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The Effects of Using Self-Access Centers on Developing Learners' Speaking Proficiency: Case Study Master I Students of English, University of Guelma

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English Language and letters in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master Degree in Anglophone Language, Literatures, and Civilizations

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DEDICATION

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Gracious

Praise be to ALLAH, the almighty, for always being there for me and blessing me with

health, strength, and peace for every goal proposed in my life.

With a deep affection, I am grateful to my family, my source of success and

Happiness.

To my sympathetic father and thoughtful mother whose love always strengthens my will.

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful parents, who have raised me to be the person

I am today. You have been with me every step of the way, Thank you for all the unconditional

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To my adorable sisters: Amel, wided and my twin souhila

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To my niece and nephews: ayya, louay and zakaria

To my sisters' husbands and my brother' wife

To all those who love me.

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Abstract

The present dissertation, a total of three chapters, is intended to highlight the role of Self-Access Centers; as a strategy used to motivate students perform orally better. Therefore, our study aims to investigate the relationship between Self-Access Centers and students' oral speaking performance, and to explore the different characteristics of Self-Access Centers to show that Self-Access Centers can be a good pedagogical strategy to develop students' general speaking proficiency. The research methodology adopted in this study is a descriptive one. In other words, it aims to describe two variables: Self-Access Centers as the independent variable and its role in improving learners' oral proficiency as the dependent variable. The data collection procedure was based on two questionnaires delivered to both Master I LMD students and teachers at the English department, University 8 mai 1945 Guelma. The aim of these questionnaires was to collect information about the effect of Self-Access Centers on developing students' speaking proficiency. The results obtained from the present research paper confirmed the hypothesis in that students need to be provided with an adequate strategy to develop the speaking skill. The more students have access to technological tools (SACS) the more their level of oral performance will develop. The analysis of the questionnaires showed that both students and teachers consider Self-Access Centers as an important pedagogical strategy in enhancing the EFL learners' speaking proficiency. This study has certainly some limitations; however, its findings revealed interesting implications and recommendations. Thus, future research has to be done experimentally to test out the applicability of the findings to a larger population of subjects.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SACs: Self-Access Centers

CALL: Computer -assisted language learning

SALL: Self-Access Language Learning

SAL: Self-Access Language

EFL: English as foreign language

CDs: Compact disc

ICTs: Information Communication Technologies

CRAPEL: Center de Recherche, Application Pédagogique et langue/ The Center for Research and Pedagogical Applications of Languages

CERCLES: European Confederation of Language Centers in Higher Education

VCRs: Video Cassette Recorders

DVD: digital versatile disc" or "digital video disc"

SL/FL: Second language/ Foreign language

Q: Question

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General Introduction

Over the last century, with the increasing technological development and the growing popularity of e-learning all over the world, the field of teaching and learning witnessed a huge change and shift on how higher education should be delivered. The integration of internet and computer made change in the form of new methodologies, approaches and organizational structures adopted in teaching mainly foreign languages in general and English in particular.

As a result, speaking proficiency becomes one of the most important issues in teaching and learning foreign languages, especially English; that has received a huge interest recently as it requires developing how to produce and practice the target language effectively through mainly listening to authentic forms or sources of the target language (have direct interactions with native speakers).

Nevertheless, foreign language learners face the problem of correct pronunciation because of the lack of grammar needed to produce the target language on the one hand, and the problem of lack of access to technological and authentic materials on the other hand. In fact, theoretical knowledge alone does not help to achieve good oral (speaking) proficiency. Furthermore, understanding the language alone is not enough to produce and practice it effectively. This is generally due to many other phonological aspects, as intonation, stress and pronunciation, needed for fluency rather than aspects of accuracy only. Therefore, providing learners with equipped centers and authentic materials is of a great importance to enhance their level of oral proficiency. According to Vygotsky, Krashen and many other authors, language is best acquired by social interaction or by meaningful input and negotiation (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). So, technology as a tool can serve this goal by providing authentic technological materials and easy access to different networks and sources.

The concept of Self-Access Centers (SACs) starts to play a significant role in the process of foreign language learning. In fact, the considerable interest in the role of SACs in the context of learning became an important factor for the researchers of this field, because they believe that SACs create opportunities for learners to develop target language knowledge and skills. And since speaking proficiency is the most desirable skill to be mastered by the vast majority of SL/EFL learners it has received a great interest as a major area that can be developed by SACs.

Consequently, the use of Self-Access Centers (SACs) in educational settings plays an important role in encouraging learners to acquire the target language easily and correctly. They help learners to have access to authentic materials such as: videos, audio-tapes, songs and lectures which enhance their pronunciation and level of fluency. They also aid learners to overcome their difficulties by providing up-dated information and knowledge in addition to on line lessons. Self-Access Centers encourage learners to become autonomous and self-dependent.

1. Statement of the problem

Master I students of English Department at Guelma University are not good in their speaking performances; the fact that affects their performance and academic achievements as well. They lack grammatical knowledge, correct pronunciation and linguistic background needed to produce correct spoken language. As a result, they most of the time hesitate to participate or be involved in classroom debates and interactions; which leads to teacher domination of classroom discourse. Another major factor that contributes to such low level of students speaking proficiency is the syllabi taught and the way they are taught via which are too theoretical and traditional. That is to say, students receive knowledge via handouts or just taking notes and even if there are some oral presentations from students' part but they do it

just as a must not because they enjoy it. Moreover, students heavily rely on their teachers concerning the way they learn or practice language; which makes their learning a teacher-dependent or class determined process. However, they have to be autonomous, self-reliant, self-determine their needs, wants and lacks and up to date with other forms of learning far from the classroom. Enhancing speaking proficiency requires using technological authentic materials as having access to Self- Access Centers.

2. Aims of the study

The present study aims to investigate the effect of Self-Access Centers on developing students' speaking proficiency. It seeks also to describe and analyze their usefulness and effectiveness from students' perspective. Our research then aims to know how Self-Access Centers can help students enhance their pronunciation quality, oral skills development and make them autonomous and self-dependent learners.

3. Research questions

The present research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How can Self- Access Centers develop students' speaking proficiency?

2. - Could Self- Access Centers develop learners' speaking proficiency and increase their learning autonomy and self-reliance?

3. Could access centers' provision be a best solution for overcoming students' speaking difficulties?

4. Research Hypothesis

Our study is supposed to test the following hypothesis:

If Master I students are provided with an access to technological authentic materials; as Self-Access Centers, then their level of proficiency will develop.

Having an opportunity to Self-Access Centers may increase Master I students' autonomy and self-dependence.

5. The research methodology and design

5.1. Research Method

To test the research hypotheses, we have relied on the descriptive statistical method. Our objective is to explore and investigate the efficacy of using Self-Access Centers on developing students' speaking proficiency, autonomy.

5.2. Population of the Study

The sample is randomly chosen from Master I students of English department population at University 8 mai 1945–Guelma. The population of the study consists of 67 first year Master students. We have chosen to work with Master I students because they are supposed to have a high level of speaking proficiency.

5.3. Data Gathering Tools

The research tools used for data collection are two questionnaires that are given to both students and teachers of English department at Guelma University. They are analyzed and their results described and discussed using the descriptive statistical method. We have, in fact, selected questionnaires as a research tool because of the difficulty of using others like

observations, interviews or tests; mainly because of some obstacles such as time limitation, lack of appropriate settings, lack of access centers and lack of other materials.

The students' questionnaire aims at investigating what impact Self-Access Centers (SACs) have on our sample students' speaking proficiency. Whereas, the teachers' questionnaire aims at investigating teachers' perceptions, perspectives and attitudes towards the Self-Access Centers and their availability for students.

6. The Structure of the Dissertation

The present research study has been divided into two main parts; a theoretical and a practical one. The theoretical part contains two chapters which state the literature review relevant to the research subject. Chapter one was devoted to a literature review of Access Centers and their importance in developing speaking proficiency in EFL learning and teaching process. Chapter two had discussed the literature review of the speaking skill including: its nature, strategies, and ways of teaching, the speaking proficiency concept, and learning difficulties.

Chapter three is the field investigation and practical part of the study; that aims at analyzing the questionnaires (teachers' and students' questionnaires) and discussing their results. General conclusions were drawn from questionnaires' analyses; in addition, to some pedagogical implications, recommendations, further suggestions for future research works and research limitations.

Chapter One:

Self-Access Centers (SACs) and Technology-Based Learning

Introduction

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Introduction

Over the last years, there has been a significant shift in language teaching from traditional teacher-centered instructional approaches towards student-centered ones. As a result, the process of EFL has witnessed a serious need for adopting different approaches and methods to achieve effective learning outcomes. For instance, the use of different and new technologies such as: internet, computer, authentic materials, etc. which can contribute in developing learner's skills and in enhancing strategies of the target language, has received scholars' greatest attention and interest.

In this chapter, the first part will shed light on some key notions about internet, computer - assisted language learning (CALL), use of technology in language learning and the focus will be on Self-Access Centers; we will deal with the origin and development of Self-Access Centers, types of materials, rational for the use of SAC, and its importance and role**.**

1.1. Integration of technology in English language learning

Today, technology plays an important role both in our lives and in the world. It is included in all fields: economy, agriculture, politics and education especially.

Pastor (2007) said that technology is in our lives and teachers should use it as a tool to motivate students in learning a second language. For instance, chats, scanning texts, games, filling formats, etc. can be activities to fulfill learning.

1.1.1. Internet

The internet alternatively referred to as the **Net** or **Web,** it is the world's largest network. The large system of connected computers around the world that allow people to share information and communicate with each other.

The Internet is a source of authentic material, publication of material and an instrument for intercultural communication (Linder, 2004).

Hill and Slater (1998) point out that there are different approaches about the advantages of networks, particularly the Internet, for teaching and learning a second language.

The following are the most important benefits of using the Internet.

- Enhancing the study of language by using remote access to resources either authentic or written on purpose;

- World Wide Web helps this access. Some web resources are limited by page turning functionality and some give students chance to complete exercises and get feedback;

- The Internet provides chance for communication. For example, asynchronous communication (e-mail, newsgroups and computer conferencing) and synchronous communication (chat, internet telephony and video conferencing).

1.1.2. Computer- assisted language learning

According to Yuan (2007), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) represents a side of e-learning where computer technology is used in the context of language learning (p.416). The (CALL) is widely used to refer to the area of technology and second language teaching and learning (Chappelle, 2001, p. 3).

According to levy (1997, p. 1) Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) can be defined as the study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning.

Here, one can notice that CALL is considered as an alternative way of e-learning, where technology is a link which facilitates learning for learners. Computers are very crucial in terms of:

- First, helping learners to be creative and think critically in their research process;

- Second, offering active and stable learning for students' knowledge;

- Third, computers are the basic technological tools in teaching and learning through technology;

- Fourth, Computer-based instruction and computer programs provide facilities and support students' educational lives;

- Finally, Computer-based learning has an impact on education by affecting students' productivity. (İşman, Çağlar, Dabaj, Altınay, & Altınay, 2003).

Computers in the process of learning have an important effect, they help students to get extra information and work alone at their own pace to enrich their knowledge. Learners who rely on using computers in their learning will enhance their communicative competence.

1.1.3. Technology use in Learning English

"….Technology is not a panacea or a magic bullet that suddenly transforms all learning. The effectiveness of educational technology depends on how it is employed to meet educational goals for particular kinds of students in specific language learning environments…." (Oxford and others, 1998.p, 13). Rosow (2001) asserts that computers, CDs and the Internet provide opportunities in language development. Baylora and Ritchie (2002) stated that the integration of technology into a course to determine its success is very crucial; this depends on the way teacher incorporated technology into instruction.

Waycott, Bennett, Kennedy, Dalgarno and Gray (2010) said:

"Students identified the following key benefits of using technologies to

support their studies: communication benefits, convenience, gaining

access to information resources, distance education benefits, and

providing opportunities to review and revise learning materials. For

staff, the benefits of using ICTs in higher education were: enhancing

communication ,presenting or lecturing benefits, flexibility (for students),

immediacy of information access, giving students convenient access

resources, fostering student engagement, providing benefits for

international students, assisting to prepare for practical placement and classes,

providing benefits for distance students, and enabling students to review

lectures. (p. 1205).

Technology has many benefits according to the field in which it is used for, especially for

learners by developing their communicative competence, language learning abilities and

giving access to wide range of information.

Based on a research which was conducted in Northwest University in China in 2007, the

use of modern information technology increases students' language learning abilities

especially their listening and speaking skills. In addition, students became autonomous. Zheng

and Wang (2009) stated that the use of technology in learning develops oral skills by listening

to native speakers through using audio- video tapes, listening to songs and watching movies.

1.2. Origin and development of SACs

In the early 1970s, SACs evolved as a practical pattern from behaviorist to constructivist and humanist approaches to learning. To encourage learners to became responsible for their own learning process, they provide an environment where the focus is only and mainly on the individual learner. Teachers play the role of facilitators and supporters of their learners during the learning process (Lamb &Reinders, 2006).

According to a research (2008) made by Maria Del Rocío Dominguez Gaona, the emergence of Self-Access Centers was on late 1960's and early 1970's as a result of languages laboratories evolution; that consisted on a console which controlled the students' cabins; consequently, the audio-lingual method was the dominant methodology in learning the second language. In this respect, these laboratories did not meet the goals expected and considered as "libraries" which paved the way for Self-Access Center based on Communicative approach (Gremmo and Riley, 1995, p.156).

