that can stimulate and control a particular activity. Thus, emotions are the primary constituents of behavior.

Emotions are a complicated human feature that is often associated with impermanent states of happiness, anger, sadness, euphoria, disgust, or fear (Wierzbicka, 1999). This indicates the broad range of reactions that individuals may encounter. However, it is worth noting that emotions extend beyond these specific examples and can involve a wide array of precise feelings and states (Dixon, 2012). For instance, feelings of nostalgia, guilt, jealousy, regret, empathy, etc.

The widely accessible Britannica Encyclopedia provides a useful definition for emotions, stating that emotions are a complex experience of consciousness, bodily sensation, and behavior that reflects the personal significance of a thing, an event, and a state of affairs (Solomon, 2019). Meaning that emotions encompass our mental awareness, physical responses, and actions in relation to what we perceive as important or impactful in our lives. . They involve how we feel, how our body reacts, and how we express ourselves. Goleman (2006) defined emotion as a state of mind that includes a variety of cognitive patterns, physiological and psychological conditions, and propensities to act. This indicates that emotions involve how we think, feel, and react, and are inclined to act in response to various stimuli or situations.

1.2.2. Definitions of Intelligence

Over time, the notion of intelligence has evolved to represent numerous definitions and meanings that have been relevant to different people throughout different times. According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2008), intelligence is the ability to learn, understand, and think logically about things. Moreover, Wade and Tavis (2006) defined intelligence as “the ability to profit from experience, acquire knowledge, think abstractly, act purposefully, or adapt to change in the environment” (p. 321). This means that intelligence encompasses various facets of cognitive

and behavioral functioning, enabling individuals to be better equipped to handle challenges in environments.

In the same way of thought, intelligence was the main concern of Wechsler, who stated that it is “the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment” (1958, p. 7). This indicates that intelligence is not limited to certain skills or domains; rather, it involves numerous practical abilities such as decision-making and action-taking, problem-solving and critical thinking, and adapting to the challenges of the environment as well.

From the aforementioned definitions, all researchers seem to agree that adaptation to the environment, the ability to understand complex ideas, using rational thinking to solve problems, and learning through experience are the most important characteristics of intelligence.

1.2.3. Definitions of Emotional Intelligence

Researchers and psychologists have proposed numerous definitions for the concept of EI. According to Goleman (1995), EI is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as to recognize, understand, and influence the emotions of others in social interactions and relationships. This indicates that EI encompasses both self-awareness and the ability to handle social situations well by understanding and responding to the emotional states of others. Hence, an emotionally intelligent person is adept at handling challenging situations, expresses his thoughts clearly, gains respect from other people, has an impact on the environment, maintains calm under stress and pressure, acknowledges his real-life reactions to people, and is self-motivated (Stein, 2009).

Being emotionally intelligent person does not mean being illogical or overly emotional; it is about the intelligent use of emotions to make effective decisions (Ciarrochi, 2009). Thus, it has to do with reasoning skills, i.e., making use of emotions to stimulate reasoning and thinking that is likely to enhance various areas of life. Additionally, Hakimi and Bashar (2015) describe EI as the ability to stay focused in the face of conflict, deal with criticism, control anger, and manage various forms of confrontation that can ruin one's life. Therefore, emotionally intelligent people are adept at handling situations that require both managerial skills and emotional awareness.

EI includes cognitive abilities that are related to emotions. Mayer and Salovey (1997), the pioneers of EI, defined it as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to assimilate emotion in thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p. 35)”. In other words, they cover the four abilities of EI as well as the importance of integrating emotions into one's thinking process and regulating emotions to facilitate both emotional and intellectual development.

EI can be seen as a personality trait. According to Petrides and Furnham (2001), EI refers to the extent to which individuals are able to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others, to achieve desired outcomes in different situations. Later on, they described EI as a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). This implies that EI is a personality trait characterized by individuals' capacity to perceive, comprehend, regulate, and leverage both their own emotions and those of others to attain desired results across various contexts.

EI integrates both cognitive abilities and stable personality traits. In this regard, Bar-On (1997) defined EI as an array of non-cognitive abilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to cope with daily demands and pressures, as well as to understand and interact with others in social and emotional contexts. This indicates that EI incorporates both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions that are crucial for succeeding in managing environmental demands. He further described EI as demonstrating traits such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, adaptability, stress management, and a generally positive disposition towards oneself and others.

It is worth mentioning that the last three definitions of EI have contributed to the development of three EI models: (1) the ability model, (2) the trait model, and (3) the mixed model.

1.2.3.1. Models of Emotional Intelligence. The field of EI comprises various models that attempt to explain the interrelated concepts therein. Among these models are the ability model, the trait model, and the mixed model.

1.2.3.1.1 Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence. The ability model is a four-branched framework of EI proposed by Mayer and Salovey. According to this model, individuals vary in their ability to process information of an emotional nature and relate emotional processing to cognition (Mangal, 2015). This demonstrates that some people are better at understanding and using emotions in their thinking and decision-making than others.

The ability model of EI is made up of four types of mental abilities, ranging from the very basic level to the most advanced level (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). This model includes (1) perception, appraisal, and expression of emotion; (2) emotional facilitation of thinking; (3) understanding and analyzing emotions; and (4) reflective regulation of emotions.

- **Perceiving emotions** refers to the capacity to recognize, distinguish, and identify one's own and other people's feelings. The ability to understand one's own emotions through physical stimulation, internal sentiments, and thoughts is the first step in the process of perceiving, evaluating, and expressing emotions (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).
- **Facilitating thought** is described as the ability to engage one's own emotions to support cognitive processes that include reasoning, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). For instance, in a challenging study session, a student recognizes feelings of stress and adjusts their study approach by taking breaks, breaking down complex concepts, and seeking assistance. This demonstrates the ability to use emotions to enhance cognitive processes, such as learning and problem solving.
- **Understanding emotions** is described as a person's capacity to categorize feelings and understand the meanings those feelings indicate. Understanding emotions requires being able to identify the similarities and contrasts among the emotions that have been labeled. For example, joy is an intense feeling of enjoyment or delight, whereas sorrow is an aversive feeling that makes us want to cry and hide from the world (Reeve, 2009). Reaching this stage allows one to understand the emotion and its origins. After that, the person is able to comprehend mixed or complex emotions at once, such as loving and hating something at the same time (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

- **Managing emotions** refers to the capacity to control, enhance, decrease, or prevent one's own and other people's emotions. This capacity promotes a person's emotional and cognitive development (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

1.2.3.1.2 Trait Model of Emotional Intelligence. The trait model of EI takes a view that may be considered opposite to the one propounded by the ability model. For this model, EI cannot be considered real intelligence as it cannot be measured as an ability due to the subjective nature of emotions (Petrides et al., 2003). Therefore, EI is, quite simply, an individual's own perception of his or her own ability to work with emotions (Austin, 2009). Trait EI under this model is thought to be situated within personality frameworks and is defined as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides et al., 2003). Petrides termed this trait emotional self-efficacy. Thus, the trait model of EI emphasizes specific personality traits that aid in perceiving and regulating emotions.

1.2.3.1.3 Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence. The mixed model is a comprehensive framework developed by Dr. Reuven Bar-On, aimed at understanding EI and its impact on various aspects of life. According to Bar-On (1997), this model is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that determine how well individuals understand and express themselves, understand others and relate to them, and cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures. Moreover, EI in this model is described as a mixture of emotion-related competencies, personality traits, and dispositions (Bar-On, 1997). Thus, the mixed model of EI incorporates the strengths of both competency (ability) and general disposition (trait).

Bar-On' mixed model has five dimensions with 15 components. The intrapersonal component, interpersonal component, stress management, adaptability, and general mood are the five scales proposed by this model. The following is a brief description of them:

- **Intrapersonal** places a strong emphasis on self-awareness and self-expression. It involves governing the ability to be aware of one's emotions and oneself in general, to understand one's strengths and weaknesses, and to express one's feelings and oneself non-destructively (Bar-On, 1997). This dimension includes five sub-scales: self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization (Bar-On, 1997). This indicates that intrapersonal skills are about being mindful of our emotions, strengths, and weaknesses, while also expressing ourselves in a positive and non-harmful manner.
- **Interpersonal** is mainly related to social awareness. It includes the ability to be aware of others' feelings, concerns, and needs, and to establish and maintain cooperative, constructive, and mutually satisfying relationships (Bar-On, 1997). Thus, by being attuned to the emotions and needs of others, individuals can cultivate harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships. This dimension includes three sub-scales: empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships (Bar-On, 1997).
- **Adaptability** is related to flexibility and problem-solving efficacy. It encompasses how individuals cope with and adapt to personal and interpersonal changes, as well as changes in their immediate environment (Bar-On, 1997). In other words, it is the ability to adjust to new situations and challenges effectively, to be flexible in one's thinking and behavior, and capable of learning from experiences. It includes three sub-scales: reality testing, flexibility, and problem-solving. (Bar-On, 1997).

- **Stress management** is mainly related to emotional management. Bar-On (1997) described stress management as “the capacity to regulate one's emotions and behaviors in response to stressful situations” (p. 81). It involves resilience, flexibility, and adaptive coping strategies to decrease the negative effects of stress on well-being. In simple terms, stress management requires learning to handle difficult situations and controlling our ability to deal with emotions so that they work for us, not against us. It has two sub-factors: stress tolerance and impulse control (Bar-On, 1997).
- **General mood** refers to the overall emotional state and disposition towards life. Bar-On (1997) defined it as the prevailing emotional tone or outlook that an individual experiences on a day-to-day basis. It reflects one's overall level of happiness, optimism, and satisfaction with life. This indicates that individuals with a positive general mood tend to approach life with enthusiasm, resilience, and a sense of well-being, while those with a negative general mood may experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction. Its sub-factors are optimism and happiness (Bar-On, 1997).

It is worth noting that the diversity of frameworks allows for multiple perspectives on the issue and covers a very broad array of abilities, skills, and traits. What is common among these models is that they acknowledge the role and importance of recognizing, regulating, and leveraging emotions to be more effective in the personal and professional lives (Webb et al., 2013).

1.2.3.2. Skills of Emotional Intelligence. Goleman (1995) posited that EI is made up of several competencies, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. He explained these five dimensions as follows:

- **Self-awareness** occurs when the individual knows what he is feeling in the moment and uses that awareness to guide decision-making, having a realistic assessment of his own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-confidence.
- **Self-regulation** involves handling our emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; being conscientious and delaying gratification to pursue goals; and recovering well from emotional distress.
- **Motivation** refers to intrinsic motivation. This dimension involves using one's deepest drives to move and guide oneself toward desired goals, taking initiative, striving for improvement, and persevering in the face of setbacks and frustration.
- **Empathy** is related to sensing what other people are feeling, being able to take their perspective, and cultivating rapport and attunement with a broad diversity of people.
- **Social skills** refer to interacting well with other people. It involves applying an understanding of our own emotions and those of others to communicate and interact, as well as building relationships. Different social skills include active listening, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and developing rapport.

1.2.3.3. Strategies for Enhancing Emotional Intelligence. EI is a flexible skill that can be learned. In light of this, Goleman (2001) asserted that even though some individuals might naturally be more emotionally intelligent than others, high EI can be developed with time through regular practice. Moreover, Bar-On (1997) posited that EI can be improved over time through training, programming, and therapy.

The ways to enhance EI are numerous; below are some of them:

1.2.3.3.1. Emotional Awareness. Emotional awareness plays a vital role in developing EI. When experiencing uncomfortable emotions, we might tend to ignore them or bottle them up rather than accept them. In this regard, Bradberry and Greaves (2009) mentioned that leaning into our uncomfortable emotions can allow us to deal with our feelings productively, increasing our self-awareness and ability to introduce positive changes in our lives. This demonstrates that facing and accepting difficult emotions is an essential step in initiating beneficial transformations in our lives.

1.2.3.3.2. Identify the Emotions. Another way to enhance EI is to identify our emotions. Learning to label emotions with a more specific vocabulary can help us identify more precisely the type of emotional state we are experiencing and feel more in control of our responses (David, 2016). For example, when recognizing that sadness differs from boredom or a sense of loneliness, we can become better able to pinpoint our emotions and manage them effectively. David (2016) also suggested another method to identify emotions, which in turn develops emotional awareness: keeping a diary. In the diary, individuals write a description of emotions and how they are brought up by specific circumstances. After a few weeks, individuals may come to understand which emotions are most difficult to tolerate, which ones are triggering, and which ones contribute to feeling more connected with their own values and satisfaction with life. Therefore, by identifying and labeling specific emotions and their triggers, individuals can develop greater emotional awareness and control, ultimately leading to improved EI.

1.2.3.3.3. Channel Emotions in a Healthy Way. Channeling emotions is essential for enhancing EI. Individuals should avoid judging their emotions and labeling them as good or bad. Instead, they should recognize them as powerful sources of information that can be used to drive their actions toward what matters to them (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). This indicates that using emotions constructively can help us overcome life's obstacles and pursue what truly matters to us.

Besides, Bradberry and Greaves (2009) added that refocusing attention on things that are under control and can be improved also allows individuals to not feel trapped in a downward emotional spiral and engage in more committed actions. To give minds a break, prioritizing scheduling activities in routines that make one feel mentally recharged is essential. These activities may include exercise, yoga, meditation, or other relaxing activities for the mind. Therefore, by directing focus to controllable factors and prioritizing activities that promote mental well-being, individuals can effectively manage emotions and enhance their EI.