In fact, there are other factors which have contributed to the appearance of these Self-Access Centers; as the need to increase the range of language courses, English mainly, to give an answer to different kinds of needs and proposes (Benson and Voller, 1997). In addition to the development of technology which is considered the activator of the emergence of SACs; in terms of supporting language learning and promoting learning autonomy. (Gremmo and Riley, 1995).

In 1974, the first of SACs emerged in France: Center de Recherche, Application Pédagogique ET langue (CRAPEL) (The Center for Research and Pedagogical Applications of Languages. Trans) of Nancy´s University by The European Counselor as an experiment to the development of self-learning in language learners. The fact that, one major contributor to

the spread of SACs all over the world was the Council of Europe's work, which was set up in the 1960's as CRAPEL.

Morrison (2008) indicated that Sheerin (1991) and Benson (2002) trace the origins of self-access language learning in The University of Cambridge (1982) and CRAPEL (1985) developed learning resource centers. From these learning resource centers, modern-day self-access centers (SACs) developed. The growing acceptance of the self-access approach particularly in Europe, South America and South-East Asia has increased the number of SACs (Morrison, 2008).

The European Confederation of Language Centers in Higher Education (CercleS) was created in 1991 due to the spread of SACs in Europe. It is a pan-European professional organization that brings together national associations of SACs to promote research on SACs through annual conferences and publications. By 2000, 250 language centers in 22 countries were represented by the national associations that are members of CercleS.

1.2.1. Best examples of SACs

In Britain, the Language Centre at the University of Cambridge is considered as the largest and most active of SACs. It provides a wide range of services and facilities to students and staff. The Language Centre at Oxford University is similar to that of Cambridge in terms of function but the major difference is that the Oxford Language Centre focuses on CALL. In Germany, the most important SAC is at the University of Münster. An example of SACs at a North American university is the Language Resource Center at Harvard University. The Language Resource Center at Columbia University is similar to that at Harvard. In Asia, especially South Korea the largest and most active SACs are at City University of Hong Kong.

1.3. Definitions of SACs

A Self-Access Center (SAC) is a facility which "consists of a number of resources (in the form of materials, activities and support), usually located in one place, and is designed to accommodate learners of different levels, goals, styles and interests" (Cotterall & Reinders, 2001, p. 2).Grander and Miller (1999) define SACs as a language learning system which involves diverse elements such as:

a) Resources: materials, activities, technology, people (assessors, administrators, other students).

b) Administration, which permits coordination and planning on the center work.

c) A control and support system for students.

d) Capacitating for the user and staff.

e) Tutors.

f) Self-evaluation.

g) Learning feedback.

h) Center evaluation.

i) Development and adaptation of self-learning materials.

Holec (1979, p.3) defined it as:" the ability of every single student to learn by him/herself. And it will be acquired on a systematic and conscious way".

It is "when the student determines the moment, the space and the rhythm and he will have to carry out his/her formal studies on any subject or topic" (Garcia Rocha, 2005.p.3). Here, students are responsible of their own learning and the development of learning strategies.

In Sturtridge's words (1992), the term Self-Access Center refers to the "system which makes materials available to language learners so that they can choose to work as they wish, usually without a teacher or with very limited teacher support" (p. 4). Here, the main focus of the center is to provide appropriate materials for learners to facilitate their process of learning.

Several authors like (Sheerin, 1989; Booton & Benson, 1996; McCafferty, n.d.; Dickinson, 1993) speak about self-access centers in a similar way. They define them as the area in which especially designed, adapted or processed materials can be used by learners in such a way that they can direct and assess their own learning with or without help.

Generally speaking, the term self-access refers to the organization of learning materials and equipment made available and accessible to students without necessarily having a teacher present.

1.4. Composition of SAC:

As physical environment, it contains four rooms:

❖ Silent study room, where students can check out the pop-quizzes and mid-terms of previous years administered to students studying at different levels. These exams are also available online. In addition, students can benefit from the practice boxes to develop their grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing skills. For reference, they can use the help box or the reference books available in the room.

❖ In the Silent Reading Room, the materials are organized and classified in a way that facilitates individual choice. To make self-evaluation possible, all the study materials are available with answer keys.

❖ The Reading Room offers a variety of books and magazines, which students can borrow. Here, they can also watch television in a cozy atmosphere.

❖ The Audio-Video Room, it is next door to the reading room which aims to enhance the learner's listening skill by watching popular films. Students can also listen to popular songs while doing related exercises. Another activity they can do, to develop their listening skills, is to work on the listening sections of the previous mid-terms and pop-quizzes recorded on CDs. Moreover, a number of interactive listening exercises can be found online.

❖ The Computer Room which makes students able to access the web easily.

These centers are provided by English language instructors at all times to help students identify their needs and choose study materials accordingly.

1.5. Characteristics of SACs

Reinders & Lázaro (2006) summarize some of the characteristics of self-access centers as follows:

1) Use of self-access centers is mostly voluntary.

2) Learners determine what they learn, how and when.

3) There is little or no formal assessment.

4) Staffs available and through advice, selection of materials and activities encourage reflection and autonomous learning skills among the students. Self-access is thus highly flexible (learners play the central role in establishing their own curriculum) and highly fluid (learners may or may not come back or come regularly to study).

1.6. The Difference between the notions: Self-Access Language Learning (SALL), Self-instruction and Self-directed Learning

1.6.1- Self-Access Language Learning (SALL)

The term self-access language learning (SALL) stands for the kind of learning that takes place precisely in a SAC. It involves the development of learner autonomy, and satisfies the goals for learners with different needs. Sheerin (1989) says that "the essential prerequisite to self-access learning is the provision of self-access materials within an organized framework so that Students can get what they need" (p. 7). The good arrangement of materials makes the learning easier and faster.

SALL raises controversy in two aspects: the cost-efficiency and the development of autonomy. Concerning the former, it is seen by many authors like (Aston, 1993) as cost-saving proposition, which eventually could replace direct teaching. Whereas others like Gardner and Miller (1997) think that:

"implementing SALL should not be seen as a cheap alternative

to teaching. It should be seen as a useful complement to teaching

which enhances language-learning opportunities and provides

learners with the independent learning skills to continue learning

languages after they have finished formal studies. In this light it

may be judged to be relatively cost efficient". (p. 32)

Concerning the latter, the aim of this mode of learning is to promote learners' autonomy but does not necessarily occur. Students are working independently in a SAC but still following what their teachers asked them to do (Reinders, 2000).That is to say, "a self-access center could be used as a teacher-directed source of individualized homework activities, but this would in no way constitute self-directed learning" (Sheerin, 1994,p. 144).

There are many positive positions, perspectives and benefits towards SALL. Self-access learning is the practical solution to many language teaching problems: mixed-ability classes, students with different backgrounds and needs, psychological and personality differences between students, etc. (Sheerin, 1989, p. 7).

1.6.2- Self-Instruction

In the Broad sense, Dickinson (1987) defined self-instruction as "neutral term which refers to a situation in which a learner, with others, or alone, is working without direct control of a teacher" (p. 5).

In the narrow sense: It is "a deliberate long-term Learning Project instigated, planned and carried out by the learner alone, without teacher intervention"(Jones, 1998; cf. Benson, 2001, p. 131). Here, it is the learner decision to take responsibility of his own learning and the way to reach the decision planned right from the beginning.

According to (Hughes, 1997,pp. 144-170) Self-instruction involves a person telling him or herself to do something and then doing it.

It has some advantages to traditional instruction. It focuses upon giving the consumer responsibility for instruction rather than relying upon a teacher or facilitator. By using "self-talk" or stating the instruction out loud, responsibility for the instruction moves from the facilitator to the consumer (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998).

It is an easy procedure to develop, learn, and use. Further, self-instruction can be practiced inside and outside of a classroom or training room. Finally, it allows a consumer to self-direct his or her life in settings where instructional support is not available, such as on the bus, at work, or with friends (Hughes, 1997).

Self-instruction is a self-management strategy that contributes to an individual's self-determination skills (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998).

In general, Self-instruction can be defined as the ability of one to cognitively plan, organize, direct, reinforce, and evaluate one's own independent learning without a teacher's prompting.

1.6.3- Self-directed

"Self-directed learning is an attitude because it deals more with a personal decision where learners take responsibility for all decisions about their learning process although this does not mean total application of those decisions". (Dickinson, 1987, p. 12).

Benson (1996) summarized this by saying that if the autonomy is the aim, then self-direction is a means to this end, and self-access is an environment within which it can be achieved. In similar way of thinking, Nunan and Lamb (1996) suggest that, at the end of the day, it is the learner and only the learner who has to do the learning, and that every kind of educational act should lead learners towards self-directed learning.

Dickinson (1987) comments, that not all people are naturally self-directed but only a very few of them and that many learners who turn to self-instruction do it by their desire and not because they are asked to do so. He suggests that: "it is not desirable to thrust self-instruction and self-directed learning on to learners who are resistant to it and it is very important (...) not

to confuse the idea or our enthusiasm to introduce it, with the learner's ability or willingness to undertake it". (p. 2)

Learners who are autonomous tend to be self-directed and SACs provide opportunity for them to develop their level of learning without teacher control.

1.7. Self-Access Centers (SACs): the best way for the rational use

For Little (1989) the rationale for the use of Self-Access Centers (SACs) is as follows:"If successful language learning depends on interaction with a large and varied diet of textual materials and the development within the learner of a capacity to take decisive initiatives; then, we must provide the learner with resources that he or she can draw on as an individual. According to this view, all language learning turns out to have a self-instructional component and the self-access system is seen not as an alternative to the teacher but as a necessary resource for all language learners''. (p. 32)

Self-Access Centers (SACs) can give learners the opportunity to learn by themselves and to make their own decisions about their learning. Crabbe (1993) said that "autonomous learning needs to become a reference point for all classroom procedures" (p.144). Gardner and Miller (1999) also discussed the notion of the Self-Access Center (SAC) acting as a bridge to the outside, unstructured environment in native speaker environments.

Aston (1996) based his view about institutions to have a Self-access Center (SAC) on economic reasons because he proposed that language learning offered by these centers is cheap and that these centers function as substitution for direct teaching operations. Additionally, McCafferty (1982 as cited in Dickinson, 1987) described Self-access Centre (SAC) as a place that offers access to materials, activities and help.

SAC also consists of a number of resources (in the form of materials, activities and help), usually in one place, that accommodates learners of different levels, styles, and with different goals and interests. It aims at developing learner autonomy among its users (Reinders, 2000).

The causes and goals each institution has for having a SAC is vital in that it affects the type of learning that takes place in them. Different factors together result in very different learning contexts; and thus different roles for teachers and learners (Little 1995, Cotterall 1998).

1.8. Types of SACs:

According to (Sturtridge, 1992.p. 4) asserted that the establishment of a SAC depends basically on, "the beliefs about learning which are held by those who set up the system". To clarify, the ideologies underlying the system within which it is set. These ideologies determine the role that the SAC will play. According to Booton and Benson (1996) the Self-Access Center may function as an instruction center; as a practice center; as a skill center or as a learning center. These types had similar goals of fostering autonomy and skills of self-directed learning.

They are agreed by (Sturtridge, 1992 and Faizahet.al., 1998) as follows:

1.8.1. Instruction Center

Acting as a surrogate teacher or a supplement to taught classes. It includes as the name indicated equipment, materials and works available to the learner. This type of center provides an effective teaching role by offering accurate and useful courses for higher number of students. It makes students faster and frees them from following the same method and speed of their colleagues. Tests are used as a way to test students' level of proficiency to see to what extent they had progressed.

1.8.2. Practice Center

It is an extension of what is covered in class. It is closely related to the institution's teaching program. It offers to the learners the opportunity to focus on their lacks and skill area they are weak in and provide sufficient practice which the class works are not providing. It supplies the learner with needed vocabulary, provides him with a recognizable plan and gives sense of direction and security.

1.8.3. Skill Center:

It is characterized by its focus on one language skill only, the most known is listening; which meets an identified need for improvement. It provides learners with practice which increases the class discussion and provides effective feedback. This type is more preferable than a more general self-Access center because it is useful to maintain a well-organized program.

1.8.4. Learning Center:

It allows learners to extend their language knowledge through practices, consolidations and tests of what has been learned in class. It includes exercises and tests for motivated learners which aim to do hard tasks. It is designed for those learners who want to work alone and on their own pace.

These centers are aiming to develop and improve the learner's learning opportunities, whatever its role within the institution, all human resources (staff) should be aware of its nature and the management of the institution should have clear idea of this role.

1.9. Materials of SAC

The first thing that can come to our mind when we think of self-access resources, is the immediate consideration of the technology utilized; for example, the hardware, the computers, the video and sound equipment (TV sets, VCRs, DVD players, tape recorders, CD players) (Moore, 1992).

Sheerin (1997) stated that Self-Access materials that are well-organized and suitable contribute to facilitate and promote self-directed learning. She emphasized that the goal of SAC is to offer the materials which foster learner independence rather than teacher-directed materials.

Dickson (1987) suggests that self -access materials should consist of:

- ❖ A statement of objectives.

- ❖ Meaningful language input.

- ❖ Practice material.

- ❖ Flexibility.

- ❖ Instructions and advice for learning.

- ❖ Feedback, tests, and advice about progression.

- ❖ Advice about record keeping.

- ❖ Reference materials.

- ❖ Indexing.

- ❖ Motivational factors (as cited in Reinders and Lewis, 2006, p. 273).

The creation of a database system with indexes related to many fields allow students to search for materials according to a category such as level, topic etc. and see what materials are available (Barnett & Jordan,1991).