1.2.3.3.1. Practice Active Listening. Active listening is a crucial skill for enhancing EI. It is about hearing beyond people's words. It involves fully attending to what is being communicated, including the content of the message and the attitude that underlies it (Rogers & Farson, 1957). Hence, active listening is essential for improving EI because it involves an attentive focus on both the information in the message and the emotional hints of communication. Consequently, through active listening, individuals can deepen their understanding of others' emotions and perspectives, fostering empathy, trust, and stronger interpersonal connections, thus contributing to the development of EI (Chang, 2006).

1.2.3.4. The Significance of Emotional Intelligence in Foreign Language Learning.

Many scholars and researchers emphasized the role of emotions in FL learning and their impact on the learning process. Most of them affirmed that FL learning is emotionally driven (López, 2011). That is to say, the process of learning a FL is heavily influenced by emotions. Besides, Kant (2019) insisted that emotions are regarded as having the power to either enhance or decrease attention, which affects how well information is learned and retained. Hence, emotions have the potential to positively or negatively affect a person's learning.

Understanding and managing emotions effectively can have profound implications for language learners' motivation, self-esteem, empathy, attitudes, and ultimately, their success in acquiring FL. EI fosters self-awareness and introspection, permitting learners to monitor their progress, establish feasible objectives, and utilize effective learning strategies (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019). Additionally, Taherkhani and Moradi (2022) emphasized that individuals possessing superior EI often demonstrate amplified motivation, self-regulation, and resilience in their language learning pursuits. This suggests that having a strong EI can enhance one's ability to stay motivated, manage emotions effectively, and overcome challenges in the process of language learning. Furthermore, López (2011) argued that cultivating and managing emotions helps overcome problems of demotivation created by fear or anger, which can potentially endanger FL achievement. She further asserted that evoking emotions enhances learners' self-esteem and empathy, which, in turn, greatly contribute to students' attitudes and motivation and facilitate language learning. Therefore, there is a positive correlation between EI and language learning, underscoring the significance of fostering EI competencies to enhance FL outcomes.

The more students are exposed to practices addressing their EI, the more effective results they will receive throughout the learning process (Mohzan et al., 2007). This means that incorporating activities and exercises that focus on developing EI can significantly enhance students' learning experience. Thus, a syllabus that includes EI tasks may be highly beneficial for the development of students during foreign language learning.

It is noteworthy that higher levels of EI can serve as a driving force and motivation for language achievement. In other words, individuals with higher levels of EI are expected to express more positive attitudes toward learning a FL.

1.2.3.5. The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Speaking. Scholars are increasingly interested in the role of EI in speaking. On one hand, many researchers agree that EI positively influences speaking skills. Tevdovska (2017) affirmed that “students with positive influence will build a relationship with others, make a positive impact, and help others to be successful. They also speak confidently without mistakes” (p. 105). This shows how EI can help students become confident and effective speakers.

On the other hand, some evidence suggests that EI can negatively impact the speaking skill. Black (2017) stated:

Emotionally intelligent students tend to be authoritative and dominating. They are often egocentric and prideful; they have a hard time getting other friends to follow, respect, or listen to them. This may culminate in adverse outcomes, particularly evident in their speaking abilities (p. 1).

This suggests that overly authoritative behavior can make it difficult for students to gain respect from their peers, negatively affecting their speaking skills.

There is a substantial focus on the role of EI and its related skills in the realm of language acquisition, with speaking being particularly emphasized. Fundamental to EI is self-awareness, which enables individuals to accurately discern their emotions, profoundly influencing their communication (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019). Thus, self-awareness is foundational to effective speaking because it allows individuals to understand their own emotions and recognize how their emotions may influence their communication. Moreover, Self-regulation, a fundamental aspect of EI, governs an individual’s communicative behavior and their responses to different emotional

contexts (Zhoc et al., 2018). They added that self-regulation is crucial for maintaining control over one's emotions and behaviors, especially in high-pressure speaking situations. Therefore, the ability to regulate one's emotions plays a pivotal role in enhancing communication.

The development of efficacious speaking in English EFL learners is influenced by various factors, including intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social skills. Intrinsic motivation is identified as a driving force behind persistence in speaking as it helps achieve better results (Arias et al., 2022). Hence, motivated speakers are passionate about their message, which translates into engagement. Additionally, the virtue of empathy is emphasized as a key competency in understanding others' emotions and needs. By empathizing with listeners, speakers can tailor their message to resonate with their audience's needs, concerns, and values (Este'vez et al., 2019). Thus, empathy is of great importance in speaking because it enables speakers understand and connect with the audience. Lastly, social skills play a crucial role in recognizing and assisting with others' weaknesses and emotions, shaping appropriate responses to interactions, and fostering conflict resolution (Rani & Yadapadithaya, 2018). Henceforth, EFL learners who aspire to improve their speaking proficiency should prioritize the cultivation of their social skills.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has provided a thorough review of the literature concerning the concepts of EI and speaking. It highlights a comprehensive overview of the intersection between EI and speaking proficiency in the context of foreign language learning. Through the exploration of speaking difficulties and affective factors hindering proficiency, it becomes evident that emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in overcoming these challenges. By equipping learners

with the ability to regulate emotions such as anxiety, stress, and lack of confidence, EI serves as a facilitator for enhancing speaking abilities.

In light of what preceding, it is recommended for students to prioritize the development of their EI through the implementation of strategies aimed at enhancing their ability to regulate emotions and focus on the focal skills of EI.

Chapter Two: Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Speaking Proficiency

Introduction

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2.1.5. Discussion of the Results

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Chapter Two: Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Speaking Proficiency

Introduction

Unlike the preceding chapter, which primarily delved into a critical appraisal of existing literature pertinent to the topic under investigation, this chapter is devoted to the practical implementation part of the present research. The purpose of the current chapter is to present, analyse and interpret the collected information for answering the research questions and achieving the overarching aim of this study. To conduct the present research, two questionnaires are administered to first-year OE teachers and first-year students at Abdelhafid Boussouf university centre-Mila.

The present chapter is divided into two sections. The first section centers on the teachers' questionnaire, while the second section delves into the students' questionnaire. The two sections provide details about the chosen-participants for this study, and a description of the questionnaires and its aim, and a thorough analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results.

Section One: Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1.1. Participants

The chosen sample of this research is teachers who teach OE or have already taught OE to first year EFL students Abdelhafid Boussouf university centre-Mila in the academic year 2023/2024. The questionnaire was administered to fifteen teachers. It was distributed to them in both paper format and electronically via Google Documents. The rationale behind selecting this population is based on the premise that first-year OE teachers have valuable insights on the initial challenges and progressions in first-year students' speaking proficiency. They possess greater knowledge about students' strengths and weaknesses while participating in oral sessions and the most effective strategies to help them boost their speaking skill.

2.1.2. The Aim of the Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to scrutinize teachers' perspectives on how learners' EI affects their speaking proficiency. Accordingly, the teachers' valuable insights and their extensive experience in teaching the OE module are vitally important to our study since their contribution will add more reliability to the findings.

2.1.3. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

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

Section One: General Information (Questions 1-3)

The initial section contains inquiries that seek to collect general information about the teachers.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill (Questions 4-6)

The purpose of the second section is to explore teachers' perceptions on their students' speaking skill.

Section Three: Emotional Intelligence (Questions 7-17)

The main aim of this part is to investigate teachers' opinions concerning the influence of emotional intelligence on speaking proficiency.

Section Four: Further Suggestions (Question 18)

The purpose of this section is to provide teachers with the opportunity to offer further suggestions related to the topic under investigation.

2.1.4. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section One: General Information

Q1. What is your academic degree?

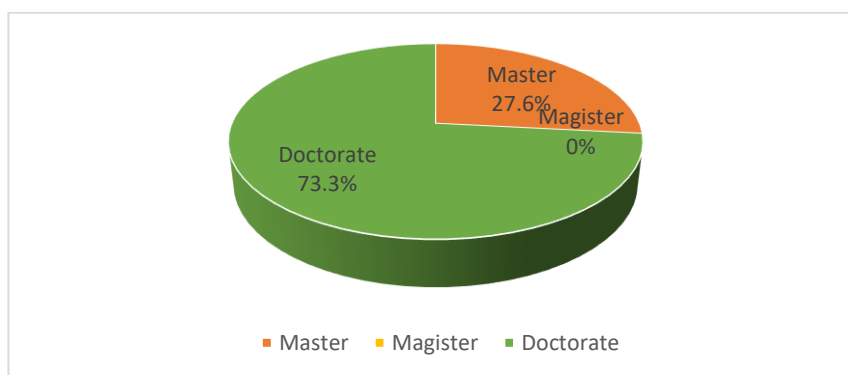


Figure 1 *Teachers' Academic Degree*

This question seeks to determine teachers' academic qualifications. From the obtained data, the highest proportion of teachers (73.3%) hold a Doctorate degree, whereas only four teachers (27.6%) hold a Master degree. None of the teachers has a Magister degree. These findings show that the respondents have sufficient qualifications, which allows us to collect more reliable and precise information.

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

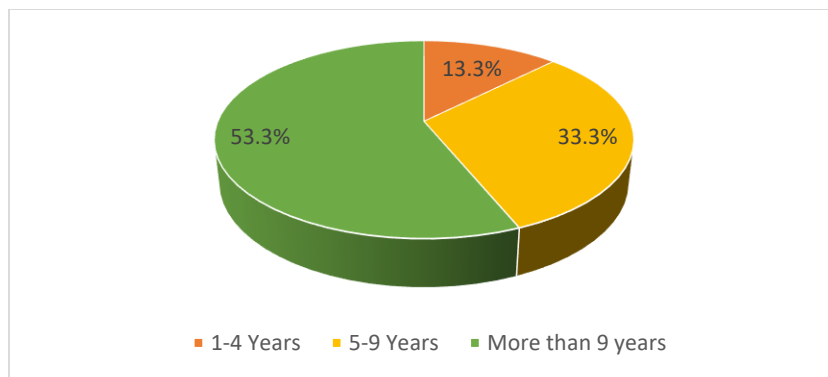


Figure 2 *Teachers' Experience in Teaching English at University*

This inquiry aims to determine teachers' experience in teaching English at university to evaluate how trustworthy their knowledge is in addressing the gaps in the current research. According to the data provided, 53.3% of the questioned teachers have taught English for over nine years. Additionally, 33.3% of them have been teaching for a period ranging from five to nine years. Finally, 13.3% of the respondents reported teaching experience of one to four years. This demonstrates that the majority of the participants in the study have considerable experience in teaching English. Hence, they may possess a deep understanding and comprehensive knowledge of the topic, which makes their insights and perspectives particularly valuable for our research.

Q3.How long have you been teaching the oral expression module for first year university students?

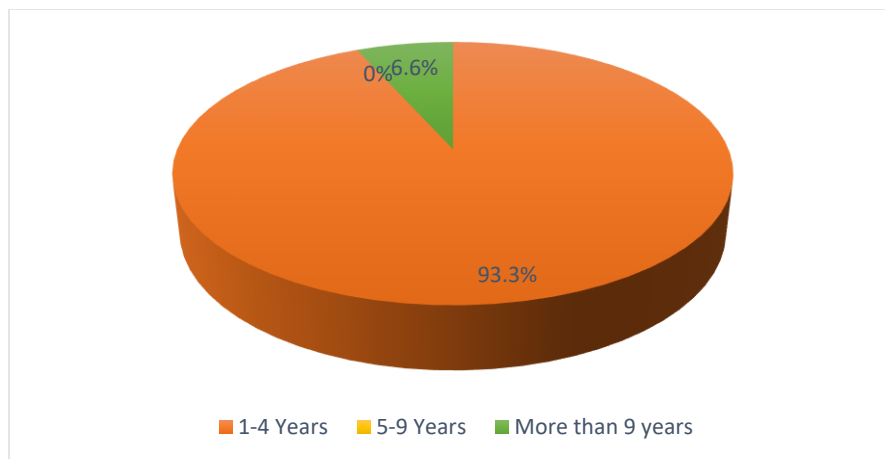


Figure 3 *Teachers' Experience in Teaching Oral Expression to First Year Students*

Through this question, we seek to have an idea about the teachers' years of experience in teaching EFL OE module for first-year students. The vast majority of the respondents (93.3%) have taught OE to first-year students for a few years, ranging from one to four years, while only one teacher (6.6%) has been teaching it for more than nine years. The direct experience of these teachers in teaching this particular module adds credibility to their suggestions and contributions. Thus, this aligns precisely with the objectives of our investigation.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Q4. How do you consider first year students' level in speaking?

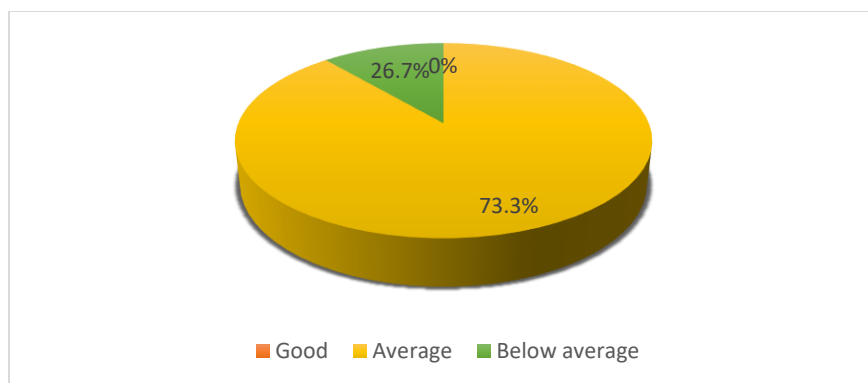


Figure 4 *Teachers' Assessment of Students' Level in Speaking*

The aim of this question is to gauge teachers' perceptions of the speaking level of first-year students. As it is shown in figure 4, the majority, comprising eleven respondents perceived the first-year students' speaking abilities as average. On the other hand, four respondents (26.7%) considered the students' speaking proficiency to be below average. Notably, none of them rated the students' oral performance as good. The results indicate that first-year EFL students are facing significant challenges in speaking proficiency that require identification and solutions.

Q5. Do your students actively engage in speaking classes?

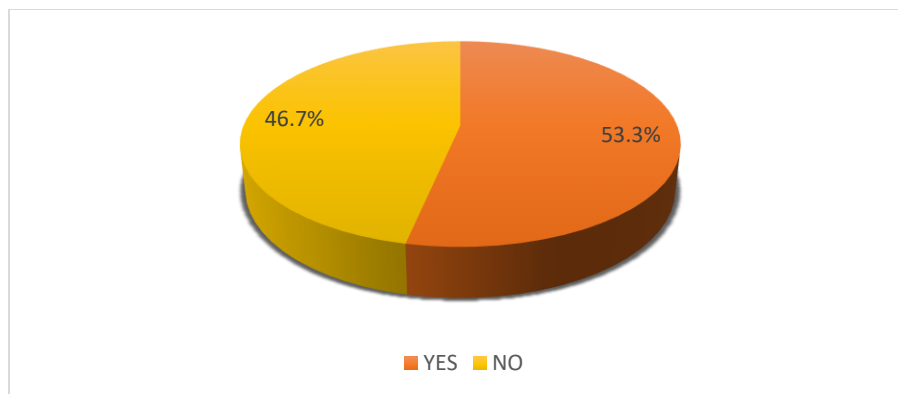


Figure 5 *Teachers' Assessment of Students' Engagement in Speaking Classes*

The purpose of this question is to assess how actively students participate in speaking classes based on the teachers' views. In terms of statistical analysis, 53.3% of the teachers reported that their students are actively involved in speaking classes, while 46.7% stated that they do not participate. These findings offer valuable insights into potential barriers to engagement. Therefore, the latter could be influenced by various factors, such as anxiety, shyness, and fear of committing mistakes. Regulating and controlling those feelings play a significant role in addressing these issues.

Q6. What are the frequent problems that your students face when they speak in the classroom?

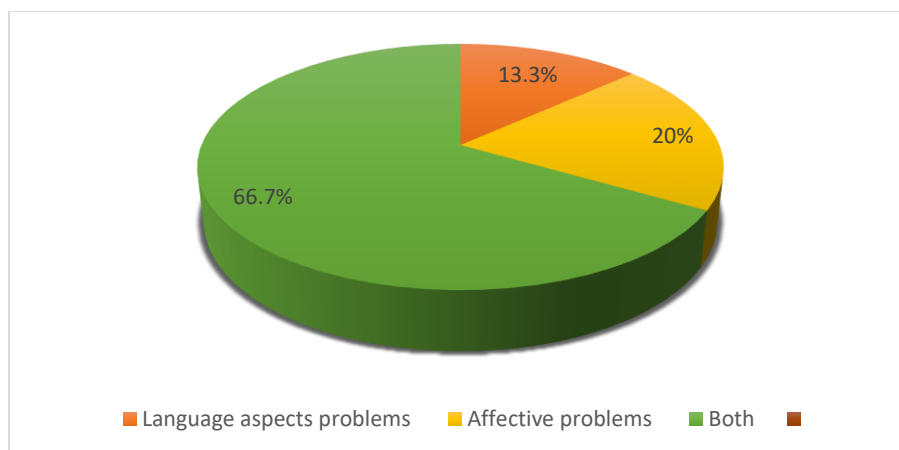


Figure 6 *Teachers' Perspectives on the Problems that Students Face when Speaking in the Classroom*

The aim of this question is to identify the underlying causes of the common challenges students encounter while speaking in the classroom, as perceived by their teachers. The above figure indicates that 66.7% noted that their students face both linguistic and affective problems. Additionally, 13.3% indicated that their students primarily face challenges related to language aspects, and two teachers (20%) reported that metacognitive issues are the main challenges. These results confirm that the main causes of challenges that first-year EFL students at Mila University Centre encounter in their speaking performance are linguistic and affective, necessitating targeted solutions to help them overcome these difficulties.

Section Three: Emotional Intelligence

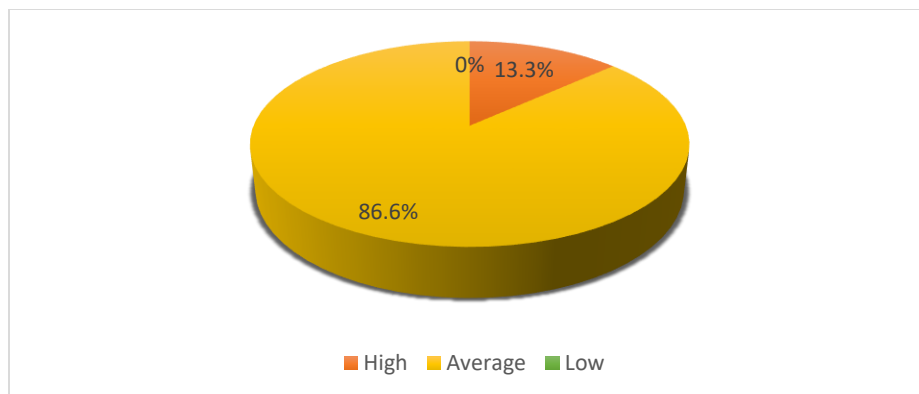


Figure 7 *Teachers' Assessment of Students' Emotional Intelligence Level*

Through this question, we intend to know how teachers perceive first-year students' EI level based on their prior knowledge of them. Figure 7 reveals that the overwhelming majority of the questioned teachers (86.6%) agreed that their students have an average EI level. The other two participants, representing 13.3%, claimed that their students' EI level is high, while no one (0%) opted for "low" option. The results imply that the majority of first-year students are perceived to have an intermediate level of EI. Hence, the obtained results highlight the importance of supporting and developing EI in students to improve their classroom engagement and speaking abilities.

Q8. Students with high level of EI perform better than those who have a low level of EI.

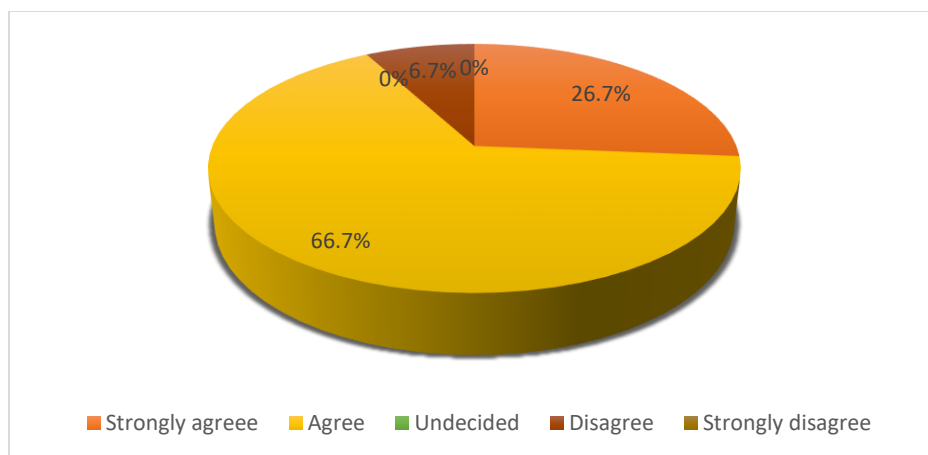


Figure 8 *Teachers' Perspectives about the Effect of High and Low level of Emotional Intelligence on Students' Performance*

The aim of this question is to determine teachers' perceptions of the impact of high levels of EI on students' speaking performance compared to those with lower levels of EI. The data show that 66.7% of the questioned teachers agreed that students with elevated EI achieve better performance compared to those with lower EI. Besides, 26.7% strongly agreed on the given statement, while only one teacher (6.7%) disagreed on it. Based on the findings, teachers' recognition of the positive relationship between high EI and better speaking performance suggests that students who can manage their emotions, stay motivated, empathize, and interact with others are more likely to excel in speaking. Thus, the overwhelming agreement highlights EI as a critical factor in speaking proficiency and supports the idea that fostering EI in students could improve speaking, making it a key area for educational focus and intervention.

Q9. Self-awareness impacts students' ability to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in speaking.

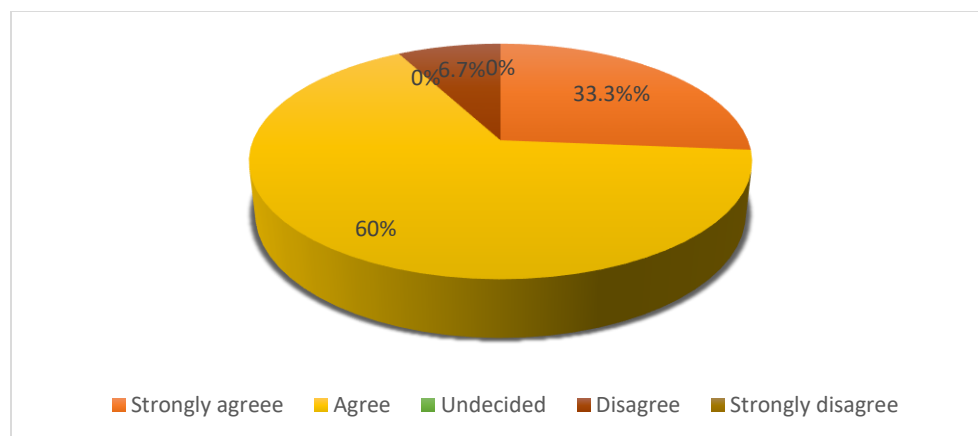


Figure 9 *Teachers' Perspectives about the Impact of Learners' Self-awareness on Recognizing Strengths and Weaknesses in Speaking*

The purpose of this question is to check first year university teachers' opinions on the effect of self-awareness on students' capability to identify speaking strength and weaknesses. The data above reveals that 60% of the informants pointed out that they agree on the given statement. Moreover, five teachers who represent 33.3% asserted that they strongly agree on it while 6.7% of them showed the opposite (disagreement). These results indicate that the majority of the teachers perceive self-awareness as an important component of EI that directly affects students' speaking proficiency. Therefore, teachers' acknowledgment of the role of self-awareness suggests that students who are more self-aware are better able to assess their own speaking abilities, identify areas for improvement, and leverage their strengths. Additionally, this comprehensive self-understanding allows them to monitor their progress over time, adapt their learning strategies to overcome challenges, and build greater confidence in their speaking abilities.

Q10. Teaching students to manage their emotions positively influences their speaking proficiency.

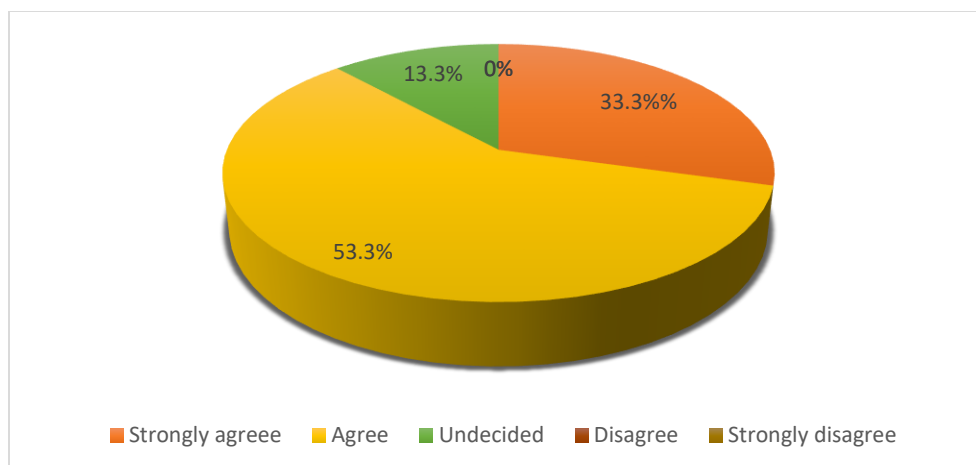


Figure 10 *Teachers' Opinions about the Influence of Teaching Students Emotional Management on their Speaking Proficiency*

This question endeavours to assess teachers' views regarding the influence of instructing students in emotional management on their speaking proficiency. Based on the provided data, 53.3% of the informants show their agreement on the above statement, and 33.3% strongly agreed on it too, whereas 13.3% opted for undecided. From the results, it can be deduced that teachers are aware of the importance of teaching learners how to manage their emotions in speaking classes. Consequently, the predominant agreement affirms the need for educational practices that include emotional regulation training to enhance students' speaking abilities, as this strategy can help students speak more spontaneously.

Q11. Intrinsic motivation contributes to students' improvements in speaking proficiency.