To illustrate, a study conducted at the self-access center at Brigham Young University suggested that, the students use SAC resources more autonomously as a result of having a web-based database (McMurry, Tanner, & Anderson, 2009). These studies suggest the importance for every self-access center to be careful about the creation, collection and organization of materials.

1.10. Types of materials

There are two main sources of Self-access materials: published materials and in-house materials (produced by teachers and material developers). (Dickinson, 1991; Gardner & Miller, 1999; Littlejohn, 1997; Sheerin, 1989)

Figure 01: In-house materials

The in-house self-access materials are important because commercially published materials lack guidance and clarity required for self-directed learning and contain themes that are culturally familiar to learners (Lin &Brown, 1994).

Gardner and Miller (1999) stressed on the effectiveness of produced materials as educational resources due to the fact that they target variety of learners with specific learning goals and different learning styles in spite of some concerns related to their quality (e.g., accuracy).

In addition to these two resources, little (1997) shed light also on authentic materials both written or spoken forms and their efficacy on developing learner's autonomy. According to him, self-access centers should provide a wide range of authentic texts such as magazines, brochures because these materials help learners gain confidence in the target language and support the development of techniques for language learning. The other important resource for producing self-access materials is SAC learners. Gardner and Miller (1999) argued that the active involvement of the students in the development of SAC materials resulted in promoting their autonomy as they feel commitment by taking the responsibility of their own learning.

In a related study conducted at Bahrain at the Arabian Gulf University, Malcolm (2004) reported that as a part of a self-directed learning program, students were made to contribute to the SAC in the development of language learning work sheets. Initially, the aim was to increase their investment in making that place serving their particular language needs through their efforts. As a result of the students' involvement in that process, the student-created materials were valued by most students (72%), who found the project helpful in improving their English.

1.11. Important Elements of SACs

Holec (1985) listed three requirements for self-access centers: an infrastructure of appropriate materials and resources, teachers trained in providing support, and effective means of informing potential users about the system (as cited in Aston, 1993).

Sturtridge (1997) also tackled the factors affecting the success of a self-access center: the management of innovation, the provision of a suitable location, the training and development of the staff and students and the use of the cultural strengths of learners and suitable materials.

1.11.1. Materials:

The success or failure of a self-Access center depends on the quality and the quantity of the materials offered by the center .(Sheerin, 1989, p. 24) "indicated that those materials should have clearly stated aims, clarity of rubric, attractive presentation, worthwhile activities, choice of presentation and feedback".

Dickinson (1991) suggested a more detailed list about the characteristics of good self-access materials. Specifically, they should include:" a clear statement of objectives, meaningful language input, exercise materials and activities, flexibility of materials, learning instructions, language learning advice, feedback and tests, advice about record keeping, reference material, indexing, motivational factors and advice about progression" (p. 80)

1.11.2. Counseling system/ training:

Self-access centers need to train learners as a step that promotes learner autonomy. This training is typically provided through a counseling system or by teachers in traditional classrooms (Aston, 1993). The SAC member or trainer is referred to as advisor, helper and consultant. Those terms have been used to describe the teachers' role in self-directed language environment or programs involving self-access systems (Voller, 1997). Furthermore, there are some qualifications and characteristics that teachers should have in order to be a counselor. Among them is the need to be equipped with macro and micro strategies. Macro strategies involve initiating, goal-setting, guiding, modeling, supporting, giving feedback, evaluating and linking (Gardner and Miller, 1999, p. 183).

Dickinson (1991) stressed the role of needs analysis and the importance of the identification and analysis of the learner's needs to direct them towards self-instruction. Through the process of needs analysis, the counselor will collect information about learners, will evaluate their problems and then will overcome them.

As an example, Victori (2007) in her article discussed an effective counseling program provided to learners for one or more semesters to enhance self-directed learning. The program involved both one-to-one sessions with the counselor and group sessions of the students to talk on their concerns and find solutions to each other problems. The counseling system was appreciated by the students and found to be helpful in achieving their learning goals for most of them.

1.11.3. Innovation and technology

Learners begun to use technology-based language learning as tools after the adaptation of computers in language learning, especially computer-Assisted language learning (CALL), to improve their English skills. CALL contributed to develop learners' autonomy as shown by the research made on the relationship of CALL and autonomy indicated that CALL has potential to contribute to the development of many aspects of learner autonomy (e.g., Blin, 2004). Today, in most of self-access centers, technology plays an important role in supporting learners by providing access to language sources in a variety of forms.

1.12. The importance of Self-Access Centers

The fundamental function of self-access centers is to help learners study independently with many resources in order to develop English skills. The most significant advantage is that, it appeals to every single learner with different learning styles and learning goals. Jones (1995) drew attention to this function of SAC saying that:" the self-access center, after all, is

dedicated to recognizing the differences and fulfilling the needs of learners as individuals, who for their part, and with encouragement from teachers, are expected to take steps towards assuming active responsibility for their own language study". (p. 228-229)

As an advantage, SACs contribute to develop learners oral performance and satisfying their needs by taking into consideration their individual differences and providing the materials needed where the learners can work alone at their pace.

Sheerin (1989) focused on the individual differences of each learner which should be taken into consideration by educators such as: personality, study habits, motivation and psychological differences.

Despite the fact that classroom-based courses follow linear syllabuses, they are unable to satisfy learners' needs and interests. Moreover, self-access facilities involved those differences and pay attention to their needs by offering ways to escape from binding syllabus (Barnett & Jordan, 1994).

Jones (1995) also stated that self-access centers work as a practical means in the development of learner autonomy. In these centers, materials are organized in such a way that students can access them easily and quickly without the control of the teacher (Littlejohn, 1985); which indicates that the learner is independent and relies on himself rather than on the teacher.

In addition, the counseling system of the center helps learners to master learning strategies by training, supporting and directing them towards individualized learning (Benson, 2001; Gardner& Miller, 1999; Sheerin, 1997). Chaix and O'Neil (1978) described individualized learning/instruction as a learning process in which goals, content, methodology and pacing are adapted according to a particular learner's characteristics (as cited in Nunan & Lamb, 2003).

Another advantage is that self-access centers provide a wider and more flexible range of opportunities for language use compared to traditional classrooms (Aston, 1993).In the late 1990's, Gardner and Miller (1999) mentioned that the widely dominated activities in these centers were workshops, English clubs, television viewing and native-speaker contacts.

1.13. The Role of SACs

In their 1997 article, Kell and Newton discussed the roles of self-Access system that needed to be considered in the designing and planning of a self-Access center. They suggested useful potential roles of SACs for schools and organizations to be able to cope with divergent needs and attitudes. The following are the most important functions the centers offer for learners:

- First, the center works as a stepping stone to help learners work independently; because there was a shift from teacher- centered learning to learner-centered learning.

- Second, it works as a sample. The center offers a variety of both teaching and learning materials for learners who are not familiar with these materials;

- Also, it plays a role of motivator or coaxer. It is a facilitator to learners who do not rely on a learning center without a teacher and makes them progress;

- Third, it works as a release/ escape/boost. Here, it helps learners to extend their knowledge by providing extra practice;

- Forth, for the lost learners, it operates as a map;

- As a last function, the self-access center is a counselor to make students familiar with the materials for their proficiency level and needs as well as learning strategies (Kell & Newton, 1997);

In order to investigate the roles of a self-access center in the tertiary language learning process in Hong Kong, Morrison (2008) conducted a study. The chosen sample was composed of 16 participants including SAC staff members and users. He used interviews to collect data. According to the study results, he identified four main roles of the center:

1. Combining language learning and independent learning;

2. Helping the learner to develop both linguistic proficiency and independent learning skills;

3. Offering the necessary resources;

4. Providing learner support;

Faizah et al. (1998), in their report on the effectiveness of SAC materials, asserted that a SAC is a resource center for autonomous learners, and a center that offers learning materials which complement a language course.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview regarding the use of technology in language learning and Self-Access Centers as a mean to develop students' speaking proficiency. The learner is allowed to be developed rapidly through the different types of SACs and materials provided by them. The use of technology makes students' learning easier and faster. Computers and Internet are among the most popular materials used in education. In the process of learning, Technology enables students to work individually, get immediate feedback and hence increase their motivation, autonomy, and self -direction.

Chapter Two:

The Speaking Skill

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Introduction

Among the four skills, the speaking skill is the more favorable one by learners because the mastery of any foreign language depends to a great extent on the oral performance. Learning to speak, then, is very essential in language learning. The speaking ability is a communicative tool to interact with others and express ideas and thoughts. However, in EFL teaching and learning contexts, speaking students face many obstacles that prevent them from communicating and developing their communicative competence using this favorable skill.

This chapter, then, will discuss different issues related to the speaking skill; in terms of its definition, criteria of speaking proficiency, types of speaking situations, elements of speaking skill, importance and purpose of speaking skill, and many other related factors.

2.1. Definition of Speaking

"Speaking involves expressing ideas and opinions; expressing a wish or a need to do something; establishing and maintaining social relationships and friendships" (McDonough& Shaw, 2003, p.134).

Literally, to speak means to say words, to utter or to talk something about something, to have a conversation with somebody; to address somebody in words, etc. while speech means the power of the action of speaking, a manner or way of speaking. Relatively, many researchers try to clarify this concept by defining it as:

- Hedge (2000, p.261) defines speaking as "a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed." This means that, speaking is a crucial skill which deserves more attention in both first and second language because it reflects people's thoughts and personalities.

- According to Thornbury (2005, p.1) "speaking is so much a part of daily life that we take it for granted". The field of applied linguistics provided a set of descriptions for spoken language: speaking as interaction, and speaking as a social and situation-based activity.

- Speaking is the production of a speech that becomes a part of our daily activities. Brown (1994) noted: "Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information". Speaking is considered as an integral part of student's daily lives in producing and receiving speech (as cited in radji abdlekarim, 2013, p36).

- Underwood (1997, p.11) says that "speaking is a creative process; an active interaction between speaker and listener that involves thought and emotion. Speaking involves three areas of knowledge. They are mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary). It takes into consideration the social and cultural norms of both the speaker and listener. The subject and aim behind this speech and conversation."

Speaking is an essential skill requires mental and cognitive knowledge of the learner in addition to its environment conditions.

- Then Weir sheds light on the aspects of speaking that have to pay attention to them, they are content, vocabulary, grammar, performance, and fluency.

Rychman (1983, p. 91-95) mentions some requirements for making a good speech, such as speech of speaking, voice and delivery, vocabulary profanity, grammar, and self-improvement suggestions.

According to Johnson and Morrow (1981), "speaking, which is popular with the term 'oral communication', is an activity involving two or more people in which hearers and speakers have to react to what they hear and make their contributions at a speed of a high level" (p.70).

Speaking is an act that requires two or more people where they express ideas and thoughts by means of messages between them.

Finnochiaro and Brumfit (1983, p. 400) propose that speaking means "giving oral expression to thoughts, opinions and feelings in terms of talk or conversation." Speaking has many forms like discussion, chat, conversation and dialogue. Between two or more people expressing their ideas and share their heritage and cultural backgrounds and exchange values.

2.2. Speaking Proficiency

Luama (2004, p. 1) argues that "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop." This means that, speaking is the hardest skill as the speech of most target language learners is characterized by a number of errors and mistakes. In order to master it, target language learners must have some experience and practice.

Hence, speaking proficiency is not an easy task to achieve quickly and took long time and efforts to enhance and progress the learner's oral proficiency. In addition, the steps and procedure followed in the speaking skill differs from that of reading, writing and listening.

The Learning process of any foreign language requires the mastery of the four skills; that are speaking and listening (oral skills) which are expressed by language through the aural medium, and reading and writing which are expressed by language through the visual medium (written symbols). These skills are not only represented by the medium but also the activity of

the language user. Therefore, speaking and writing are called active or productive skills; whereas, listening and reading are called receptive skills.

According to Harmer (in Liao, 2009,p. 12) "one skill cannot be performed without another, it is impossible to speak in a conversation if you do not listen as well, and people seldom write without reading". For example, spoken English is different from written English but it has a good relation in the midst of listening. "The ability to listen to English effectively is very significant, because good listening is also an important step to good speaking" (Zhang, 2009, p. 201).

Speaking is then the most important language skill with the confess of both learners and researchers consider it as the corner stone of any language. For example, Bygate (2002) described it as a complex and multilevel skill. In this context, the part of complexity is explained by the fact and the truth that speakers need to use their knowledge of language and activate their ability to do this under real constraints.

Inside the classroom, speaking and listening are the most often used skills. They are also known by teachers and learners as critical for functioning in the English language context, for learners with low literacy levels (either in English or mother tongue language) or limited formal education, these two skills are essential to start with. Logically, the target goal is to speak and this happens with exposure to the language by listening and repeating (Brown, 1994).

According to Harmer (2001, p.271), "speaking is one of the important skills that should be mastered by students in order to communicate in English fluently and clearly. Speaking involves interaction with one or more participants."

This means that speaking effectively also requires a good deal of listening." Speaking is a part of our everyday life through conversation, chats, and speech. Among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) the learning and mastery of speaking skill is the most difficult task for students". (Harmer, 2001, p.271).

Richards (2008) stated that "our main interests in speaking are to explore concepts and thoughts, express or get something done, or simply being together. Speaking English fluently by students helps them to communicate easily and explore their ideas. Speaking English well also helps students to access up-to-date information in fields including science, technology and health. Good English speakers will be in a strong position to help their country's economic, social development"(p.19).

So, learning how to speak a foreign language is of great importance and it aims to make the learners good speakers and enrich their knowledge. Speaking is like a visa for the learners because if they do not speak they cannot travel or go further.

According to Bailey and Savege (in Fauziati, 2010: 15), "speaking in a second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills".