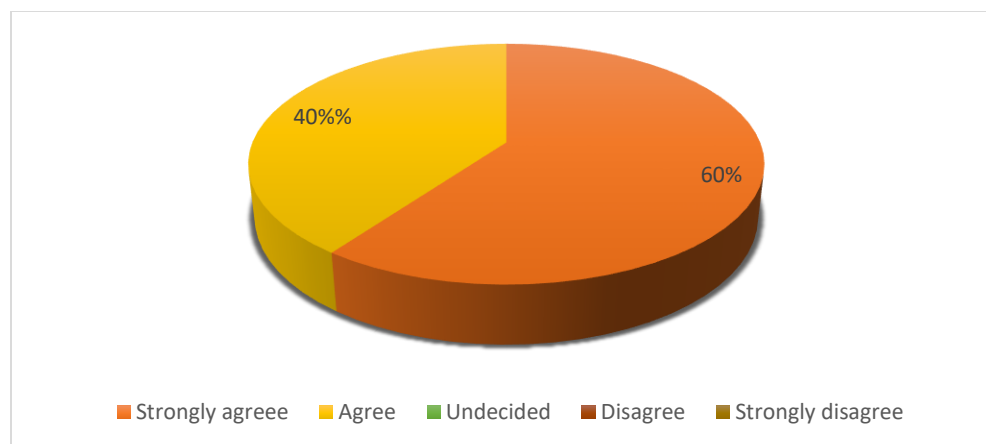


Figure 11 *Teachers' Perceptions towards the Effect of Intrinsic Motivation on Students' Improvements of Speaking Proficiency*

Question 11 seeks to evaluate teachers' opinions on the role of intrinsic motivation in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. The collected answers displayed in figure 11 demonstrate that 60% of the informants strongly agreed and 40% agreed on the perception that intrinsic motivation is essential for enhancing students' speaking skills. This illustrates that all teachers share the belief that when students are internally motivated, they are more likely to engage in speaking activities, practice regularly, and strive for better performances. This reflects their positive point of view towards the role of EI in enhancing students' speaking skills as intrinsic motivation is a fundamental component of EI.

Q12. Motivated learners are more willing to take risks in speaking.

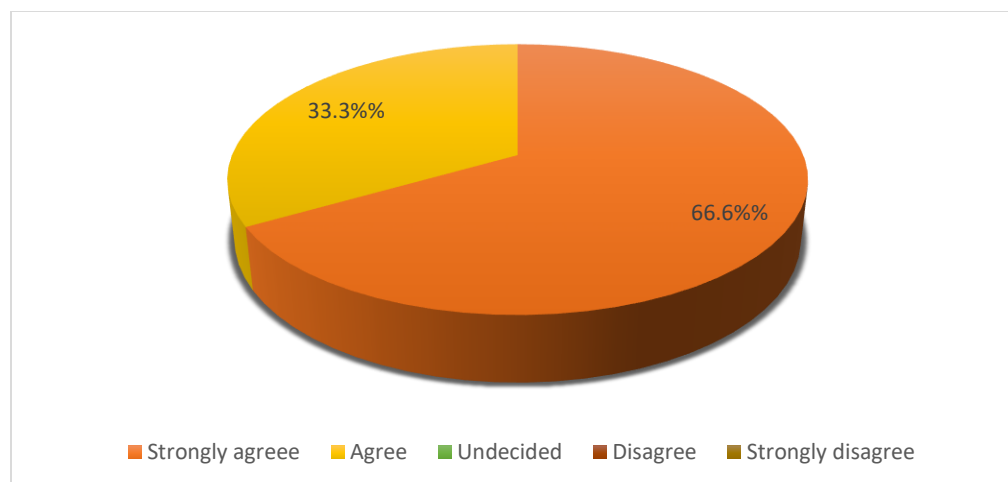


Figure 12 Teachers' Opinions about the Influence of Motivation on Taking Risks in Speaking

This inquiry aims to assess teachers' perspectives on whether motivated learners are more likely to take risks in speaking. It is clearly indicated in figure 12 that all the questioned teachers expressed their agreement (strongly agree or agree) on the statement in question 12. This can be implicitly interpreted that OE teachers believe that motivated learners are more inclined to complete tasks, speak in front of others, and participate in challenging conversations. This implies that motivation plays a pivotal role in encouraging students to step out of their comfort zones and engage in speaking activities. Hence, teachers' agreement confirms their positive perceptions regarding the impact of motivation, an essential skill of EI, on ameliorating students speaking proficiency.

Q13. There is a strong connection between students' empathy levels and their ability to engage in effective communication.

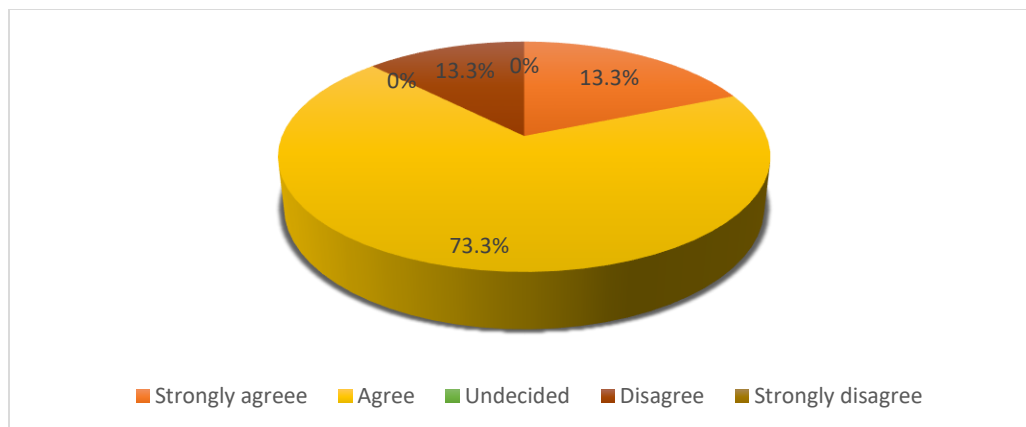


Figure 13 *Teachers' Perceptions about the Effect of Students' Empathy Level on the Ability to Engage in Effective Communication*

This question is designed to figure out teachers' viewpoints regarding the relationship between students' empathy levels and their ability to participate in communication. As it is shown in Figure 13, the vast majority of the questioned teachers (86.7%) show their agreement (strongly agree/agree) on the given statement. Conversely, 13.3% of them disagreed on it. These findings demonstrate a firm belief in the profound link between students' empathy levels and their prowess in communication. Hence, this concurs with the idea that the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others serves as a foundational element in fostering improvement in specific areas of communication, such as active listening and rapport building. EI, which includes empathy as a key component, is therefore essential in enhancing students' communication skills and overall participation.

Q14. Effective collaboration with peers results in noticeable improvements in students' speaking skills.

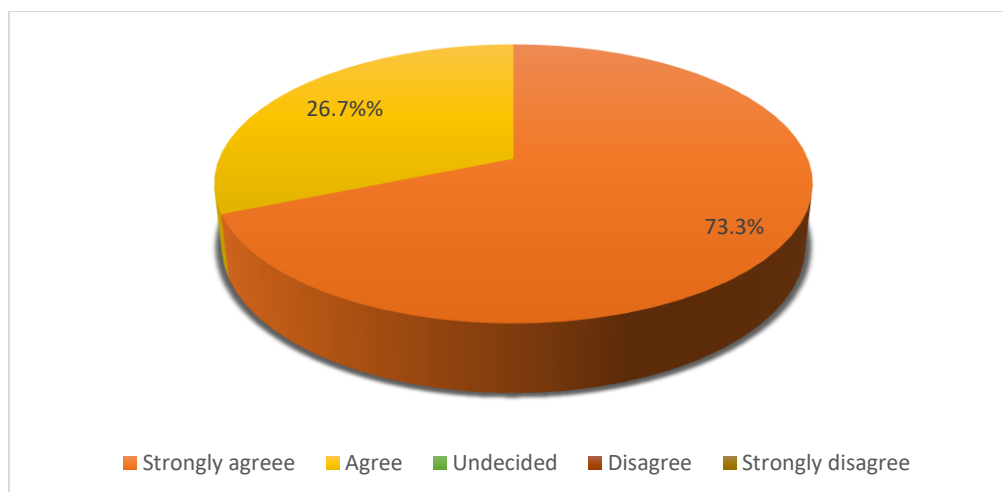


Figure 14 *Teachers' Opinions about the Effect of Effective Collaboration on the Improvement of Students' Speaking Skill*

Question 14 aims to assess teachers' perceptions regarding the influence of successful teamwork among peers on students' oral proficiency. The data reveals that 73.3% are strongly agreed on the given statement and 26.7% of them agreed on it. Thus, all the participants supported the idea. This implies that teachers recognize the value of collaborative learning environments, including group discussions, debates, and collaborative projects. Such active participation and interaction can lead to increased confidence, fluency, and accuracy in spoken language. Additionally, collaboration fosters essential social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and empathy, which are integral components of EI. Henceforth, teachers' agreement confirms their positive opinions regarding the role of social skills in enhancing speaking proficiency.

Q15. EI should be formally incorporated into language curriculum standard.

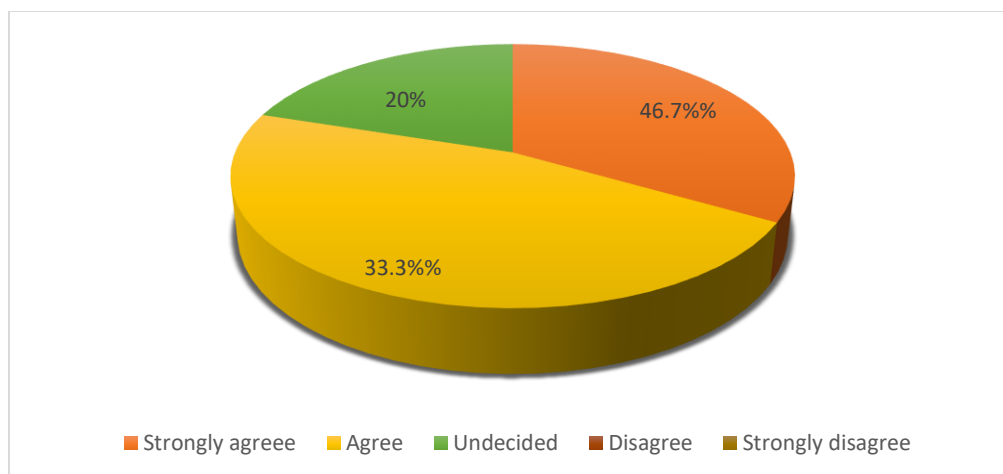


Figure 15 *Teachers' Perspectives about the Incorporation of Emotional Intelligence into Language Curriculum Standard*

The aim behind this question is to figure out teachers' perspectives on the integration of EI into the language curriculum. As the figure indicates, 80% of the respondents expressed their agreement (strongly agree or agree) on this idea. The remaining teachers (20%) were not sure; they opted for undecided. These responses indicate that the majority of teachers believe that formal incorporation of EI into the curriculum could benefit students. They recognize that EI, encompassing skills such as empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation, motivation, and social skills, can significantly enhance language learning. Therefore, these results underline the importance of strategies such as incorporating reflective activities, collaborative learning, and social learning programs into the educational framework to boost academic performance and prepare students for practical interactions.

Q16. Incorporating EI activities in oral classes improves speaking proficiency.

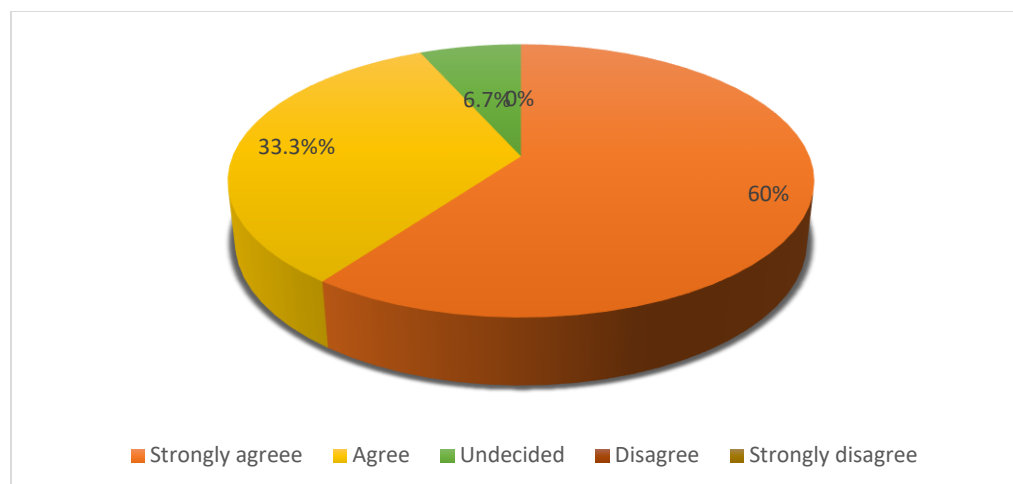


Figure 16 *Teachers' Perceptions about the Effect of Incorporating Emotional Intelligence Activities in Oral Classes on the Improvement of Speaking Proficiency*

This question aims to gauge teachers' views on whether incorporating EI activities in oral classes can enhance students' speaking performance. 09 informants (60%) pointed out that they strongly agree on the given statement. In addition, 05 teachers who represent 33.3% asserted that they agree on it while only one teacher (6.7%) opted for undecided. These findings illustrate that most teachers are convinced that including EI activities in oral lessons significantly improves students' speaking abilities. This consensus suggests that activities focused on EI, such as self-awareness exercises, empathy-building activities, and stress management techniques are beneficial for enhancing students' speaking skills. Hence, when agreeing with this point, OE teachers show their positive views about the application of EI activities in oral classes for the sake of helping students improve their speaking performances.

Q17. In your opinion, what are the activities that can help students improve their EI? (You may choose more than an option)

a. Discussion

b. Role Play

c. Storytelling

d. Games

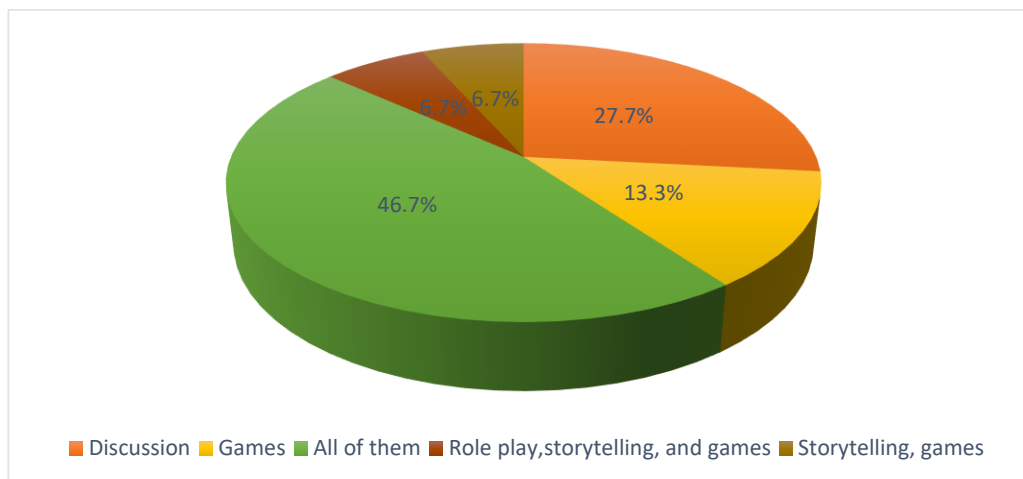


Figure 17 *Teachers' Opinions about the Activities that Can Help in Improving Students' Emotional Intelligence*

The aim of this question is to gather teachers' perspectives on which activities they believe are most effective in enhancing students' EI. The results recorded in figure 17 show that the majority of teachers (46.7%) opted for all the activities as being effective. Following this, discussion was chosen by 27.7% of teachers, making it the second most popular choice. Games were selected by 13.3% of the respondents. However, 6.7% of the teachers identified role-play, storytelling, and games as the most helpful activities. Likewise, another 6.7% chose storytelling and games as the most valuable activities for fostering EI. These results reflect that OE teachers admit the value of using a variety of classroom speaking activities to boost students' EI.

Section Four: Further Suggestions

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

Question 18 seeks to gather suggestions from teachers regarding how they perceive the influence of EI on speaking proficiency. Only one teacher answered this question. S/he suggested that teachers should be trained or make their own efforts to know how to incorporate EI into their lessons to have better outcomes in oral expression sessions.

2.1.5. Discussion of the Results

The present questionnaire aims to investigate teachers' opinions regarding EI as an essential skill to help first-year students solve their problems in speaking. The analysis indicates that the majority of the questioned teachers have significant experience, which lends credibility to their responses. This extensive experience implies that their insights into the influence of EI on speaking proficiency provides an opportunity to gather accurate responses that are highly beneficial for our research.

Most questioned teachers rate first-year students' speaking abilities as average, which indicates that they face many difficulties in their speaking skill. These difficulties often lead students to be passive in the classroom. The challenges that result in passive participation in oral sessions may be influenced by numerous reasons. Notably, teachers attribute these difficulties to both language-related issues such as lack of vocabulary and grammar mistakes as well as metacognitive problems such as anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation. The high percentage of teachers recognizing both types of problems assures the need to manage both affective and language related problems to support students in overcoming these obstacles.

As derived from the questionnaire results, the overwhelming majority of the informants believe that there is a direct link between students' EI levels and their speaking, emphasizing the role of each skill encompassed within the construct of EI in developing speaking proficiency. Teachers overwhelmingly agree that self-awareness helps students recognize their strengths and weaknesses, leading to targeted improvements in their speaking skills. In addition, they consider emotional management essential for spontaneous speaking and intrinsic motivation as vital for active engagement and risk-taking. Furthermore, teachers argue that both empathy and social skills play essential roles in enhancing oral proficiency. Therefore, these findings reflect teachers' positive perceptions regarding the impact of EI and its focal skills on maintaining fluency and accuracy in speaking.

Considering the data collected from the questionnaire, there is a widespread agreement among teachers regarding the positive influence of integrating EI activities into oral classes to enhance students' speaking proficiency. Additionally, they endorse the effectiveness of various speaking activities, including discussion, role-play, storytelling, and games, in fostering EI. Therefore, these insights highlight a recognition among educators of the interconnectedness between EI development and speaking skills enhancement, emphasizing the importance of integrating both aspects into language teaching practices to ameliorate students' academic performance.

In short, the questionnaire findings reveal that most teachers hold a positive view on the influence of EI on speaking proficiency. Teachers consistently recognize the benefits of EI components for enhancing students' speaking skill and agree on integrating EI into the language curriculum. This suggests that teachers endorse the idea that developing EI is essential for improving speaking proficiency and advocate for its incorporation into language learning settings.

Section Two: Students' Questionnaire

2.2.1. Population and Sample

The present work is conducted at Abdelhafid Boussouf university centre-Mila, Institute of Letters and Foreign Languages, Department of Foreign Languages during the academic year 2023/2024. The targeted population is first-year students of English affiliated with this department. A sample of seventeen students out of two-hundred and thirty-nine students divided into seven groups participated in responding to the questionnaire.

The rationale behind selecting first year university students stems from the fact that in this foundational period, they become acquainted with their academic strengths and weaknesses while adjusting to the demands of the academic environment. It is during this phase that they begin to search for solutions to their problems.

The questionnaire was administered both at the university campus and electronically via Facebook groups in a Google document format.

2.2.2. The Aim of the Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to discover students' perspectives on the significance of EI in enhancing speaking proficiency. Accordingly, students' firsthand experiences and insights are critically important to our study, as their input will provide valuable data.

2.2.3. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire comprises sixteen questions, incorporating a mix of closed-ended questions, agree/disagree statements, and a concluding open-ended request. The students

are informed that their participation in the questionnaire guarantees complete anonymity, thereby creating a conducive atmosphere for the uninhibited expression of opinions.

It is divided into four sections:

Section One: General Information (Questions 1 and 2)

This section aims at exploring some personal information about the students.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill (Questions 3-6)

This section focuses on exploring students' speaking skills such as their general level, frequency of participation, and the difficulties they face.

Section Three: Emotional Intelligence (Questions 7-15)

The main aim of this part is to investigate students' opinions about the influence of EI on speaking proficiency.

Section Four: Further Suggestions (Question 16)

The aim of including this section is to afford learners the chance to contribute additional suggestions pertinent to the topic under examination.

2.1.4. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section One: General Information

Q1. Studying English was:

- a. Your choice
- b. Obligatory

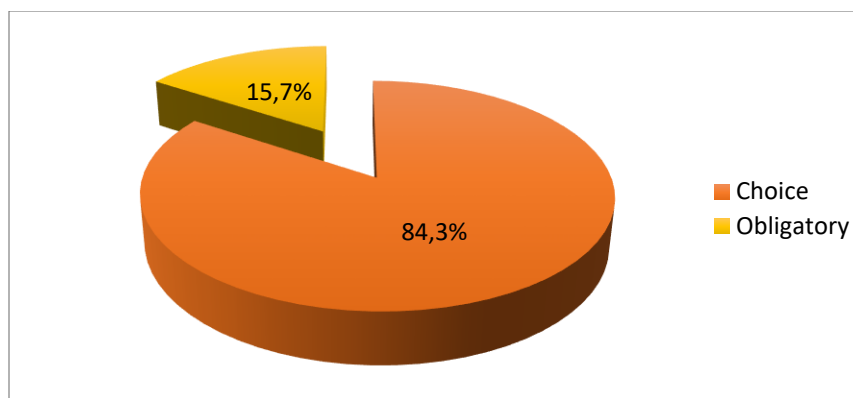


Figure 18 *Students' Choice of Studying English*

This question aims to figure out whether learning English was the students' choice or not. As it is clearly seen in the figure above, the highest proportion of students (84.3%) confirmed that studying English at university was their choice, whereas only 15.7% of them were obliged to study it. This is a justifiable indicator that most students are intrinsically motivated to learn English, indicating a genuine interest in the language.

Q2. How do you consider your level in English?

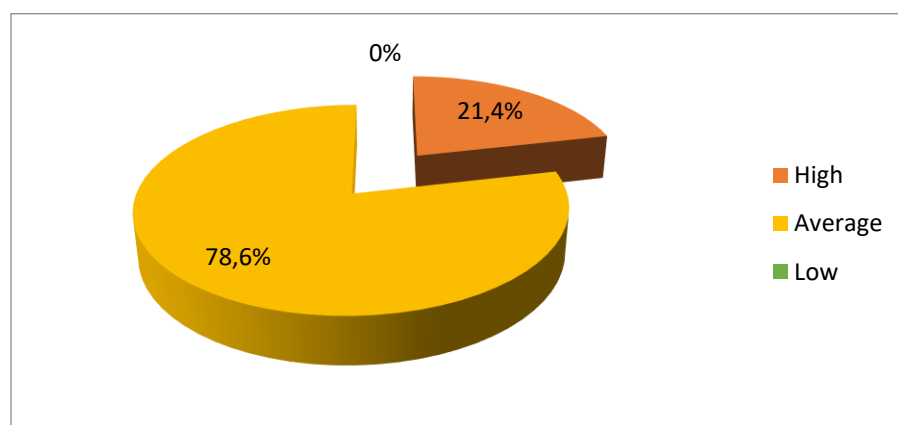


Figure 19 *Students' English Level*

The aim behind addressing this question is to elicit information from the participants about their level estimation. In terms of statistical analysis, the data reveals that 78.6% of the students perceive their level of English as average, while 21.4% deem it high. Interestingly, none of the students rated his level as low. These results demonstrate that most questioned students have a moderate perception of their English level. These findings suggest that first year university students have problems in the different language skills that require effective solutions.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Q3. How do you evaluate your speaking skill?

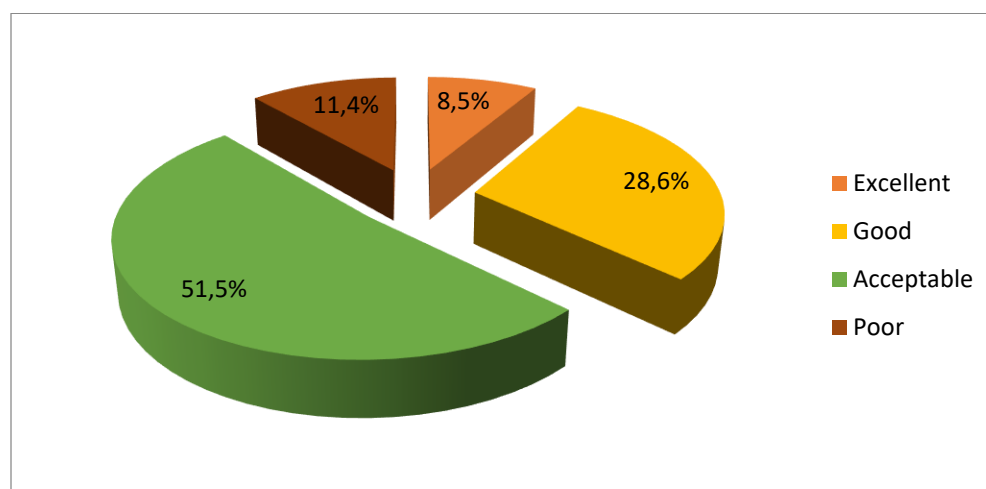


Figure 20 *Students' Speaking Level*

This question is designed to ascertain the students' level in speaking. Based on the gathered data, 51.5% of the students rate their speaking as acceptable, while 28.6% deem it good. Notably, 11.4% of the participants claimed that their spoken English is poor. The rest of them (8.5%) stated that their speaking is excellent. These findings highlight that a significant portion of learners face challenges in speaking, indicating a need for improvement strategies.

Q4. How often do you participate in the oral expression session?

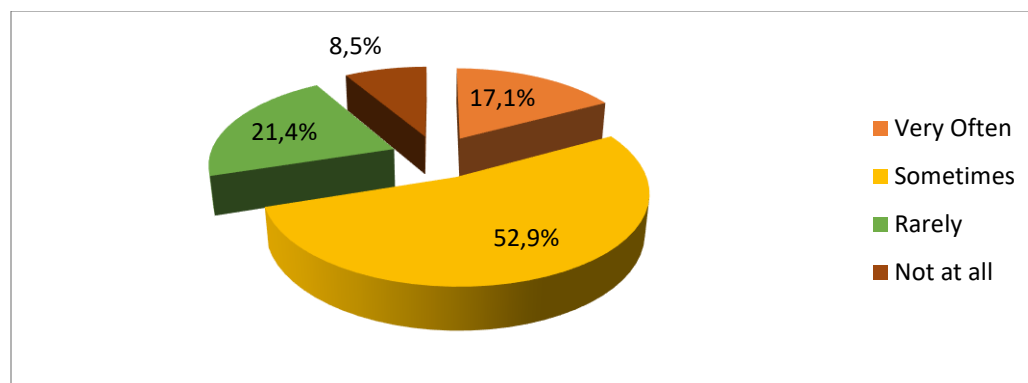


Figure 21 *Students' Participation in Oral Expression Session*

This question endeavors to gauge students' frequency of participation in OE sessions. According to the data, 52.9% of the participants claimed that they participate sometimes, whereas 21.4% reported rare participation and 8.5% stated that they do not participate at all. Additionally, 17.1% opted for very frequent participation. These results reveal the varying levels of engagement among students in OE sessions. This variability may be influenced by factors such as individual levels of shyness, anxiety, motivation, fear of committing mistakes, classroom atmosphere, and language problems. Therefore, these findings emphasize the importance of addressing these factors and promoting awareness of the significance of cultivating a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Moreover, by emphasizing the value of active engagement, students may feel more empowered to contribute and improve their speaking skills.

Q5. Do you find difficulties when speaking English?