The purpose of speaking is for communication which has many functions not only interaction with other people but also media to overcome all problems faced by them. "Speaking naturally is designed to teach students how to perform certain language functions in English by presenting the social rules for language use " (Tillitt & Newton, 1985: vii).

For Bygate (1977, p.3) one of the basic problems in foreign language teaching is to prepare learners to be able to use the language. For that reason, teachers must know about their learners' goals, such as:

- owning general information about "grammar", and" vocabulary" which allows learners to use the foreign language orally ;

- also, teachers must consider the necessary needs in order for learners to learn speaking which means that the theoretical knowledge alone are not enough and necessitate practice to master the language.

To many people, speaking is no doubt the hardest skill to be understood due to cultural and social norms. To illustrate, the case of adult Japanese speakers who cannot hear the distinction between /r/ and /l/ sounds in English despite years of school education or immigration to an English speaking country (Takagi, in Alonso, 2011,p. 2).

Ur (2000, P.12) stated that:

"Of all the four skills [listening, speaking, reading and writing], speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as speakers of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing."

Here, we can confirm the importance and efficacy of speaking skill in the process of learning foreign language. Also, this is meaning that mastering speaking skill is considered as mastering all other skills. As Celce-Murcia (2001) argues that for most people "the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication."(P. 103).

2.2.1The levels of Speaking Proficiency

Speaking proficiency has four main levels of speaking namely: novice, intermediate, advance, and superior. The characteristics of each criterion for speaking are as follows:

1. Novice

It is the ability to communicate in daily situations by using simple language and previously learned words and phrases. The novice level speaker finds difficulties while communicating with those who use the language even non-native speakers.

2. Intermediate

It is concerned with using background knowledge and learned elements of language creatively in responsive or reactive way. The intermediate level speaker can tackle some community tasks and also the speaker can ask and answer the questions, speak in fragmented sentences and on topic related primarily to his or her immediate environment.

3. Advanced

This level is characterized by the ability to speak fluently and clearly. The speaker can communicate easily, describe, narrate events in the present, past, and future, and organize thoughts, when appropriate, into paragraph-like discourse. At this level, the speaker can discuss concrete and factual topics of personal and public interest in most unaccustomed to non- native speaker.

4. Superior

The superior level is characterized by the ability to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Using extended discourse, the speaker can explain details, hypothesize, on concrete and abstract topics, and support or defend opinions on controversial matters.

2.3. Speaking Competence

According to Oxford Advanced Dictionary by Hornby 1995, competence is (of person) having ability, power, authority, skill, knowledge, etc. (to do what is needed).

Whereas for Chomsky in Brumfit and Johnson (1998, p.13) competence is "the speaker-hearer's knowledge and ability that includes concepts of appropriateness and acceptability". The following variables are inevitably taken into consideration during the study of competence: attitude, motivation, and a number of socio- cultural factors. So, speaking competence is not fluent speaking but means conversation ability or conversation skill. Nolasco (1997, p.xii).

One of the most important goals of teachers is that to enable learners to use English for communication. According to many theories speaking skill can be improved by games, role play, etc. which evidence shows that speaking should happen in activities and in a group. Students have a lot of problems at their primary level they want to speak but when they go to class as they do not feel learn thing (Chastain, 1988).

Students are able to convert their thought and their speaking. Every learner could not understand none native speaker not at all. For improving second language skill, you should practice more. First students improve their general vocabulary and after that they should listen to simple sentence to complex sentences. Students should read simple story and sometimes memorize it. With listening and speaking student should be more confident (Chastain, 1988).

2.3.1. Signs (types) of Speaking Competence/ performance

Brown (2004, p. 141-142) indicating that we can judge a person as having speaking competence if he required the following aspects:

2.3.1. Imitative

Students tend to imitate native speakers by repeating a word or phrase or possibly a sentence when exposed to authentic listening materials and pronounce the same way that they heard them. "Drilling" is also important in the learning process as it gives the students the chance to listen and repeat orally some language forms.

2.3.2. Intensive

Intensive speaking surpasses imitative. The students are focusing on the words' or sentences' stress and rhythm; it can be "self-initiated" as it can be practiced in pairs.

2.3.3. Responsive

In a language class, students are often responsive by giving short answers when they are asked. As they can also respond to a very short conversation, standard greetings and small talk, simple requests and comments. Their speech might be "meaningful and authentic".

2.3.4. Interactive or Transactional (dialogue)

Transaction is "an extended form of responsive language". It takes the two forms of either transactional language which aims at exchanging specific information or interpersonal exchanges which aim at maintaining social relationships.

2.3.5. Interpersonal (dialogue)

Maintain social relationships with the transmission of facts and information. Such interpersonal dialogues might be complicated for learners because they include colloquial language, slang, or ellipses that are not easily figured out by the learners. Dialogues are to

establish or maintain social relationships, such as personal interviews or casual conversation role plays.

2.3.6. Extensive (monologue)

Students in the intermediate and advanced levels are requested to give oral reports or summaries. These are called monologues. So, they develop (monologue) oral production including speeches, oral presentations, and story-telling.

2.4. Characteristics of Speaking Performance

The main goal of teaching speaking is to communicate effectively. Learners should take advantage of their level of proficiency to reach higher degree of successful communication. Ur (1999, p.120) mentioned the characteristics of a successful speaking activity as follows:

1) Talkative Learners: learners' talk must dominate during the time devoted to the activity and not teacher talk or pauses.

2) Participation in class: all students must have equal chance during classroom discussion and should not be limited only to talk active participants

3) Motivation: motivated learners are always eager to speak and express their ideas, due to their interest in the topic; they want to give their opinions and to achieve the goal of the task.

4) Use of simple language (of an acceptable level): learners express themselves by using relevant, easily comprehensible utterances and of accurate language.

2.5. Types of Speaking Situations

According to Lingual links Library (1999), there are three kinds of speaking situations:

2.5. 1. Interactive Speaking

Interactive speaking situations conclude face to face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are exchangeably listening and speaking and we have a chance to ask for explanation, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner.

2.5. 2. Partially Speaking

It is a kind of speaking situations when giving a speech to a live audience where the convention is that the audience doesn't interrupt the speech. The speaker nevertheless can see the audience and judge from the expressions on their faces and body language whether or not he or she is being understood.

2.5. 3. Non-interactive Speaking

It happens when recording a speech for radio broadcast. Performing in a play, reciting a poem and singing.

2.6. The Elements of Speaking Skill

The mastery of speaking is a very difficult task because in order to speak clearly and fluently learners need to master all components of speaking skill. Fulcher and Davidson (2006, p.94) state that there are five components of speaking skill that can be defined as follows:

2.6.1. Pronunciation

Thornbury (2005) stated that "the lowest level of knowledge speaker draw on is the pronunciation" (p.24).

Pronunciation is essential in speaking because it allows learners to produce clearer language. Students who have good pronunciation and intonation can communicate effectively despite the fact that they have limited vocabulary and grammar. For Kline (2001, p.69), "pronunciation is the way for students to produce the utterance words clearly when they are speaking". Gilbert (2008) defined English pronunciation as "learning and practicing the specifically English way of making a speaker's thoughts easy to follow" (p.1).

Pronunciation is considered as a sign of a fluent speaker, effective communication needs good pronunciation.

Pronunciation requires many aspects that include articulation, rhythm, intonation and phrasing, and more peripherally even gesture, body language and eye contact (Fraser, 2001, p.6). Pronunciation is process that involves both physical and mental features.

Redmond and Vrchota (2007, p. 104) argue that "it is imperative that you use the correct word in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation. Pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood."

Here, pronunciation means accuracy that's to say to use the right word in the right place to reach the exact meaning.

2.6.2. Grammar

"Grammar is a systematic way of accounting for and predicting an ideal speaker's or hearer's knowledge of the language" (Purpura, 2004, p.6). To produce correct and well-formed utterances, students use a set of principles and rules in conversation both in written and oral forms. Green Baum and Nelson (2002, p.1) stated that grammar refers to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units. Thornbury (2005, p.20-21) lists the following features of spoken grammar:

Spoken grammar
- Clause is the basic unit of construction.
- Clauses are usually added (co-ordinate).
- Head+ body+ tail construction.
- Direct speech favored.
- A lot of ellipsis.
- Many question tags.
- Performance effects including: hesitation, repeats, false starts, incompletion, syntactic blends.

Table 01: Thornbury's Classification of the Spoken Grammar

Thus, it is a linguistic category, which is generally defined by the syntactic or morphological aspects, for example, using sentence structure and tenses.

2.6.3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a set of lexemes including single words, compound words and idioms (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p.580).

According to Turk (2003), vocabulary means "the appropriate diction or the most important thing in a language especially in speaking. It helps us to express our thoughts, feelings and ideas easily both in oral or written form" (87).

It is a component of language that maintains all of information about meaning. It has two forms: oral and written. The former is the set of words where the meanings are known when we speak or read orally. The latter consists of those words for which we know the meaning when we write or read silently. Therefore, it is important to make a clear cut between the two forms because the set of words that beginning readers know are mainly oral representations. As they learn to read, written vocabulary comes to play an increasingly larger role in literacy than does the oral vocabulary (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005, p.3).

2.6.4. Fluency

Fluency is the ability to speak communicatively and accurately and express oral language freely and easily without interruption. As a sign to check students' fluency in the process of teaching and learning, the teacher gives chance to students to speak and express themselves freely .The main goal is to encourage and help learners to speak fluently. In this case, the teacher's immediate correction is avoided because too much correction interferes with the flow of conversation (Pollard, 2008, p.16).

Hedge Tricia (2000, p. 54) stated that

"The term fluency relates to the production and it is normally reserved for speech. It is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness, or undue hesitation."

Thus, fluency can be said that it is the learner's oral competence of using language appropriately and accurately without any obstacles.

2.6.5. Comprehension

Comprehension is the students' understanding of conversation. According to Cohen et al. (2005, p.51), comprehension refers to the fact that participants fully understand the nature of the research project, even when procedures are complicated and entail risks.

In speaking context, it refers to the speakers' understanding about what are they saying to the listeners in order to avoid misunderstanding information. Furthermore, its function is to make the listeners easily understand and pick up the information from the speakers.

2.7. The Sub-Skills of Speaking

As a first step to prepare how to teach learners speaking, teachers need to know about learners needs. There are some sub-skills the learner has to acquire in order to know what, how, why, to whom and when to say something. The teacher's role is to monitor students' speech production to determine what skills and knowledge they already have and what areas need development. Then, the teacher provides learners with authentic practice that prepares them for real life communication.

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983: 140), state that learners have to:

a) Think of ideas they wish to express, either initiating a conversation or responding to a previous speaker.

b) Change the tongue, lips and jaw position in order to articulate the appropriate sounds;

c) Be aware of the appropriate functional expressions, as well as grammatical, lexical, and cultural features to express the idea;

d) Be sensitive to any change in the "register" or style necessitated by the person(s) to whom they are speaking and situation in which the conversation is taking place;

e) Change the direction of their thoughts on the basis of the other person's responses.

According to Brown (2001, p.272) sub-skills of oral communication include:

1. Produce chunks of language of different length.

2. Orally produce differences among the English phonemes and allophonic variants.

3. Produce English stress patterns, words in stress and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, and into national contours.

4. Produce reduced forms of words and phrases.

5. Use an adequate number of lexical units (words) in order to accomplish pragmatic purposes.

6. Produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery.

7. Monitor your own oral production and use various strategic devices- pauses, fillers, self-corrections, backtracking- to enhance the clarity of the message.

8. Use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g., tense, agreement,

And pluralization), word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.

9. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.

10. Use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

11. Accomplish appropriately communicative functions according to situations, participants, and goals.

12. Use facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey meanings.

Ur (1996: 121-122) suggests the following strategy to overcome the speaking problems: use group work, base the activity on easy language, the language should be easily recalled and produced by the participants, make a careful choice of topic and task to stimulate interest because the clearer the purpose of the discussion the more motivated participants will be, give some instruction or training in discussion skill, and keep students speaking the target language.

2.8. The Purpose of Speaking

In a foreign language, it is important to mention the purpose behind speaking because it reflects the success of foreign language learners, as argued by Nunan (1991, p.39):

"To most people, mastering the art of speaking is the single most important factor of learning a second or foreign language and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language."

The degree of success in learning any language depends on the extent to which the learner is able to use this language. To simplify, learning and knowing the target language is reflected on the ability to communicate effectively using this language.

According to Bygate (1987), the speaking skill demands special care like the other skills, for both the mother tongue and the foreign language as it requires a firm trust in one's own abilities to reach his goals. It is the skill and the means of expressing and moving the solidarity of societies, social positions; it is an excellent tool for allowing the learning of languages to take place.

In any language whether mother tongue or foreign one, speaking is the most important skill to be mastered first because it is the only means through which people can express their thoughts and understand what other people said or done. Any person must rely on his ability to develop his speaking proficiency.

Respectively, Clark and Clark (1977) argued that speaking is used as a tool by speakers who speak in order to influence their listeners, through asking questions to get information; and also, they do many activities to reach their goals.

Speaking is a mean of communication, interaction and influence. Speakers can affect each other using their oral skill.

2.9. The Importance of Speaking

In foreign language learning, speaking plays an important and significant role that is described by researchers as follows:

- Wilson (1997) claimed that children who can translate their thought and ideas into words are more likely to succeed in school. He also pointed out that the speaking skill

does not need to be taught as a separate subject, but the four skills can be smoothly integrated. When individuals learn a language, they aim to be able to speak that language.