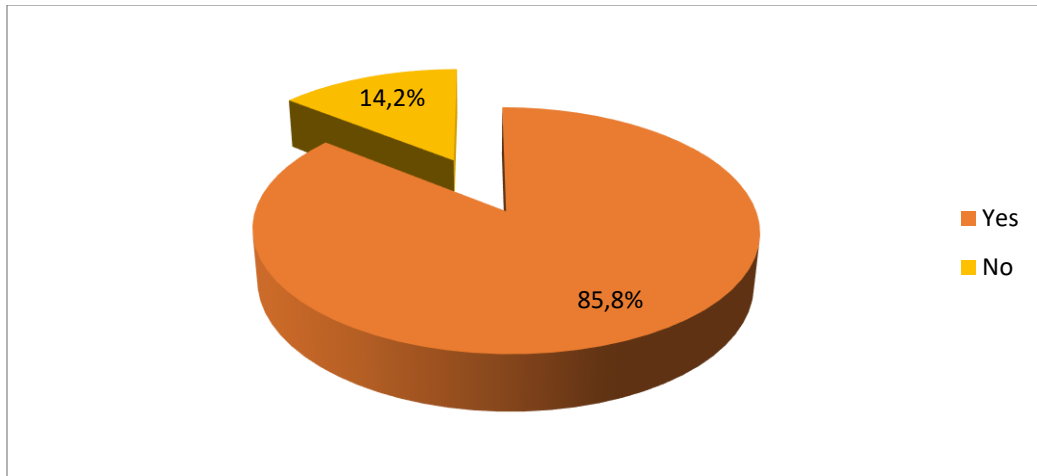


Figure 22 *Students' Difficulties in Speaking*

This question aims to determine whether first-year students of English encounter difficulties while speaking. The provided figure indicates that a significant majority of students (85.8%) face challenges while speaking. These responses underscore the considerable difficulty inherent in speaking. Hence, these findings indicate the necessity of implementing effective strategies and activities to facilitate speaking development.

Q6. If “yes”, your difficulties are caused by:

- a. Language aspects (vocabulary, grammar, etc.)
- b. Affective factors (inhibition, anxiety, etc.)
- c. Both

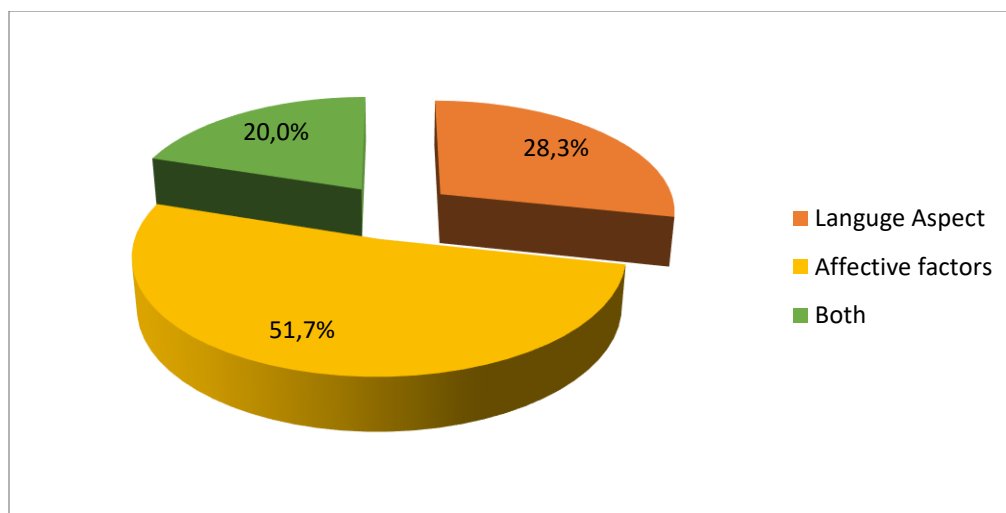


Figure 23 *Causes of Students' Speaking Difficulties*

The aim of asking this question is to identify the specific factors contributing to the difficulties students encounter when speaking English. 51.7% of the participants selected affective factors as their primary cause of difficulty, while 28.3% reported language-related issues. Additionally, 20% of the sample attribute their speaking problems to both affective factors and language aspects. The obtained results assume that the affective factors are the primary cause of difficulties in speaking. Therefore, addressing affective factors, such as anxiety and self-confidence, may be crucial in enhancing speaking proficiency among learners. Additionally, by acknowledging and managing these emotional aspects, learners may overcome barriers that hinder their speaking abilities and ultimately improve their performance in oral expression sessions.

Section Three: Emotional Intelligence

Q7. Students who speak English fluently and accurately are the ones who do not let stressful situations or people affect their speaking.

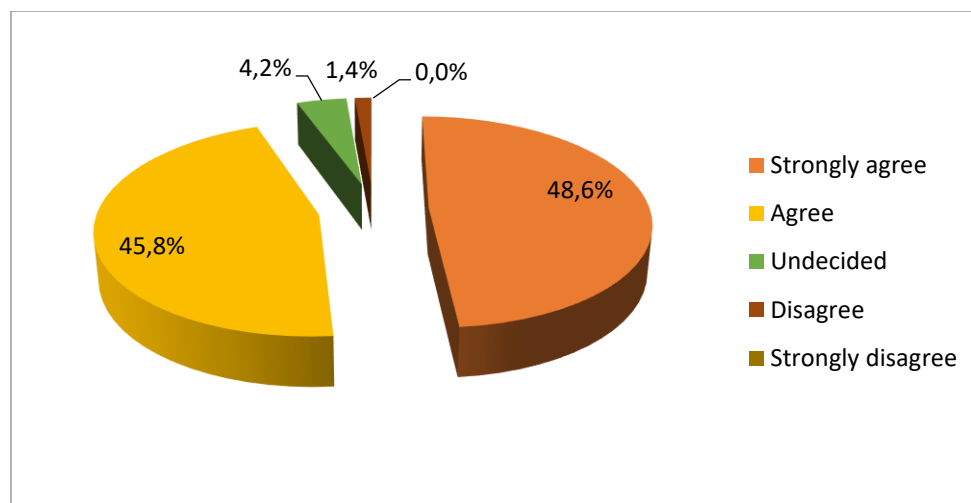


Figure 24 *Students' Opinions on Speaking Fluently and Accurately Despite Stressful Situations*

This question seeks to determine the extent to which learners agree that coping with stressful situations or people affect learners' speaking proficiency positively. The results demonstrate that 48.6% and 45.8% of the questioned students opted for strongly agree and agree respectively, indicating that they believe fluency and accuracy in English speaking are associated with the ability to remain unaffected by stressful situations or individuals. However, a small percentage (4.2%) chose undecided, and only one student believes that ignoring stressful situations does not have significant impact on speaking proficiency. Hence, students who remain calm, focused, and optimistic may be better equipped to handle stress and maintain fluency and accuracy in speaking. The findings show learners positive opinions on the given statement, which in turn hints at the importance of emotional resilience, flexibility, and adaptive strategies in handling stress in speaking which helps the development of speaking proficiency.

Q8. Feeling comfortable participating without fear of committing mistakes foster greater fluency in speaking

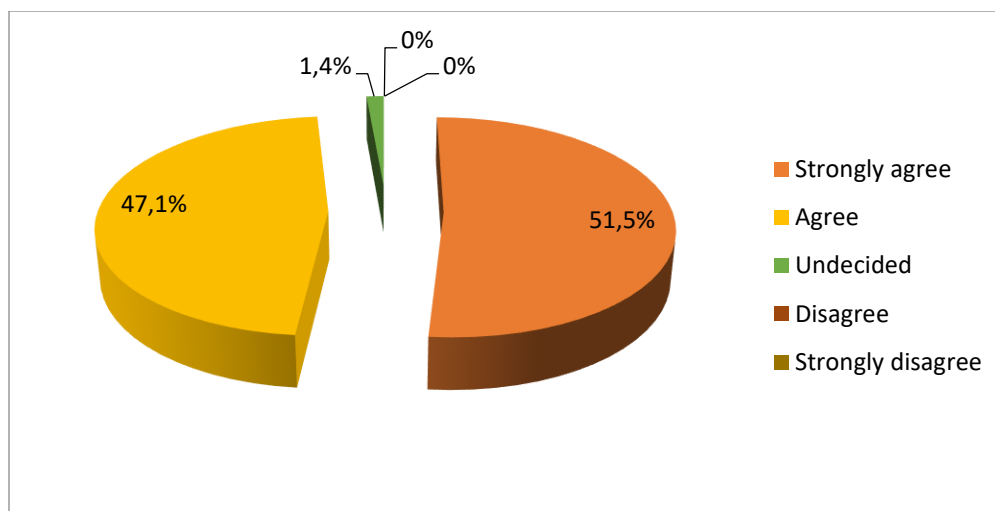


Figure 25 *Students' Opinions about the Effect of Feeling Comfortable while Participating on Fostering Fluency in Speaking*

The aim of this question is to explore students' beliefs regarding the connection between feeling at ease when participating without fear of making mistakes and fluency in speaking. The data obtained from the above figure reveals that 51.5% of the informants strongly agreed and 47.1% agreed on the perception that being at ease during conversations, free from the fear of making errors, enhances students' ability to communicate smoothly and effortlessly. Remarkably, only a small proportion (1.4%) opted undecided, and none of the students strongly disagreed or disagreed. The aforementioned statistics suggest that students who feel at ease participating in conversations and discussions may indeed experience enhanced fluency in speaking. Consequently, by feeling at ease when participating, students may exhibit traits associated with EI, such as self-confidence and adaptability. Besides, managing the fear of making mistakes is a crucial aspect of this process, as it allows students to engage more freely in communication. This aligns with the notion that emotional resilience and confidence play essential roles in developing the speaking skill.

Q9. When speaking, maintaining balance and controlling one's emotions leads to clearer speech and more confident speakers.

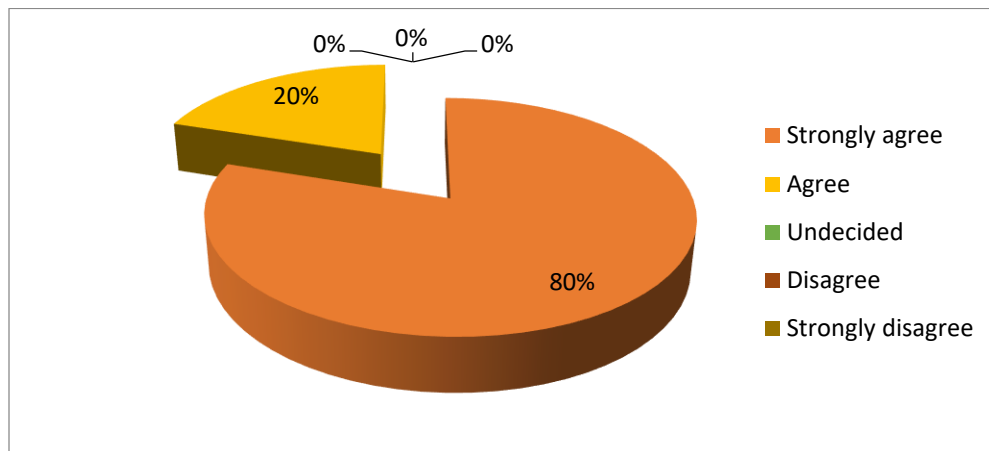


Figure 26 *Students' Opinions about the influence of Controlling Emotions on Speech Clarity and Speakers' Confidence*

The purpose behind asking this question is to know students' perspectives on the role of emotional regulation in enhancing the lucidity of speech and fostering confidence. 80% of the students strongly agreed on the given statement and 20% of them agreed with it too. The results show a strong consensus among students regarding the significance of emotional balance and control during speaking engagements. This reflects their positive opinions about the role of self-regulation, a fundamental skill of EI, in enhancing clarity and confidence in speaking.

Q10. Increased awareness of emotions helps learners articulate their thoughts and ideas with greater clarity and confidence.

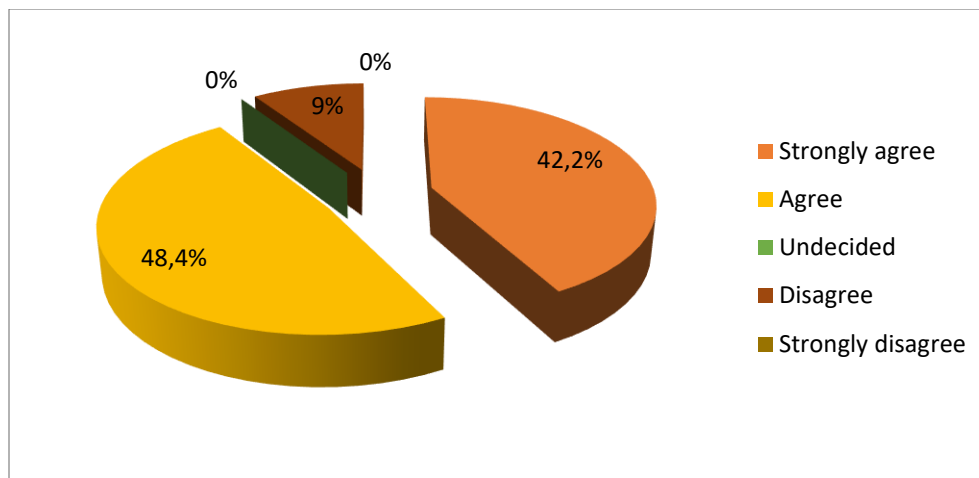


Figure 27 *Students' Opinions about the Impact of Increased Awareness of Emotions on Speech Clarity and Confidence*

This question seeks to demonstrate students' opinions about the impact of increased awareness of emotions on the capacity to express thoughts and ideas with enhanced clarity and self-assurance. As it is shown in Figure 26, the vast majority of the questioned students (90.6%) expressed their agreement (strongly agree/agree) on the given statement. In contrast, 9% of the sample disagreed on the statement, while the remaining students were not sure as they opted for undecided. This overwhelming agreement among students reflects a strong belief in the positive influence of increased emotional awareness on communication clarity and confidence. Therefore, this reflects the perceived importance of self-awareness as a component of EI in fostering speaking proficiency.