- The primary source of learning, to the extent that minimizing the classroom talk may handicap the learners to share the processing knowledge (O` Keefe, 1995).

- It is a unique and complicated skill that enables the speaker as an information processor to transform intentions and thoughts in a fluent and articulated speech (Levelt 1989, p.1).

- It enables the speaker to take decisions regarding what to say, when and how (Bygate 1987, p.6).

- It empowers the speakers to present ideas in a democratic process since "free speech is a hallmark of democracy" (Verderber et al. 2011, p.6). Speaking is a right through which persons enjoy their social and political life.

- It comes at the forefront of communication, because it is an untrained facility which is possible for all people who can speak and use the bodily movement (Andrews, 2011, p.183).

- Speaking has been deemed also as "the most important part of an EFL course" (Knight, 1992, p.294) and the most observable among other types of participations including listening, reading, writing and also physical or body language (Tsou 2005).

Speaking is a vehicle that permits speakers to explore the cultural, social and political norms of the other nations.

- Ur (2000, p. 12) declares also that:

"Of all the four skills [listening, speaking, reading and writing],

speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know

a language are referred to as "speakers" of the language, as

if speaking included all other kinds of knowing."

Today, speaking is the most important skill and learners of foreign language give priority in their learning to speaking more than the other skills because it is the cornerstone and the basis of any language. Furthermore, the main question often given to foreign language learners is "do you speak English?" or "do you speak French?" but not "do you write English?" We understand that most of people take speaking and knowing a language as synonyms.

Celce-Murcia (2001, p. 103) argues that for most people "the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication."

Hence forth, speakers of foreign languages have more opportunities to get jobs. Baker and Westrup support that "a student who can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion." (2003, p. 05).

Nowadays, in order to get job the first condition is mastering the English language even if the candidates are specialized in fields where English is never used, this due to the fact that English is international language.

2.10. The Influence of Speaking

Baker and Westrup (2003, p.5-6) stated that speaking has a positive impact on students both educationally and professionally.

❖ Educationally, it reinforces students' grammar, vocabulary, and functional language, allows them to experiment the language in different contexts, improves their English level and provides them with the opportunity to study in an English speaking country. Speaking is also a medium to study other subjects like Math and Science and obtain success in examinations.

❖ Professionally, speaking enables learners to maintain better future careers and gain promotion, since governments and companies currently only appoint the staff who can speak English naturally and communicate efficiently.

2.11. Problems in Speaking

Brown (2001, p.270-271) suggests some causes that make speaking difficult:

1) Clustering

Fluent speech is phrasal, not word by word. Learners can organize their output both cognitively and physically (in breath groups) through such clustering.

2) Redundancy

The redundancy of language allows the speaker to make meaning clearer. Learners can benefit from this feature of spoken language.

3) Reduced Forms

Contractions, elisions, reduced vowels, etc., all these caused special problems in learning and teaching spoken English. Students who don't learn colloquial contractions can sometimes develop a stilted, bookish quality of speaking that in turn stigmatize them.

4) Performance Variables

One of the benefits of spoken language is that the process of thinking allows learners to manifest a certain number of performance hesitation, pauses, backtracking, and corrections when they speak. Learners can actually be taught how to pause and hesitate. For example, in English our 'thinking time' is not silent; we insert certain "fillers" such as ub, um, well, you know, I mean, like, etc. One of the most salient differences between native and nonnative speakers of a language is in their hesitation phenomena.

5) Colloquial Language

Learners must be familiar with the words, idioms, and phrases of colloquial language and ensure that they get practice in producing these forms.

6) Rate of Delivery

Another salient characteristic of fluency is rate of delivery. One of the main interests of teachers in teaching spoken English is to help learners achieve an acceptable speed along with other attributes of fluency.

7) Stress, Rhythm, and Intonation

This is the most important characteristic of English pronunciation. The stress-timed rhythm of spoken English and its intonation patterns convey important messages.

8) Interaction

 It is the most important factor to develop speaking, but learning to produce waves of language in a vacuum – without interlocutors– would lose speaking skill of its richest component: the creativity of conversational negotiation.

2.12. Difficulties of Speaking

Echevarria et al. (2008) support that in the learning process, knowing the difference between the knowledge of how things must be done and the ability to do these things is crucial. Foreign language Learners often find some difficulties when practicing the speaking skill, even those who know about the system of the foreign language.

Parrott (1993) asserts that teacher's role is practicing a series of tasks in order to provide learners with the confidence and the skills required for benefiting from the classroom opportunities in order to speak English effectively.

According to Ur (2000), there are four main difficulties faced by learners in speaking activities. These difficulties include inhibition, lack of theme to be spoken, low of participation, and use of mother tongue. Those difficulties can be further explained as follows

2.12.1. Inhibition

The act of speaking requires a direct exposure to an audience, unlike reading, writing and listening activities. Learners are often inhibited to participate in classroom because they worried about mistakes, fearful of criticism, or shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

Littlewood (1999, p. 93) argues that "it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety." These factors can be explained as feeling of shyness and fear of making mistakes as a result of the feeling of linguistic inferiority and low development of

communicative skills. Students fear to make mistakes especially if they will speak to critical audience.

Ur (2000:111) states that:

"Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Worried about, making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts."

This view is supported also by Bowman et al. (1989) who argue that in teaching speaking, the teacher asks students to express themselves in front of the whole class; this caused stress for them while speaking.

To conclude, both stress and anxiety are two major factors that also can stop students from speaking confidently in front of their classmates.

2.12.2. Nothing to Say or the lack of theme to be spoken

Learners face some difficulties concerning speaking and thinking about what to say; they are not motivated to speak and express their ideas. "I have nothing to talk about", "I don't know", "no comment" or they keep silent are the common expressions used by SL/FL learners when they are imposed to participate in a given topic; as a result of lack of motivation in expressing themselves or due to the chosen topic they should discuss or talk about.

Rivers (1968, p. 192) says: "The teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him [the learner]or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express, whether in the native language or the foreign language."

Here, the learners' ignorance of the topic may cause problems for them by preventing them from participating inside classroom.

Moreover, this problem can be created by the poor practice of the target language. Baker and Westrup (2003) support that many students find it difficult to answer when teachers ask them to say anything in the target language. The learners may have only some ideas to talk about; they may not know how to use some vocabulary or they are not sure of the grammatical correctness. Also, students could not carry out the discussion on topics that are not interesting for them.

2.12.3. The Low Participation

This problem is caused by the following factors:

- First, Rivers (1968) claims that some personality factors can affect participation in a FL and teachers then should recognize them. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all. However, others prefer to speak only if they ensure that the answer is correct, and others keep silent, show no interest or participation all along the course. This problem refers to the amount of each student's time of talking.

- Second, Harmer (2001) suggests streaming weak participators in groups and letting them work together. In such cases they will not hide behind the strong participators, and the teacher can achieve a high level of participation.

- Third, the classroom arrangement is another factor that can create the problem of participation. It may not help students to perform some speaking activities. Bowman et al. (1989) support this idea by saying that "traditional classroom seating arrangements often work against you in your interactive teaching." (p.40).

This can be shown through the behavior of learners who seat in the front of teacher are very active and get great attention whereas those who seat in the back are somehow ignored and not active participants.

- Fourth, Low participation is due to the ignorance of teacher's motivation too. If the teacher does not motivate his learners, the talkative ones also will show no interest. So, increasing and directing student motivation is one of the teacher's responsibilities.

2.12.4. Mother Tongue Use

According to Baker and Westrup (2003, p. 12) "barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language." In classroom, SL/FL students of the same mother tongue tend to use it outside and even inside the classroom; because firstly, it is easier. Secondly, it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language. Lastly, they feel less "exposed" if they are speaking their mother tongue. If they are talking in small groups, it can be quite difficult to keep using the target language. Therefore, learners will not be able to learn and use the foreign language correctly if they keep on using their mother tongue. The lack of vocabulary of the target language usually leads learners to borrow words from their native language.

2.13. Solutions for Speaking Difficulties

Ur (1996, p.121-122) selected some solutions to solve the problems in a speaking activity. Here are they:

1) Use group work

This activity will help learners through:

- Reducing the inhibitions of those who are unwilling to speak in front of the full class.

- Increasing the sheer amount of student talk going on in a limited period of time.

- Also learners' fear of making mistakes will disappear when they speak and feel comfortable with their colleagues.

The aim behind such activity is to make the learners able to communicate and use the language without hesitation and create an atmosphere that helps him speak spontaneously without hesitation.

2) Base the activity on easy language

In this case, the language used by the participants should be simple and easy to understand in the discussion. The level of the language needed for a discussion should be lower than that used in intensive language learning activities in the same class. So that, they can speak fluently with the minimum of hesitation.

3) Make a careful choice of topic and task to stimulate interest

The success of any discussion is mainly based on its purpose; the clearer the purpose of the discussion is the more motivated participants will be. A good topic is one which learners can discuss and develop using their own experience and knowledge. It should also reveal a genuine controversy. Some questions or suggested lines of thought can help to stimulate discussion. A task is essentially goal-oriented. At the end, the goal achieved can be manifested through as brief notes or lists, a rearrangement of jumbled items, a drawing, and a spoken summary.

4) Give some instruction or training in discussion skills

If the task is based on group discussion then include instructions about participation when introducing it. For example, each group needs to select a chairperson who will represent them.

5) Keep students speaking the target language

Teachers encourage learners to use the target language by appointing one as a monitor from the groups. His job is to remind participants to use the target language, and at the end of the discussion he may inform teachers about how well the group managed to keep it. Even if there is no actual penalty attached, the very awareness that someone is monitoring such lapses helps participants to be more careful.

Conclusion

As a productive skill, speaking is a very essential process to judge students ' level of proficiency in a foreign language. Teachers should devote much time to help students know how to speak fluently and accurately; by focusing on teaching the main aspects of speaking skill; in addition to, knowing what are the serious problems learners suffer from to help overcome them by providing adequate and effective solutions and classroom activities.

Chapter Three:

Field Investigation

Introduction

3. Research Design

3.1. Methodology

3.2. Population

3.3. The sample

3.4. Data Gathering Tools

3.5. Description and Data Analysis of Questionnaires

3.5.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

3.5.1.1. Description of the Questionnaire

3.5.1.2. Data collection and analysis

3. 5.1.3. Summary and discussion of the results of the students' questionnaire

3.5.2. Description of teachers' Questionnaire

3.5.2.1. Data collection and analysis

3.5.2.2. Summary and discussion of the results of the teachers' questionnaire

General conclusion

3.6. Pedagogical Implications Recommendations

3.7. Limitation of study

3.5. Description and Data Analysis of Questionnaires

3.5.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire, a sum of twenty one (21) questions, has been divided into four sections. The questions vary from closed ones requiring from the sample students to choose "Yes/ No" answers, or to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices, to open questions requiring from them to give full answers and provide justifications whenever required.

Section One: General Information

Question (1) to (3) were devoted to students' background information; these latter are asked to specify their gender, how many years they have been studying English and if they have freely chosen to study English. Question (4) sought students' reasons behind choosing English to study at the university level, and question (5) was about students' self- evaluation of their English mastery level.

Section Two: Speaking Skill

In Question (6), students were asked if they seek opportunities to use English, Question (7) sought their attitudes towards English-speaking community. Question (8) was about the degree of importance of speaking skill in EFL learning in comparison to the other language skills. Question (9) was designed to know their level of speaking proficiency. In question (10) students were asked to mention some speaking difficulties to that make their level average or low. In question (11), students were asked to choose the important element of speaking and question (12) they were required to specify if there are other significant elements for speaking skill development.

Section Three: Self-Access Centers (SAC)

Questions (13 & 14) were about students' opinions about Self-Access Centers as an educational facility, and their usefulness for learners. Question (15) asked for justification of their answers. Question (16) was about what students benefit or gain from Self-Access Centers.

Section Four: Effect of Self-Access Centers on Developing EFL Students' Speaking Proficiency

Question (17) was Self-Access Centers contribution in increasing students' oral proficiency, question (18) relatively sought students' justifications of (Q. 17). In question (19), students were asked if (SACs) is the best strategy to develop their EFL speaking skill and to justify their answers (Q. 20). The last question (21) was left for students' further suggestions.

3.5.1.1. Data collection and analysis:

Q1- Specify your gender:

a- Female   b- Male

Table 02

Students' Gender

Option	number	percentage%
Female	30	93.75%
Male	02	06.25%
Total	32	100%

The table above recorded two males only making up (06.25%); whereas, the rest is of a female gender (93.75%). The study sample revealed that females are dominant over males (6.25%); this may be due to the fact that, females are more interested to study foreign languages and English language particularly than males who often choose to carry on scientific studies.

Q2- Have you been studying English for?

a- More than 10 years   b- More than 5 years (less than 10)

Table 03

Students' English Study Background

Option	Subjects	percentage%
More than 10years	23	71.87%
More than 5 years	09	28.13%
(Less than 10)		
Total	32	100%

As shown in table (3), more than half of our informants (71.87%) have been studying English for more than 10 years, and only (28.13%) of them have been studying it for more than 5years (less than10). Thus, our sample students are said to have an English study background (10 years) which normally allows them to master its different linguistic systems; and be able to write and speak via it in different speech situations.

Q3- Is studying English your own choice?

a- Yes   b-No

Table 4

Students' Choice to Study English

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Yes	28	87.50%
No	04	12.50%
Total	32	100%

The majority of the sample (87.50%) affirmed that studying English at the university level was their own choice. While (12.50%) of them said that English was not their own choice. Mastering English language could be more successful if learners choose to study it by

themselves because we expect that they prefer to study it because they are talented and intrinsically motivated to study it for the reasons provided in (Q. 4).

Q4- If it was your choice, please, briefly give your reasons (i.e.; say why)?

- English is means of communication.

- International Language of the world.

- Just being interested in studying it and eagerly want to learn and develop it.

Q5- How can you judge your level in English?

     a- good   b-average   c- less than average   d- I don't know

Table 5

Students' Self-Evaluation of English Mastery Level

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Good	16	50%
Average	15	46.87%
Less than average	00	00 %
I don't know	01	03.13%
Total	32	100%

    Half of students (50%) judged their level as being good, whereas (46.87%) declared to have an average level. (03.13 %) of students said that they cannot self-evaluate their English level. Students' level is not less than average because to pass to master one, they go through selection procedures. In fact, the above results can be somehow subjective depending on how and according to what factors students' judge their English mastery. However, we can assume

that sample students' English level varies from average to good; which is a good sign that indicate their ability to speak and communicate in English with less trouble**.**

Q6- Do you seek opportunities to use English?

a - Yes, I do, I actively seek opportunities to use English.

b-When an opportunity comes up, I make use of it.

c-No, I don't.

Table 6

Students' Use of English

option	Subjects	percentage %
A	12	37.50%
B	19	59.37%
C	01	03.13%
Total	32	100%

From the above table, (59.37%) ensured that they use English when an opportunity is available; while (37.50%) of them answered yes, and confirmed that they actively seek opportunities to use English and do not just wait for them to come. Only (03.13%) stated that they don't make use of any opportunity. On the basis of these answers, we can say that students' are aware of the importance and efficacy of using English inside and outside classrooms to develop it more and more.

Q7-What is your attitude towards English-speaking community?

    a- I am interested in English-speaking community- its life-style, culture, etc.

    b- I am quite interested, but I do not know much about English-speaking-community.

c- I am not interested in English-speaking community.

Table 7:

Students' Attitudes towards English-Speaking Community

Option	Subjects	percentage%
A	23	71.87%
B	07	21.88%
C	02	06.25%
Total	32	100%

The majority of learners (71.87%) said that they are interested in English-speaking community- its life-style, culture, education, literature, etc. This indicates that learners are really interested in dealing with authentic sources of English to develop their speaking skill in particular and communicative competence in general. (21.88%) said that they are quite interested, but they do not know much about English-speaking-community; whereas (06.25%) said that they are not interested in English-speaking community at all; which may be due to the fact that, studying English was not their own choice.

Q8- How important is, in your opinion, speaking skill in learning English in comparison to other skills (Listening, Reading, and Writing)?

a- Less than 15% of importance in comparison to other skills (L, R and W).

b- About 25% of importance.

c- 50% of importance.

d- 75% of importance.

Table 8

The Importance of Speaking Skill in English learning

Option	Subjects	percentage %
A	00	00%
B	04	12.50%
C	12	37.50%
D	16	50%
Total	32	100%

As shown in table 8, (50%) of students claimed that speaking skill is very important (about 75% of importance) in learning English in comparison to other skills; whereas (37.50%) declared that speaking is about 50% of importance. Only (12.50%) said that speaking skill is about 25% of importance. In learning the four language skills, Students usually considered speaking skill as the cornerstone of any target language in comparison to other skills (Listening, Reading, and Writing); for the fact that, speaking a language is considered as a measurement for your knowledge of that language. Learners' goal is to speak more than read or write.

Q9- How is your speaking proficiency?

a- High   b- Average   c- Low

Table 9

Students' Level of Proficiency

Option	Subjects	percentage%
High	08	25%
Average	24	75%
Low	00	00%
Total	32	100%

More than half of students (75%) said that their level of speaking proficiency is average due to lack of practice, the focus on other skills in classroom and some personality factors (anxiety, stress). Whereas (25%) believed that their level of proficiency is high. Students usually considered their level as either high or average since they are EFL learners and speaking the medium of communication in the class or even in online conversations.

Q10-If average or low, what makes speaking difficult for you?

The following are reasons students presented when they were asked to explain their speaking difficulties:

- Lack of fluency and limited English use only in the classroom

- Lack of opportunities to develop speaking skill

- Lack of vocabulary and appropriate use of grammar rules and structures

- Personal reasons like: introvert learners who prefer listening even if they can speak correctly, anxiety and stress.

- Lack of practice and the focus is on reading, writing and listening rather than speaking.

- Teacher domination of classroom discourse

Q11- What is the most important element for speaking? (One option)

a- Pronunciation   b- Fluency   c-Vocabulary   d- Grammar

Table 10

Important Element of Speaking Skill

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Pronunciation	08	25%
Fluency	13	40.63%
Vocabulary	08	25%
Grammar	03	09.37%
Total	32	100%

(40.63%) of students agreed that fluency is the most important element of speaking; as most students think that a fluent student is a good speaker and then a good learner of English; whereas there is a balance in terms of importance given to both vocabulary(25%) and pronunciation (25%) because students believe that having good pronunciation necessitates background knowledge and large amount of vocabulary. Only (09.37%) of students gave importance to grammar because for them correct speech requires accurate grammatical rules.

Q12- if others, specify

The only factor mentioned is accuracy; which is again related to linguistic rules.

Q13- What can you say about Self-Access Centers as an educational facility?

Here, they were provided with the definition of SACs .The students' answers came as follow:

• It is an important system since students' depend on technological advancement without any effort from the teacher.

• Helpful and suitable for education by facilitating learning.

• (SACs) are good for our country and they provide useful opportunities for speaking.

• Helpful to improve learner-centered approach and support the role of the learner.

• They are important for learning but they are not available in our country.

• First time to hear about them, it is a good idea to study by ourselves without a teacher.

• They enhance learning and education and should be developed in our country.

Some students stressed on the role of the teacher and said that (SACs) are neither important nor useful.

Q14- Do you think that (SACs) are useful for developing learner's autonomy and self-reliance?

        Yes   No

Table 11

SACs' Role in Developing Students' Autonomy and Self-Reliance

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Yes	31	96.87%
No	01	03.13%
Total	32	100%

The overwhelming majority of our students (96.87%) stated that (SACs) are very useful for developing learners' autonomy; whereas only (03.13%) believed that they are not useful. Thus, the majority of our informants do believe in taking their own learning responsibility as advanced learners far from teacher's control; the fact that can help them to be autonomous, self-directed, critical thinkers and more able to solve problems and take risks.

Q15- Whatever your answer, please justify.

Those who said NO justified their answer by a lack of access to internet. However, those who said YES justified by providing the following:

- (SACs) are useful and help students to be self-independent

- Increase self-proficiency and promote autonomy

- Raise self-confidence

- Develop speaking skill

- facilitate learning by providing materials

Q16- What do you think students gain from Self-Access Centers?

The students' answers are the following:

- Be self-responsible and Self-assessment

- Self-confidence and self- autonomy

- Motivation and self-esteem

- Independence and control their own learning

- Mastering the language through speaking freely and fluently

- Speaking fluency

- Save time and efforts

Q17- Do you think that Self-Access Centers contribute in developing speaking proficiency?

Yes   No

Table12

SACs' Contribution in Increasing Students' Speaking Proficiency

option	Subjects	percentage%
Yes	25	78.13%
No	07	21.87%
Total	32	100%

As shown in table (12) above, the overwhelming majority of the informants (78.13%) claimed that (SACs) highly contribute in increasing learners' speaking proficiency. This indicates that students are aware of SACs' significance in developing their speaking proficiency. Therefore, students hold this view may be because they have easy access to internet and possess different technological tools (variety of materials); that provide them with an opportunity to practice the language and have extra information. Consequently, learners learn by themselves without necessary presence of a teacher. While (21.87%) claimed that (SACs) did not contribute in any way in their speaking proficiency development because they prefer teacher-dependent learning more than self-dependent; stressing on the fact that teachers' role is crucial and vital in EFL learning process.

Q18-Justify

Those who said NO justified their choice as follows:

• Students cannot develop their oral proficiency alone.

• Learners need the teacher presence and not only as guider.

Those who said YES justified their answers saying:

• Learners can communicate with native speakers

• They can develop their speaking proficiency either visually or auditory

• Easy access to internet and technological tools

• Learners learn by themselves without necessary presence of teacher

• Provide practice of the language

Q19-Do you think that (SACs) can be the best strategy to develop EFL students' speaking skill?

     Yes   No

Table13

Students' Opinion about (SACs) as a Learning Strategy for Developing EFL Speaking Proficiency

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Yes	27	84.37%
No	05	15.63%
Total	32	100%

  The majority of students (84.37%) believed that (SACs) are the best strategy to develop EFL learners' speaking proficiency/skill because (SACs) are alternatives for teachers, and to develop the speaking skill EFL learners must rely on themselves. In addition, (SACs) provide practice and exposure to the foreign or target language. These centers foster learning by using technology where students can find available and authentic materials quickly and easily. These centers are considered as free space for learning. Finally, teachers and classroom learning experiences are not enough to develop EFL speaking skill in particular and all the other skills in general. As a result, they provide a limited exposure to the target language, as a linguistic system, as well as to its culture or any authentic form that can be found in its native social context. While (15.63%) claimed that (SACs) are not the best strategy for EFL students to develop their speaking skill; stressing the importance of teachers' roles in developing speaking skill and their preferences of traditional form of learning under teacher's guidance.

Q20-Justify

Students who said NO justified their answers as follows:

• Teachers' role is important in developing speaking skill

• They prefer teacher-centered approach

Students who answered YES justify their answers as follow:

• SACs are alternatives for teachers

•To develop speaking skill, EFL learners must rely on themselves

• (SACs) provide practice and exposure to the foreign or target language

• These centers foster learning by using technology

• Students find materials available quickly and easily

• These centers considered as free space for learning

• Teachers and classroom are not enough to develop EFL skills

Q21-students' suggestions

In this last question, we have asked students to offer some suggestions about this topic; thus, here are some of them:

• Focus should be on speaking skill in relation to other skills mainly listening and how (SACs) enhance both.

• Provide each university with more advanced and new technologies of EFL teaching/ learning

• Give opportunities to learners to have access to such centers

• A serious need for establishing (SACs) in our universities

3.5.1.2. Summary and discussion of the results of the students' questionnaire

In this chapter, the students' questionnaire analysis allowed us to draw up many conclusions. First, our hypotheses have been confirmed through the positive results revealed in data analysis concerning the effect of Self-Access Centers on developing students' speaking proficiency. This means that there is a positive relationship between the use of Self-Access Centers and students' Speaking proficiency development. (SACs) are one pattern of learning which helps students in their learning of EFL speaking skill. Nowadays, these centers are spread all over the world and adopted as new ways for learning and developing speaking proficiency.

In addition, we have realized that the use of modern technological materials "computers" or equipped laboratories can be of great help if they are used for educational purposes.

According to students' questionnaire analysis, the main problem Master I English students at the University of Guelma have is their serious need for more up-dated learning equipments; especially aural materials. Moreover, students lack opportunities for self-learning because the university did not offer equipped space for them. Students suggested to have free spaces; where technological tools are provided and wish teachers to devote more time for speaking skill.

The following are some important points of the results:

1. The process of foreign language learning is not merely a process of acquiring knowledge, but one which creates situations where students interact and express their thoughts using the target language. That is to say, learning a foreign language is to speak and to communicate in that language. Relatively, students can master English language only when speaking it.

2. The majority of the students express their needs in terms of speaking proficiency more than the other skills (i.e. reading, writing, and listening) because learning how to speak will reinforce their learning of other skills.

3. Students' opinions and evaluation of Self-Access Centers, as an educational facility for developing speaking proficiency, implies their awareness, readiness and need for such a facility. They hope they will have such centers in their University.

4. All students claimed that the major benefits from these centers are self-autonomy, independence and motivation. In addition, students will rely on themselves and not on the teacher.

3.5.2. Description of teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire consists of (23) questions which were divided into two main Sections. The questions are either closed questions, requiring from the teachers to choose "yes" or "no" answers, or to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices, or open questions where teachers are requested to give explanation or suggest other alternatives.

Section One: Background Information

This section was devoted to collect background information about teachers. They were asked in (Q1) to specify their specialty, and in (Q2) the academic degree(s) they held. Teachers are also asked in (Q3) to specify their teaching experience, and in (Q4) they were asked if they have been actually teaching oral and written expressions or not.

Section Two: Self-Access Centers (SACs)

The aim of this section is to investigate teachers' knowledge of Self-Access Centers (SACs). First of all, they were asked (Q5) to describe the extent to which they are familiar with Self-Access centers. (Q6) is put to know the reasons behind teacher's unfamiliarity with Self-Access centers. (Q7) intended to show teachers' opinions about whether the establishment of SACs at the university level is important for EFL students or not. Teachers were asked to justify their opinions by choosing from the options given in (Q8). (Q9) required teachers to provide other options if they have any. (Q10) was designed to get information about what could make Self-Access Centers necessary for students. (Q11) attempted to know teachers' opinions about the benefits of SACs. In (Q12) teachers were asked to list the most useful materials in helping students improve their speaking proficiency and then justify their answers (Q13). In (Q14) was about what students can improve when having access to SACs; teachers were given options to select from them. (Q15) was about teachers' role in SACs. In (Q16) students were asked about the usefulness of having computers in the EFL learning process. In (Q17) asked teachers to choose the reasons that make SACs useful for developing English (speaking) and they also asked to mention others if possible (Q18).