Q11. When speaking, regulating feelings of anxiety and nervousness helps learners express themselves effectively.

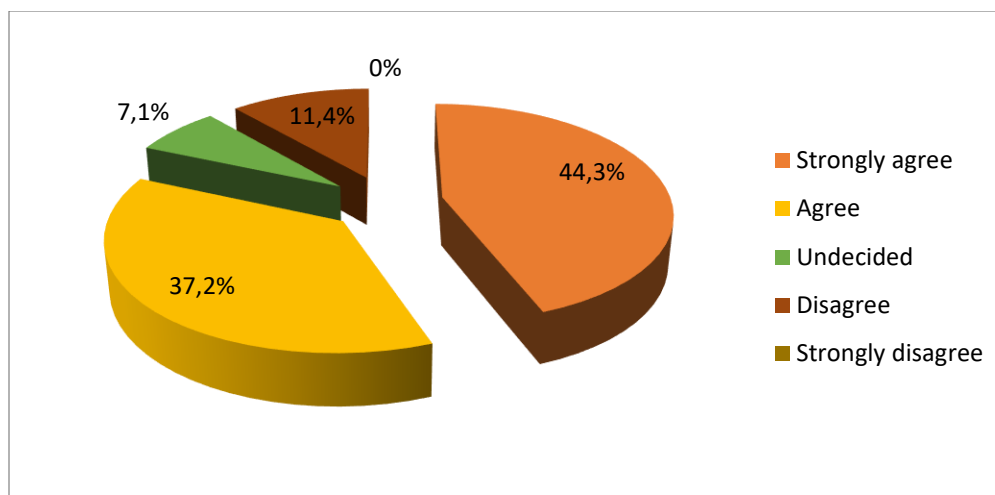


Figure 28 *Students' Opinions on the Influence of Regulating Feeling of Anxiety and Nervousness on Expressing Oneself Effectively*

The purpose behind asking this question is to elucidate learners' points of view regarding the influence of controlling feelings of unease and tension on their capability to articulate thoughts and ideas proficiently. The data above reveals that 44.3% of the informants pointed out that they are strongly agree on the given statement. Besides, 26 students who represent 37.2% asserted that they agree on it while 11.4% of them express the opposite (disagreement). Interestingly, five students (7.1%) were not sure whether to agree or not, so they opted for undecided. These results prove a widespread recognition among learners of the crucial link between emotional regulation of anxiety and nervousness and the capacity to sustain fluency-and confidence while expressing oneself. Hence, these findings imply that fostering emotional regulation abilities can boost communicative proficiency among learners.

Q12.Alleviating anxiety contributes to maintaining fluency and avoiding unnecessary pauses-and hesitation in speech.

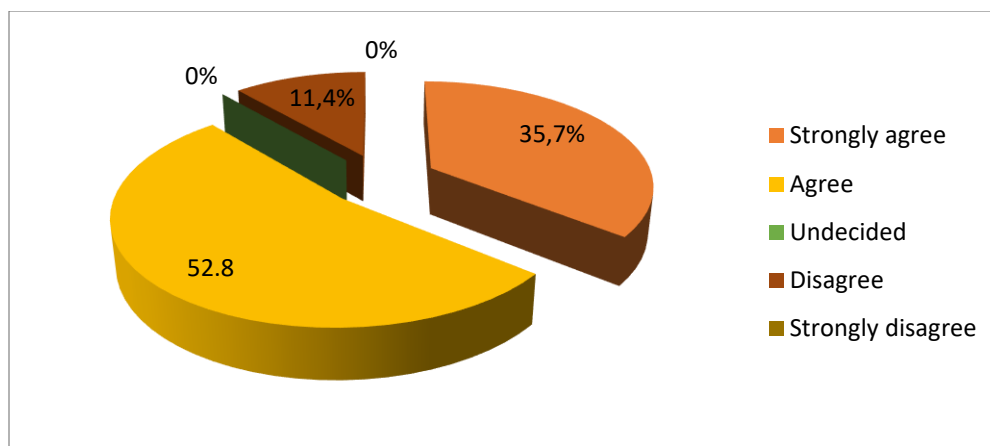


Figure 29 *Students' Opinions on the Relationship between Anxiety Alleviation and Speech Fluency*

This question aims to determine the degree to which learners agree that reducing anxiety aids in maintaining fluency and minimizing pauses and unnatural hesitation in speech. The statistical analysis reveals that a substantial portion of the sample (88.5%) recognized the potential benefit of anxiety alleviation. However, 11.4% of the respondents did not believe that reducing anxiety helps in sustaining smoothness and preventing unnecessary breaks and hesitation in speech. These findings suggest that the majority of the informants acknowledge the potential advantages of reducing anxiety in enhancing fluency, and minimizing pauses and hesitation during speech. Therefore, these findings imply that first-year university students possess an understanding of how EI skills, specifically self-regulation, can positively influence their speaking proficiency by managing anxiety and disturbance.

Q13. When learners are intrinsically motivated, they are likely to persist in participating in oral classes.

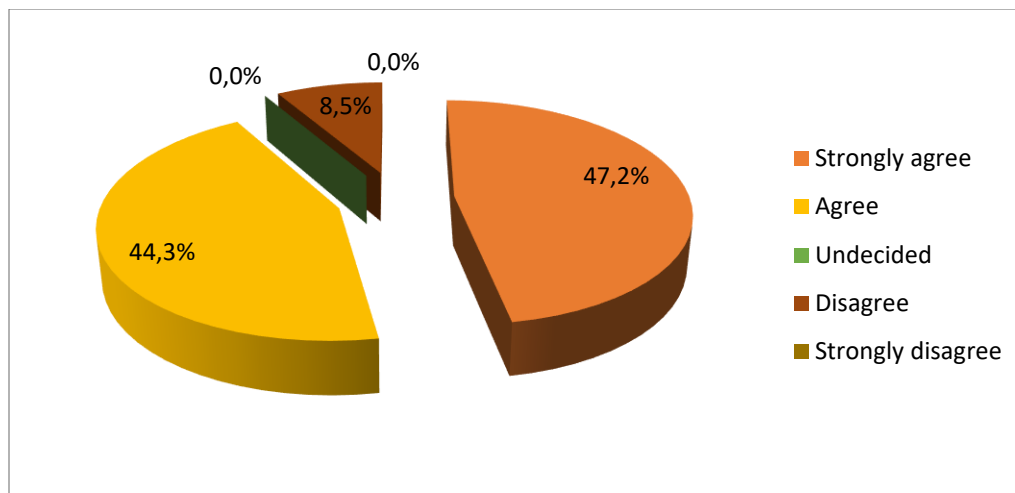


Figure 30 Students' Opinions on the Relationship between Intrinsic Motivation and Oral Class Participation Persistence

The aim of this question is to ascertain learners' agreement regarding the relationship between intrinsic motivation and continuous engagement in oral classes. The data above shows that the overwhelming majority of the students (91.5%) expressed their agreement (strongly agree/ agree) with the given statement. However, 8.5% of them disagreed on it. Thus, their responses reflect their positive opinions about intrinsic motivation, a key element of EI, in maintaining active engagement in oral classes

Q14. Empathizing with others improves learners' ability to connect and engage in conversations.

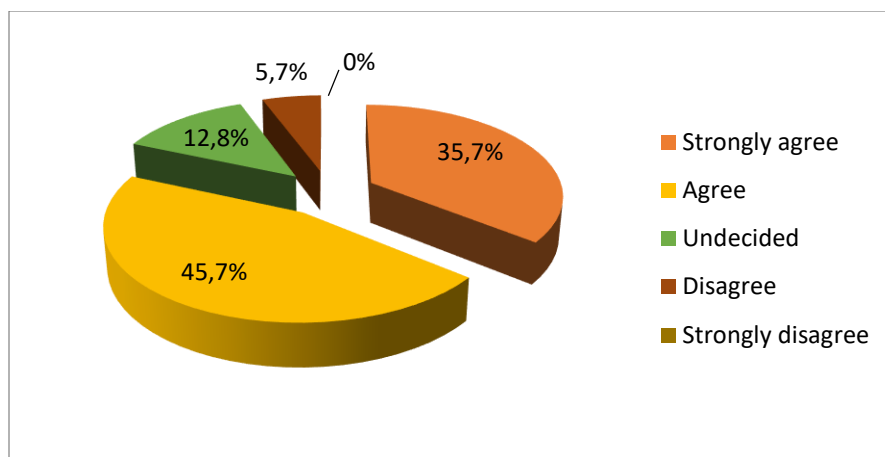


Figure 31 *Students' Opinions on the Role of Empathy on Enhancing Conversational Engagement*

This question intends to determine learners' views on how empathizing with others influences the capacity to connect and actively engage in conversations. The data obtained indicates that 81.4% of the informants show their agreement on the above statement. However, it is noteworthy that a notable proportion (12.8%) of the participants opted for undecided, indicating a degree of uncertainty among some learners. Nevertheless, only a small minority of the participants (5.7%) disagreed on the given statement. These findings indicate a strong consensus among learners concerning the positive effect of understanding others' feelings on their capacity to participate in discussions. Therefore, it may be beneficial to incorporate activities or exercises in language learning environments that promote empathy and interpersonal skills. Enhancing students' EI, using such activities can improve their ability engage in conversations.

Q15. Developing learners' social skills helps navigate conversational turn-taking and interactional coherence when speaking.

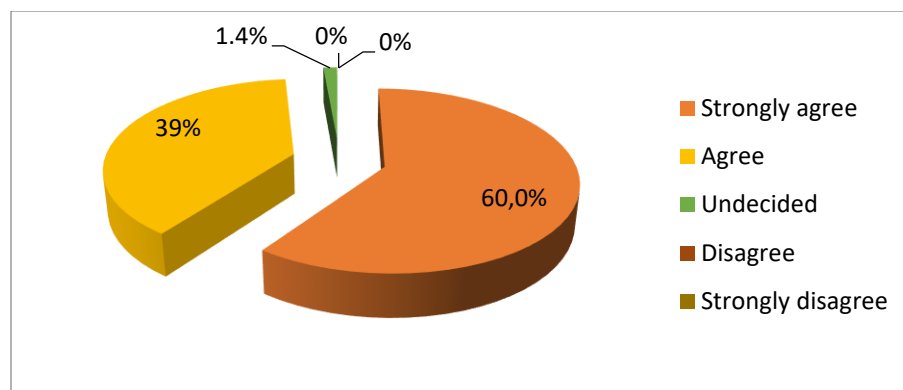


Figure 32 *Students' Opinions on the Role of Social Skills Development in Fostering Conversational Turn-taking and Interactional Coherence in Speaking*

The intention behind this statement is to elucidate the students' perspectives about the importance of developing learners' social skills in facilitating conversational turn-taking and maintaining interactional coherence during speaking activities. As it is shown in figure 31, 98.5% of the informants show their agreement on the above statement. However, it is noteworthy that only one student (1.4%) of the participants disagreed on it. In the light of these findings, students perceive social skills such as active listening, cooperation, and conflict resolution, as vital tools for managing the flow of conversation and maintaining smooth interactions during speaking activities. This suggests the need to recommend teachers to imply interactive and collaborative activities that promote social interaction and turn taking during oral expression sessions. When focusing on these aspects, teachers can enhance students' EI, fostering better interpersonal connections and improving overall speaking proficiency.

Section Four: Further Suggestions

Q16. Please, add any suggestion you see relevant to the aim of the questionnaire.

The aim of this question is to elicit additional suggestions from participants regarding the topic under investigation. After reading all the learners' answers, we have noticed the following:

-Many students highlighted the importance of being aware of and controlling their emotions to improve fluency in speech. They suggested that increased emotional awareness leads to better emotional regulation, which in turn enhances speaking fluency and clarity.

-Some students suggested that specific teaching instructions should be implemented to enhance both EI and speaking skills. They emphasized the need for practical opportunities to practice language skills in conjunction with EI development.

-Several responses emphasized the role of self-confidence in effective speaking. Students noted that confidence helps speakers express themselves more clearly and bravely.

-The necessity of overcoming fear and anxiety to speak fluently was a recurring theme.

It is readily apparent that the suggestions provided by participants reflect their positive opinions on the importance of EI in improving the speaking skill.

2.2.5. Discussion of the Results

The analysis of the students' questionnaire provides insightful glimpses into the significance of EI in speaking proficiency. The analysis reveals that most first-year students are intrinsically motivated to study English at university, which demonstrates a genuine interest in the language. However, the average level of most students indicates that speaking is challenging for them. Besides, a majority of participants do not regularly engage in oral expression sessions,

encountering numerous hurdles primarily stemming from affective factors such as anxiety, lack of motivation, and lack of self-confidence, along with language-related challenges like limited vocabulary and grammar mistakes.

In light of the findings obtained from the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of the questioned students support the idea that emotional resilience, self-awareness, and self-regulation are essential for maintaining fluency, accuracy, and clarity in speech. Additionally, students recognize the essential role of intrinsic motivation in sustaining participation in oral classes, which, in turn, indicates their positive perspective on motivation in maintaining active engagement in oral classes. Thus, these findings reflect their recognition of the importance of fostering EI skills in enhancing speaking proficiency.