Teachers were asked (Q19) if Access Centers contribute to the development of EFL students' speaking proficiency and in (Q20) they ought to justify their answers. (Q21) sought teachers' opinions about SACs as a good strategy or tool to help EFL students' improve their speaking skill in particular and whole learning in general and to justify their answers (Q22). (Q23) was devoted for teachers' further suggestions.

3.5.2.1. Data collection and analysis:

Q1: Are you specialized in?

-Literature -Linguistics   -Civilization   -Translation

Table14

Teachers' Specialty

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Literature	02	25%
Linguistics	04	50%
Civilization	02	25%
Translation	00	00%
Total	08	100%

(50%) of teachers are specialized in linguistics, (25%) are specialized in literature and (25%) are specialized in civilization. This may give us a variety of answers to our topic.

Q2: academic Degree(s) held

a-Magister

b-PHD (Doctorate)

Table15

Teachers' Academic Degree

Degree	Subjects	percentage%
Magister	08	100%
PHD	00	00%
Total	08	100%

According to the above table, all teachers have MA (magister) degree in one of the study options mentioned above (i.e., linguistics, literature, or civilization).

Q3: How long have you been teaching English?

Teachers' EFL teaching experience varies from eleven years to three years (respectively; 11-9-8-6-4-3 years). The results of (Q3) are interesting too because teachers have an acceptable experience in teaching since they have spent a significant in teaching English. Therefore, their responses will be of great importance for our research.

Q4: Have you taught and/or you are actually teaching oral and written expression modules?

Yes   No

Table16

Teachers' Teaching Experience of Oral and Written Modules

option	Subjects	percentage%
Yes	06	75%
No	02	25%
Total	08	100%

The vast majority of teachers (06 out of 08) claimed that they have been teaching oral expression and only (02) of them said that they did not teach oral expression at all. Most of teachers have been teaching oral expression and their answers will help us in confirming our hypotheses.

Q5: Describe the extent to which you are familiar with Self-Access centers.

- Unfamiliar   - Neutral   -familiar   - Very familiar

Table17

Teachers' Familiarity with SACs

Option	Subjects	percentage%
unfamiliar	02	25%
Neutral	03	37.50%
familiar	03	37.50%
very familiar	00	00%
Total	08	100%

(37.50%) of the teachers considered themselves as neutral; however, (37.50%) of them stated that they are familiar with Self-Access Centers; as they are specialized in linguistics. (25%) claimed that they are unfamiliar with Self-Access Centers. Teachers' neutrality and unfamiliarity with SACs may be due to their technophobia or preferences of classical teaching/learning methods.

Q6: According to you, Teacher's unfamiliarity with Self-Access centers is due to:

a- Non a existence of SACs in Algerian universities

b- You have not heard about it

c-you do not find it useful

Table 18

Reasons of Teachers' Unfamiliarity with SACs

Option	Subjects	percentage %
-Non a existence of SACs in Algerian universities	05	62.50%
b-You have not heard about it	03	37.50%
c-You do not find it useful	00	00%
Total	08	100%

The table above illustrated that (62.50%) of teachers are unfamiliar with Self-Access Centers and this is due to the non-existence of SACs in Algerian universities; while (37.50%) of teachers are unfamiliar with SACs due to the fact that they have never heard about it.

Q7: Is the establishment of SACs in your university important for students?

Yes   No

Table 19

Importance of SACs' Establishment

option	Subjects	percentage%
Yes	07	87.50%
No	01	12.50%
Total	08	100%

It is obvious from the table above that most of the teachers (87.50%) agree that the establishment of SACs in their university is important for students. This means that teachers are aware about the importance of SACs for students in the learning process. However (12.50%) of the teachers state that they did not consider the establishment of SACs as important for students because Self-study is not mastered by learners who are not autonomous and some materials need access to the Internet which is not always available.

Q8: If no, do you think that SACs are not important because

    a- There would be a lack of materials in the center

    b- Self-study is not mastered by learners who are not autonomous

    c- Some materials need access to the Internet which is not always available

One teacher say "NO" explain that SACs are not important because Self-study is not mastered by learners who are not autonomous and some materials need access to the Internet which is not always available.

Q9: If others, please specify them

There were no further reasons presented by teachers who said that SACs are not important for students.

Q10: What could make Self-Access Centers necessary for students?

A-Books Self-study   b- Online home works   c-Magazines &Newsletter

d-The Internet   e- listening to CDs   f- Movie club   g-Worksheets

Table20

Necessary Elements of SACs

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Books Self-study	02	25%
Online home works	02	25%
Magazines &Newsletter	00	00%
The Internet	01	12.5%
Listening to CDs	01	12.5%
Movie club	02	25%
Worksheets	00	0%
Total	08	100%

According to the above table, (25%) of teachers claimed that books self-study is what makes SACs necessary for students, and (25%)of teachers declared that online home works is what makes SACs necessary for students .(25%) of teachers considered movie club as the that makes SACs necessary for students . While (12.50%) of teachers chose the internet as what makes SACs necessary for students and (12.50%) of teachers stated that listening to CDs is what make SACs necessary for students. According to these results, teachers held different views about what makes SACs important and believe that this importance of SACs is determined according to learners' needs and lacks.

Q11: What are the benefits of SACs?

   a- Promoting autonomy and self-independence

   b- Self-assessment and self-evaluation

   c- Developing speaking competence

Table21

Benefits of SACs

option	Subjects	percentage%
Promoting autonomy and self-independence	03	37.5%
Self-assessment and self-evaluation	01	12.5%
Developing speaking competence	04	50%
Total	08	100%

(50%) of teachers claimed that SACs develop speaking competence; whereas (37.50%) of them assumed that SACs promote autonomy and self-independence and only (12.50%) of them ensured that SACs enhance students' self - evaluation. Teachers are aware the variety of benefits students can gain from SACs for developing their speaking proficiency.

Q12: What materials do you think are most useful in helping students improve their oral proficiency?

The following are teachers' answers and suggestions:

• Audio-visual labs, PDFs and dictionaries, CDs and YouTube videos, songs, TV shows, Internet, books, radio.

• Movies, documentaries, Skype, viber Messenger calls.

Q13: justification

Teachers illustrated their choice as follows:

-They make students acquire listening and speaking skills which they often need.

-Easy to access and students don't need to do a lot of efforts.

-They contain audio materials needed for developing oral proficiency via listening then imitating because these materials of listening improve speaking.

-The keys to oral proficiency are fluency, intelligible pronunciation, and the ability to interact easily.

Q14: What do you think students can improve when having access to SACs?

a- Spoken interaction   b- Pronunciation   c- Vocabulary   d- Grammar   e- All

Table22

Skills Improved through SACs

option	Subjects	percentage%
Spoken interaction	04	50%
Pronunciation	01	12.50%
Vocabulary	01	12.50%
Grammar	00	00%
All	02	25%
Total	08	100%

   Most teachers (50%) claimed that students can improve spoken interaction when having access to SACs. While (25%) of them said that students can improve all skills cited above; when having access to SACs. Only (12.5%) of teachers believed that students can improve pronunciation and vocabulary respectively when having access to SACs. All teachers focus on spoken interaction because speaking is the most commonly language medium used for communication in all over the world.

Q15: In Self-Access centers, the teacher is supposed to be:

A-Coach   b-facilitator   c-moderator

Table23

Teachers' Role in SACs

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Coach	01	12.50%
Facilitator	06	75%
Moderator	01	12.50%
Total	08	100%

The majority of teachers (75%) said that teachers can play in SACs is only the role of a facilitator. (12.50%) of teachers chose the role of a coach and (12.50%) assumed that he can be a moderator. The focus here in such centers is to make learners self-independent and the teacher just a guider not a dominator.

- Others, please specify

The other teachers' suggested role in Self-Access Centers is to be a supervisor

Q16: Are computers useful for learning English in self-access situations?

a-Not at all   b-sometimes useful   c-useful   d-very useful

Table24

Usefulness of Computers for Learning

option	Subjects	percentage%
Not at all	00	00%
Sometimes useful	00	00%
Useful	01	12.50%
Very useful	07	87.50%
Total	08	100%

(87.50%) of teachers stressed that computers are very useful in Self-Access Centers, while (12.50%) of teachers claimed that they are useful. Computers are really important tools in SACs and greatly help students in their learning.

Q17: SAC is most useful for developing English (speaking) because:

a- It provides adequate materials

b- It is easy to use

c- It gives Feedback

d- It lets students work at their own pace

e- It is interesting or enjoyable

Table25

Causes Making SACs most Useful for Developing Speaking

Option	Subjects	percentage%
It provides adequate materials	04	50%
It is easy to use	02	25%
It gives Feedback	03	37.50%
It lets students work at their own pace	04	50%
It is interesting or enjoyable	02	50%

Most of teachers (50%) considered SAC as most useful for developing English (speaking) because it provides adequate materials and it lets students work at their own pace.(37.50%) of teachers claimed that SAC is most useful in developing English (speaking) because it gives Feedback. (25%) of teachers illustrated that SAC is easy to use and is interesting and enjoyable. Thus, SAC's importance lies in providing materials, on one hand, and making learners independent and autonomous on other hand. It motivates students to learn by themselves and supports learner- centered learning rather than teacher domination (centered).

Q18: If others, please specify

• It motivates students.

• No obligations by the teachers to use it for marks or something else, so whenever they feel they want to, they will do so on their own.

Q19: Do you think that Self-Access Centers contribute to the development of EFL students' oral proficiency?

Yes   No

Table26

SACs' Contribution in Develop EFL Students' Speaking Proficiency

Option			Subjects	percentage%
Yes	08	100%		
No			00	00%
Total			08	100%

All teachers (100%) claim that Self-Access Centers highly contribute to the development of EFL students' speaking proficiency.

Q20: justify

-They contain audio materials needed for developing speaking proficiency via listening then imitating.

-Promoting autonomy and self-independence

-Developing speaking competence

-The SAC provides the students with opportunity to have control over their learning process with less pressure; i.e., learner-centered approach. SAC provides authentic model speaker samples, listening exercises, discourse-based tasks, and corrective feedback, that will help students improve their speaking /oral proficiency.

- They motivate students to speak

Q21: Are SACs a good strategy or tool to help EFL students' improve their whole learning?

-Yes   -No

Table 27

SACs as a Learning Strategy

Option	Subjects	percentage%
Yes	08	100%
No	00	00%
Total	08	100%

All teachers agreed that SACs are a good strategy or tool to help EFL students improve their whole learning.

Q 22: Whatever your answer, please justify

- ➢ SACs contain all materials for students

- ➢ SACs enhance learners' autonomy

- ➢ Not always, but just in some modules; such as, oral expression, written expression and grammar because they motivate learners, develop autonomous learning and learners will self-control their learning.

Q23: Further suggestions

- ❖ Just for teachers, they should include/control their students' feedback; show how they profit from self -access materials.

- ❖ This form of learning is good but we cannot trust our students' ability to adapt and integrate this method of learning effectively since most students are not autonomous learners. Also this form of learning will depreciate and reduce teachers' skills and experiences.

- ❖ There is an ongoing project conducted by the faculty of letters and languages at the University of Guelma, it is more like an e-library. There is the Moodle web page of the University. A University that I have visited makes use of SAC; which involves a

computer program and students can have access to the software, take a course and pass a test, then they receive their score, after finishing several units they will move to the next stage of learning English. SAC does not neglect the role of the teacher but it serves to motivate learners to work independently and provide more practice of a particular language item.

3.5.2.2. Summary and discussion of the results of the teachers' questionnaire

With respect to teachers' answers, a large number of responses were quite positive; in the sense that, they supported more our hypotheses and answered our research questions. It is reasonable to think that, the participating experienced teachers are noticeably highly aware of the importance of Self-Access Centers in enhancing students' speaking proficiency in the EFL classroom. They consider that establishing them can have a positive impact on learners' speaking capacities. SACs primarily give learners the opportunity to learn by themselves and at their own pace. So, through a regular use of these centers, learners can try new hypotheses about how English works and then increase the pace of their speaking.

1. First, in the learning process the major concern approximately of all teachers is the oral skills. This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of developing oral proficiency.

2. For developing speaking, most teachers prefer the adaptation of technological materials. As such, SACs would provide students with appropriate materials and help them in increasing their oral/ speaking proficiency. Thus, teachers have to encourage their students to accede to such centers.

3. When teachers were asked about the benefits of SACs, some teachers asserted that SACs let students work at their own pace and promote autonomy and independence. However, they have mentioned some problems students can encounter in SACs; like lack of self-study skills as learners are not autonomous.

So the findings show the need of students to such centers to develop their speaking level and learning as a whole.

4. Finally, teachers' evaluation of Self-Access Centers as a method of learning for improving students' oral proficiency reveals their recognition of the effectiveness of such a method.

Conclusion

All in all, the positive results revealed in this study about the influence of Self-Access Centers on improving student' speaking proficiency have confirmed our hypotheses. This means that, there is a positive relationship between using SACS and developing EFL oral or speaking proficiency. SAC is one way of learning adapted by many institutions and teachers all over the world and proved to be of great importance for learners as a result of the huge development and inclusion of new technologies in education.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

3.6. The Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

As found in the present study, most of the participants showed positive attitudes and a willingness to integrate Self-Access Centers in the University of Guelma, and mainly at the department of English. Furthermore, they considered the SACs as fabulous and rich source of information for different learning purposes.

1. In the EFL learning process the major concern, approximately of all teachers, is developing students' oral skills. This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of developing their speaking proficiency.

2. For developing speaking, most teachers prefer the adaptation of technological materials; such as, SACs that would provide students with appropriate and authentic materials and help them in developing their speaking proficiency.

3. Teachers need to know about SACs and encourage learners to use such centers to enhance their oral productions.

4. When teachers were asked about the benefits of SACs, some teachers asserted that SACs let students work at their own pace and promote their autonomy and self- independence.

5. When they were asked about possible problems encountered while using SACs, teachers mention some problems as students' lack or total ignorance of what does it mean to have self-study and how to realize it in their context. In addition, teachers suffer from students' lack or even absence of motivation and autonomy. Thus, the findings show the serious need of students to such centers to develop their level in speaking and learning as whole.

6. Finally, teachers' evaluation of Self-Access Centers as a method of learning for improving students' oral proficiency reveals their recognition of the effectiveness of such a method.

From the results above, we can suggest some recommendations for our teachers summarized as follow:

Teachers should develop students' speaking proficiency through devoting much time for oral expression module. Thus, teachers' interaction with students must be based on giving voice for students to speak more than them.

Furthermore, teachers should integrate technological materials in their classrooms and make students aware about the importance of using technology in developing their oral performance. Also, teachers should encourage students to be independent learners by relying on themselves rather than teachers through using learning centers like SACs.

Finally, teachers need to develop learners' self-study, by using the approach of learner-centered and not teacher-centered. Teachers ask students to present the lesson and they are just guiding them and giving feedback.

As far as students are concerned, the major results are:

1. The process of foreign language learning is not merely a process of acquiring knowledge, but one which creates situations where students interact and express their thoughts using the target language. That is to say, learning a foreign language is to speak and to communicate in that language. Therefore, the learner masters the language if speaks it well and be able to communicate via it in different communicative situations or contexts out of the classroom.

2. The majority of the students express their needs in terms of speaking proficiency more than the other skills (i.e. reading, writing, and listening) because, for them, developing the speaking proficiency will reinforce the learning of the other skills.

3. Although the focus of learning English language is to develop speaking proficiency, most of students claim that they speak whenever an opportunity comes up. This may be interpreted in terms of teacher's domination in classroom, lack of motivation and lack of practice. Teachers need to devote more time for students to speak and use materials which contribute in enhancing their level of speaking like technological tools that can expose students to some authentic forms of English; as videos, online lessons given by native speakers, etc.

4. Concerning learning English, students have different attitudes towards English-speaking community. The majority of students show their interest in English-speaking community- its life-style, culture, etc. Thus, the role of the administration is to adapt and provide students with technology aids like free space to learn by themselves, e-library and other audio visual aids. The teacher's role is to encourage students to self-use such and other technological tools by themselves through their learning process.

5. The majority of students state that speaking is more important and that both their speaking proficiency and ability to speak in different situations is average, because of lack of opportunities to develop their speaking proficiency and fluency, lack of vocabulary and some psychological problems (mentioned above). Teachers need to cover all these issues and know what problems and difficulties their students face inside classroom.

6. Students' opinions and evaluation of Self-Access Centers, as an educational facility for developing speaking proficiency, implies their awareness, readiness and need for such a facility. They hope that the ministry will implement such centers at the Algerian Universities.

7. The majority of students agree that Self-Access Centers are useful and good strategy for learners to develop their speaking proficiency by providing materials necessary for learning and enhancing their general English level of proficiency.

8. All students claim that the major benefits from these centers are self-autonomy, self-regulation, independence and motivation; i.e., students will be self-reliant.

Henceforth, we suggest the following:

➤ Students should work hardly to develop their oral production and communicative competence. They have to rely on themselves for further knowledge and learning materials and not on their teacher as source of information.

➤ Students should practice language outside the classroom; through reading books, speaking with their peers, and in chatting with natives or other speakers of English via social networks.

➤ Universities (and specifically foreign languages departments) need to establish centers; for example, SAC's for helping students develop their speaking proficiency.

3.7. Limitations of the Study

To our knowledge, the present study is the first to evaluate the effects of using Self-Access Centers on developing learners' speaking proficiency at the University of Guelma. The study used a questionnaire as data collection tool. From the results we perceive that EFL learners and teachers are ready and willing to use computers and technological materials to learn and teach English if they are provided with time and access to resources. It was obtained from the research that teachers estimate that students need to be self- autonomous learners and need to develop self-regulation and self-reliance skills.

Whichever research study carried out in the field has a number of restraints. The first imperfection is that this piece of research is not generalizable. The study was carried out with students and teachers working at the University of 8 mai 1945- Guelma. The results of the study display the opinions and attitudes of sample students and teachers in this institution. Consequently, it would not be suitable to generalize them to all English students and teachers working in Algerian Universities; who may encounter varied circumstances compared to the participants of this study.

A further limitation of this study is that there are no SACs in Guelma University to check whether the sample students actually resort to computer technology resources and tools as they proclaim in the questionnaire, and whether they use them effectively or not.

A further weakness of the study is the shortage of earlier research of university students and teachers' beliefs and perceptions that could be resorted as a baseline for reference especially in Algeria.

In addition to the insufficient time we have had to realize this research dissertation which limits us just to have questionnaires and not an experimental study that would be more reliable.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Students' Questionnaire

Dear participants,

This questionnaire is devised to get scientific data in order to conduct a study at 08 Mai 1945 University about the effect of Self-Access Centers on raising learners' speaking skill. We would be grateful if you could answer these questions to help us in our research for the Master's degree in Language Sciences.

The name, surname and address of the participants will not be asked. The information you provide will be confidential. Thank you for your contributions by spending time to share your thoughts and ideas.

Please, use a cross (×) to indicate your chosen answer and specify your option when needed.

Section One: General Information

Q1- Specify your gender:

a- Female ⬜

b- Male ⬜

Q2- Have you been studying English for?

a- More than 10 years ⬜

b- More than 5 years (less than 10) ⬜

Q3- Is studying English your own choice?

a- Yes ⬜

b- No ⬜

Q4- If it was your choice, please, briefly give your reasons (i.e.; say why)?

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……………………………………………………………………………………………...

Q5- How can you judge your level in English?

a- good ⬜

b- average ⬜

c- less than average ⬜

d- I don't know ☐

Section Two: Speaking Skill

Q6- Do you seek opportunities to use English?

    a - Yes, I do, I actively seek opportunities to use English. ☐

    b- When an opportunity comes up, I make use of it. ☐

    c- No, I don't. ☐

Q7- What is your attitude towards English-speaking community?

    a- I am interested in English-speaking community- its life-style, culture, etc. ☐

    b- I am quite interested, but I do not know much about English-speaking-community. ☐

    c- I am not interested in English-speaking community. ☐

Q8- How important is, in your opinion, speaking skill in learning English in comparison to other skills (Listening, Reading, Writing)?

    a- Less than15% of importance in comparison to other skills (L, R and W). ☐

    b- About 25% of importance. ☐

    c- 50% of importance. ☐

    d- 75% of importance.

Q9- How is your speaking proficiency?

High	
Average	
Low	

Q10-If average or low, what makes speaking difficult for you?

.………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Q11- What is the most important element for speaking? (One option)

Pronunciation	
Fluency	
Vocabulary	
Grammar	

Q12-

Others,specify…………………………………………………………………………………

………

………

Section Three: Self-Access Centers (SAC)

Definition: The term self-access refers to the organization of learning materials and equipments made available and accessible to students without necessarily having a teacher present. The ability of every single student to learn by him/herself and it will be acquired on a systematic and conscious way.

Q13- What can you say about Self-Access Centers as an educational facility?

………

………

………

Q14- Do you think that (SACs) are useful for developing learner's autonomy and self-reliance

Yes ☐　　　　　No ☐

Q15- Whatever your answer, please justify.

………

………

………

……….

Q16- What do you think students gain from Self-Access Centers?

……

……

……

……

Section Four: Effect of Self-Access Centers on Developing EFL Students' Speaking Proficiency

Q17- Do you think that Self-Access Centers contribute to increase oral proficiency?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q18-

Justify…………………………………………………………………………………………

....

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....

Q19- Do you think that (SACs) can be the best strategy to develop EFL students' speaking skill?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q20-

Justify…………………………………………………………………………………………

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Q21- What suggestions would you like to offer for this topic?

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Thank you for your collaboration and time.

Appendix Two: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is devised to get scientific data in order to conduct a study at 08 Mai 1945 University about the effect of Self-Access Centers on developing EFL students' speaking skill. We would be grateful if you could answer these questions to help us in our research for the Master's degree in English language.

The name, surname and address of the participants will not be asked. The information you provide will be of great significance and confidential.

Thank you for your contribution by spending time to share your thoughts and ideas.

Please, use a cross (×) to indicate your chosen answer and specify your option when needed.

Miss AGABI Sara

Department of English language

University of 08 Mai1945 –Guelma-

University year: 2016-2017

Section One: General Information

Q1- are you specialized in?

Literature ☐   Linguistics ☐   Civilization ☐   Translation ☐

Q2- Academic degree(s) held

Master ☐   MA ☐   PhD ☐

Q3-How long have you been teaching English?

……………… years.

Q4 – Have you taught and/or you are actually teaching oral and written expression modules?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Section Two: Self-Access Centers (SACs)

Definition: The term "Self-Access Centers" refers to an academic center in which learning materials and equipments are available and accessible to students without necessarily having a teacher present."

Q5-Describe the extent to which you are familiar with Self-Access centers.

Unfamiliar ☐   neutral ☐   familiar ☐   very familiar ☐

Q6- According to you, Teacher's unfamiliarity with Self-Access centers is due to:

a- Non-existence of SACs in Algerian universities ☐

b- you have not heard about it ☐

c- you do not find it useful ☐

Q7-Is the establishment of SACs in your university important for students?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q8-If no, do you think that SACs are not important because ☐

d- There would be a lack of materials in the center ☐

e- Self-study is not mastered by learners who are not autonomous ☐

f- Some materials need access to the Internet which is not always available

Q9-If others, please specify them

………

………

Q10-What could make Self-Access Centers necessary for students?

Books Self-study ☐ Movie club ☐ Worksheets ☐

Online home works ☐ Magazines &Newsletter ☐

The Internet ☐ listening to CDs ☐

Q11- What are the benefits of SACs?

a- Promoting autonomy and self-independence ☐

b- Self-assessment and self-evaluation ☐

c- Developing speaking competence ☐

Q12-What materials do you think are most useful in helping students improve their oral

proficiency?

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………………………………………………………………………………

Q13-Justify your answer please

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q14-What do you think students can improve when having access to SACs?

    a- Spoken interaction   ☐

    b- Pronunciation   ☐

    c- Vocabulary   ☐

    d- Grammar   ☐

    e- All   ☐

Q15- In Self-Access centers, the teacher is supposed to be:

Coach ☐   facilitator ☐   moderator ☐

Others………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Q16-Are computers useful for learning English in self-access situations?

Not at all ☐ sometimes useful ☐ useful ☐ very useful ☐

Q17-SAC is most useful for developing English (speaking) because:

    a- It provides adequate materials   ☐

    b- It is easy to use   ☐

    c- It gives Feedback   ☐

    d- It lets students work at their own pace   ☐

    e- It is interesting or enjoyable   ☐

Q18-If others, please specify

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q19-Do you think that Self-Access Centers contribute to the development of EFL students'

oral proficiency?

            Yes ☐   No ☐

Q20-

Justify………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q21-Are SACs a good strategy or tool to help EFL   students' improve their whole learning?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q22-Whatever your answer, please justify

………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Q23-If you have any further ideas or suggestions to add about the use of Self-Access centers to learn how to speak English and the usefulness of computers in a self-access situation, you are welcome.

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Thank You

Arabic Summary

والغرض من هذه الرسالة، أي ما مجموعه ثلاثة فصول، هو تسليط الضوء على دور مراكز النفاذ الذاتي؛ كاستراتيجية تستخدم لتحفيز الأداء الشفهي الأفضل للطلاب. لذلك، تهدف دراستنا إلى التحقيق في العلاقة بين مراكز الوصول الذاتي والأداء الشفوي للطلاب، واستكشاف الخصائص المختلفة لمراكز الوصول الذاتي، وتبين أن مراكز الوصول الذاتي يمكن أن تكون استراتيجية تربوية جيدة لتطوير مهارة التحدث / التكلم للطلاب .

منهجية البحث المعتمدة في هذه الدراسة هي المنهج الوصفي الذي يهدف إلى وصف متغيرين: مراكز الوصول الذاتي كمتغير مستقل ودوره في تحسين الكفاءة الشفوية للمتعلمين كمتغير تابع. استند إجراء جمع البيانات على شكل استبيانين تم تسليمهما إلى كل من طلبة الما ستير والمعلمين من الدرجة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة 8 ماي 1945، قالمة. وكان الهدف من هذه الاستبيانات جمع معلومات عن تأثير مراكز النفاذ الذاتي على تطوير مهارة التحدث لدى الطلاب .

وقد أكدت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من هذه الورقة البحثية الفرضية القائلة بأن الطلاب بحاجة إلى توفير استراتيجية ملائمة لتطوير مهارة التحدث. وكلما زاد عدد الطلاب الذين يتاح لهم الوصول إلى الوسائل التكنولوجية كلما زاد مستوى أدائهم الشفهي. وأظهر تحليل الاستبيانات أن كلا من الطلاب والمعلمين يعتبرون مراكز الوصول الذاتي استراتيجية تربوية هامة في تعزيز إجادة المتعلمين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

هذه الدراسة لها بالتأكيد بعض القيود؛ ومع ذلك، كشفت نتائجها آثار مثيرة للاهتمام والتوصيات. وبالتالي، يجب إجراء البحوث المستقبلية تجريبيا لاختبار إمكانية تطبيق النتائج على عدد أكبر من المتعلمين.