Finally, the data concerning empathy and social skills suggest that students believe that interpersonal connections are integral to effective communication. The majority of the participants agreed on the perception that empathy improves the capacity to build connections and participate actively in discussions. These findings call for the implementation of interactive and collaborative activities such as group discussions, role-play, and cooperative learning projects in language classrooms to promote social interaction and turn-taking, thereby enhancing interactional coherence during speaking activities.

In summary, the findings derived from this questionnaire illuminate that a predominant proportion of students endorse the favorable effects of the central components of EI on enhancing speaking proficiency. Therefore, they harbor positive opinions regarding the influence of EI on speaking proficiency.

2.3. Recommendations and Limitations

2.3.1. Recommendations

2.3.1.1 Recommendations for English as Foreign Language Teachers

2.3.1.2 Recommendations for English as Foreign Language Students

2.3.1.3 Recommendations for Future Researchers

2.3.2 Limitations of the Study

2.3. Recommendations and Limitations

2.3.1 Recommendations

In light of the present study's results and discussions that indicate the significance of EI in improving students' speaking skills, the following recommendations are worth stating for teachers, students, and future researchers:

2.3.1.1 Recommendations for English as Foreign Language Teachers.

- Teachers are recommended to incorporate activities aimed at developing learners EI skills, like, role-play group discussions, and reflective exercises.
- Teachers are recommended to encourage collaborative learning through group work and peer interactions, which helps students develop social skills and learn from each other's strengths.
- Teachers are recommended to engage in professional development opportunities focused on EI and its integration into language teaching, like workshops, seminars, and courses on EI that can provide valuable insights and strategies for enhancing teaching and learning.
- Teachers are recommended to create a safe classroom where students feel encouraged to express themselves without fear of making mistakes through positive reinforcement, giving constructive feedback, and building a sense of community.

2.3.1.2 Recommendations for English as Foreign Language Students.

- Students are recommended to focus on developing the fundamental skills of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, to enhance their speaking proficiency in English.

- Students are recommended to develop self-awareness by keeping a journal of their speaking experiences, noting their strengths and areas for improvement, which helps in recognizing emotional responses and managing them effectively.
- Students are recommended to practice self-regulation by setting specific, achievable goals for their speaking practice and managing stress through relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and mindfulness exercises.
- Students are recommended to enhance their motivation by setting personal rewards for achieving speaking milestones and by staying engaged with content that interests them, fostering a positive attitude towards language learning.
- Students are recommended to engage in active listening and cultural exchange activities to develop empathy, which enhances their ability to connect with others and respond appropriately in conversations.
- Students are recommended to participate in group discussions and language exchange programs to practice and refine their social skills that enable them to communicate efficiently.

2.3.1.3 Recommendations for Future Researchers.

- Future researchers are recommended to conduct a study about the strategies that can enhance EI specifically in EFL contexts.
- Future researchers are recommended to conduct studies to understand the strength of the potential relationship between learners' speaking proficiency and each skill that falls under the construct of EI.

2.3.2 Limitations of the Study

During our research journey, we encountered a set of obstacles and difficulties that were unexpected and beyond our control. The following are some limitations that have had an adverse influence on our work:

- There was a notable reluctance among teachers to participate in the study, and even when they did respond, many did not complete the questionnaire fully. This limited engagement may have restricted the depth and breadth of insights obtained from the teachers' perspectives.
- There is a lack of detailed studies on how individual EI skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, specifically influence speaking proficiency in EFL contexts.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the practical part of the current study, which aims to investigate teachers and students' perspectives on the role of EI in enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills. To achieve this, we designed two questionnaires distributed to both teachers and students, aiming to gather comprehensive insights into their views. Through the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the responses, the results indicate that both informants have positive opinions about EI as a crucial skill in minimizing students' problems within oral expression sessions.

General Conclusion

Speaking is one of the most important skills in learning FLs. However, it poses considerable challenges for EFL students, requiring sustained effort and practice. Many learners encounter metacognitive obstacles such as anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, and lack of confidence, that hinder their participation in speaking activities. Therefore, EI emerges as a promising solution to navigate these problems, enabling students to effectively regulate their emotions and engage in speaking classes. The main aim of this study is to explore the pivotal role of emotional intelligence in bolstering learners' speaking proficiency. Hence, an attempt was made to examine the perspectives of both students and teachers regarding the impact of EI on speaking proficiency.

In pursuit of the study's aims to elucidate the significance of EI in enhancing learners' speaking skills, data were obtained through the design and administration of two questionnaires. One questionnaire was distributed to fifteen first-year OE teachers, and another was given to seventy first-year EFL students from the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University centre-Mila. The findings derived from these research instruments provided answers to our research questions.

EFL students, indeed, encounter significant challenges in speaking. The findings indicate that students' difficulties in speaking lies in languages related issues and affective factors, which impede their participation and make them passive in oral sessions. Besides, both teachers and students endorse the beneficial effect of self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social skills, the core elements of EI, on ameliorating speaking proficiency. In this

regard, it is noteworthy that the present research can help teachers and learners reflect on the degree to which they prioritize the significance of EI in language learning contexts.

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasized the important role of emotional intelligence in minimizing the challenges encountered by EFL students in speaking proficiency. Recognizing and fostering EI and its fundamental skills helps students reduce affective barriers and actively engage in oral classes.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Teachers' Questionnaire

Appendix II: Students' Questionnaire

Appendix I: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a research work carried out in the framework of a Master degree. It aims at gathering your opinions about the influence of learners' emotional intelligence (EI) on speaking proficiency. Hence, your contribution would be of great help for getting deep understanding of the issue under investigation.

You are kindly requested to tick (✓) the appropriate box and provide your opinions and comments wherever necessary.

Section One: General Information

1. What is your academic degree?

a. Master

b. Magister

c. Doctorate

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

a. 1-4 years

b. 5-9 years

c. More than 9 years

3. How long have you been teaching the oral expression module for first year university students?

a. 1-4 years

b. 5-9 years

c. More than 9 years

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

4. How do you consider first year students' level in speaking?

a. Good

b. Average

c. Below average

5. Do your students actively engage in speaking classes?

a. Yes b. No

6. What are the frequent problems that your students face when they speak in the classroom?

a. Language aspects problems (lack of vocabulary, grammar mistakes, etc.)

b. Affective problems (Inhibition, anxiety, lack of motivation, etc.)

c. Both

Section Three: Emotional Intelligence

7. How do you rate the EI level of your students?

a. High

b. Average

c. Low

8. Students with high level of EI perform better than those who have a low level of EI.

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

9. Self-awareness impacts students' ability to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in speaking.

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

10. Teaching students to manage their emotions positively influences their speaking proficiency.

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

11. Intrinsic motivation contributes to students' improvements in speaking proficiency.

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

12. Motivated learners are more willing to take risks in speaking.

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

13. There is a strong connection between students' empathy levels and their ability to engage in effective communication.

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

14. Effective collaboration with peers results in noticeable improvements in students' speaking skills.

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

15. EI should be formally incorporated into language curriculum standard.

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

16. Incorporating EI activities in oral classes improves speaking proficiency.

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

17. In your opinion, what are the activities that can help students improve their EI? (you may choose more than an option)

a. Discussion

b. Role Play

c. Storytelling

d. Games

Section Four: Further Suggestions

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

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you

Dear student,

This questionnaire is part of a research work carried out in the framework of a Master degree. It aims at gathering your opinions about the influence of learners' emotional intelligence (EI) on speaking proficiency. Hence, your contribution would be of great help for getting deep understanding of the issue under investigation. We would like to inform you that your responses will be kept completely anonymous. All collected data will be used exclusively for research purposes.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage both your own emotions and those of others effectively. It involves being aware of your own emotions and how they can affect your behavior, as well as being able to empathize with others and navigate social interactions skillfully.

You are kindly requested to tick (✓) the appropriate box and provide your opinions and comments wherever necessary.

Section One: General Information

1. Studying English was:

a. Your choice

b. Obligatory

2. How do you consider your level in English?

a. High

b. Average

c. Low

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

3. How do you evaluate your speaking skill?

a. Excellent

b. Good

c. Acceptable

d. Poor

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

a. Very often b. Sometimes c. Rarely d. Not at all

5. Do you find difficulties when speaking English?

a. Yes b. No

6. If "yes", you find difficulties in:

a. language aspects (vocabulary, grammar, etc.)

b. Affective factors (inhibition, anxiety, etc.)

c. Both

Section Three: Emotional Intelligence

7. Students who speak English fluently and accurately are the ones who do not let stressful situations or people affect their speaking.

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

8. When speaking, maintaining balance and controlling one's emotions leads to clearer and more confident speech.

9. Increased awareness of emotions helps learners articulate their thoughts and ideas with greater clarity and confidence.

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

10. When speaking, regulating feelings of anxiety and nervousness helps learners express themselves effectively.

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

11. Alleviating anxiety contributes to maintaining fluency and avoiding unnecessary pauses or hesitation in speech.

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

12. When learners are motivated, they are likely to persist in participating in oral classes.

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

13. Empathizing with others improves learners' ability to connect and engage in conversations.

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

14. Developing learners' social skills helps navigate conversational turn-taking and interactional coherence when speaking.

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

Section Four: Further Suggestions

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

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Thank you

ملخص

يعد التحدث أحد الجوانب الأساسية لتعلم اللغة. ومع ذلك، فإنه يمثل التحدي الأكبر لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، حيث أن إتقانها يتطلب ممارسة متسقة. يواجه العديد من الطلاب عقبات مثل القلق والحجل وانعدام الثقة والخوف من ارتكاب الأخطاء، مما يمنعهم من المشاركة في وحدة التعبير الشفهي. وبالتالي، الذكاء العاطفي يوفر حلاً قابلاً للتطبيق للتغلب على هذه التحديات، وتمكين المتعلمين من إدارة عواطفهم ببراعة والمشاركة بنشاط في دروس التحدث. الهدف الأساسي من الدراسة هو استكشاف تصورات المعلمين والمتعلمين حول تأثير الذكاء العاطفي على إتقان التحدث. ولتحقيق هدف هذا البحث تم طرح ثلاثة أسئلة: (1) هل يواجه متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السنة الأولى مشاكل في تعلم التحدث؟ (2) هل لدى معلمي التعبير الشفهي في السنة الأولى آراء إيجابية حول تأثير الذكاء العاطفي على إتقان الطلاب للتحدث؟ (3) هل لدى طلاب السنة الأولى آراء إيجابية حول أهمية الذكاء العاطفي في تطوير كفاءتهم في التحدث؟ للإجابة على هذه الأسئلة تم تصميم استبيانين. يوزع الاستبيان الأول على خمسة عشر مدرساً من معلمي التعبير الشفهي للسنة الأولى بالمركز الجامعي عبد الحفيظ بوصوف-ميلة، في حين يوزع الاستبيان الثاني على سبعين تلميذاً من تلاميذ السنة الأولى. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب يواجهون العديد من المشكلات اللغوية والعاطفية التي تعيق التحدث لديهم. علاوة على ذلك، يحمل كلا المخبرين آراء إيجابية حول تأثير الذكاء العاطفي كحل لتقليل معوقات الطلاب في التحدث، وبالتالي تحسين إتقان التحدث. وأخيراً يوصي البحث بضرورة التركيز على تنمية المهارات الأساسية للذكاء العاطفي للتغلب على مشكلات التحدث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهارة التحدث، الذكاء العاطفي، مشكلات التحدث، العوامل الوجدانية، آراء المعلمين والطلاب

Résumé

Parler est l'un des aspects les plus fondamentaux de l'apprentissage des langues. Néanmoins, il représente le plus grand défi pour les étudiants en anglais comme langue étrangère, car sa maîtrise exige une pratique constante. De nombreux étudiants sont confrontés à des obstacles tels que l'anxiété, la timidité, le manque de confiance et la peur de se tromper, qui les empêchent de participer au module d'expression orale. Par conséquent, l'intelligence émotionnelle constitue une solution viable pour surmonter ces défis, en permettant aux apprenants de gérer efficacement leurs émotions et de s'engager activement dans les cours d'expression orale. L'objectif principal de l'étude est d'explorer les perceptions des enseignants et des apprenants sur l'effet de l'intelligence émotionnelle sur la compétence orale. Pour atteindre l'objectif de cette recherche, trois questions sont posées : (1) Les apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère en première année rencontrent-ils des problèmes pour apprendre à parler ? (2) Les enseignants d'expression orale de première année ont-ils des opinions positives sur l'influence de l'intelligence émotionnelle sur la compétence orale des élèves ? (3) Les étudiants de première année ont-ils des opinions positives sur l'importance de l'intelligence émotionnelle dans le développement de leur compétence orale ? Pour répondre à ces questions, deux questionnaires sont conçus. Le premier questionnaire est administré à quinze professeurs d'expression orale de première année au centre universitaire Abdelhafid Boussouf-Mila, tandis que le second est distribué à soixante-dix étudiants de première année. Les résultats révèlent que les élèves rencontrent de nombreux problèmes langagiers et affectifs qui gênent leur expression orale. De plus, les deux informateurs ont des opinions positives sur l'effet de l'intelligence émotionnelle comme solution pour minimiser les obstacles à l'expression orale des élèves, améliorant ainsi la maîtrise de l'expression orale. Enfin, la recherche recommande aux

étudiants de se concentrer sur le développement des compétences fondamentales de l'intelligence émotionnelle pour surmonter les problèmes d'expression.

Mots clés : expression orale, intelligence émotionnelle, problèmes d'expression orale, facteurs affectifs, opinions des enseignants et des élèves