



The Teaching of the Speaking Skill in ESP Classrooms An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

This study examined the practices which are employed by the teachers to develop ESP learners' speaking skill in Touggourt City in Algeria. Therefore, ten learners with their teacher were selected from a private language school for data collection by using classroom observations. The findings reveal that various practices played a significant role in enhancing learners' speaking ability. These practices include: the integration of different and technological teaching materials, selection of relevant themes, use of appropriate language structures, implementation of interactive tasks, application of effective instructional techniques, reliance on informal assessment methods, and providing immediate and constructive feedback.

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1. Introduction

Although teachers' practices in ESP classrooms are primarily tailored to learners' goals and needs, some investigations should be conducted in order to determine the effectiveness of these practices in fulfilling the pre-defined objectives of the ESP course. This is often realised by making a course evaluation checklist or a questionnaire to be given to learners, yet this type of investigation reflects a one sided view of research. So as to reach a fuller understanding of teachers' practices in the ESP context, other research tools such as classroom observations enable the researcher to have a wider view on these practices. Therefore, the present study which is an exploratory-descriptive research on the teaching of the speaking skill in ESP classrooms focuses on teachers' practices by using observation. What also makes this study distinct is that it is conducted in Touggourt City in Algeria which is a context that is less researched if at all.

This study is highly important in ESP research as it contributes in enhancing teachers' practices in addition to the type of courses which are designed to improve learners' speaking skill in ESP classrooms in Touggourt City and in other contexts. Therefore, it is targeted to provide an insight into the way the speaking skill is taught in ESP classrooms in this city. In other words, it is intended to investigate the role of classroom practices in developing ESP learners' speaking proficiency. So as to reach these

objective, the following question (RQ) is raised in this research:

RQ- How do teachers' practices affect learners' speaking skill in ESP classrooms in Touggourt City?

This research question is targeted to provide information on the key features of the teaching of speaking in ESP classrooms. It is geared towards determining the relationship between classroom practices and learners' speaking skill development by focusing on different aspects including the role of the teaching materials, the effect of the selected themes, language structures, type of tasks, the role of the teacher, and the impact of assessment methods and feedback techniques. The answer to this question will hopefully serve in understanding various features of the teaching of speaking in these classrooms.

2. Previous Studies

In relation to the teaching of language skills in ESP classroom, the literature cite few research work in the Algerian context. The majority of this research shed light on reading or writing skills, such as Fethiza-Tidjani and Goui (2016), Bouchareb and Bouchareb (2022), Rouabah and Aliouchouche (2023), and Ouis (2023). As far as the speaking skill, only three studies were relevant to the current study. They are: Djaileb and Zitouni (2013), Addi (2014-2015), and Aouar and Aboubou (2018). The following three sub-sections present these studies from the oldest to the most recent and provide details on their findings.

2.1 Djaileb and Zitouni (2013)

The first research work is Djaileb and Zitouni's article (2013) which was about the significance of teaching the speaking skill to ESP students of computer sciences who were supposed to interact orally in English in seminars and conferences. The two researchers suggested various oral tasks to develop the oral skills of these students. These tasks emphasized dialogues, role plays, and discussions. In addition, they recommended that teachers should include authentic topics which are related to the students' field of study so as to create real discussions and encourage them to communicate orally in their subject. They also noted that the teacher in this case should not focus on grammatical errors but on the student's ability to convey meaningful messages in English.

2.2 Addi (2014-2015)

The second research work is Addi's Magister dissertation in which he explored students' difficulties in speaking in business English classrooms. Addi (2014-2015) used two questionnaires; the first questionnaire was distributed to 72 students to discover the factors which inhibited them from interacting orally in English, whereas the second questionnaire was submitted to 11 teachers to ask them how to help these students improve their oral proficiency in English. The findings of this study showed that several factors caused difficulties for these students to interact orally in English. These factors included lack of teachers' training and experience, teaching general English

instead of business English, ineffective techniques of errors' correction, excessiveness of teacher's talk, complexity of language structures and vocabulary, stressful learning environment, and the various difficulties that students faced such as fear of making mistakes, fear of negative feedback from the teacher and peers, shyness, and lack of opportunity because of excessive teacher's talk and time. So as to help students to overcome these difficulties, the researcher proposed some learning strategies. Concerning teachers, he recommended providing training, conducting needs analysis, using simple language structures, using effective techniques of errors' correction, creating a comfortable learning environment, incorporating speaking activities such as role play, dialogue completion, questions and answers, problem solving, and interviews, and using pair and group work.

2.3 Aouar and Aboubou (2018)

The third research work which should also be referred to is the one of Aouar and Aboubou (2018). The two researchers carried out a descriptive study in which they distributed a questionnaire to 33 doctorate students belonging to different departments (Sociology, Psychology, History, Philosophy, Information and Communication, and Library Sciences). The questionnaire explored these students' weaknesses in listening and speaking English as well as their attitudes towards integrating films in their learning of the English language. The findings revealed that students needed to develop their listening and speaking skills

in order to be able to understand and speak English in international conferences and study days. However, they had difficulties when listening to authentic English conversations because of the speed of native speakers, their pronunciation, and lexical segmentation of words. It was also found out that these students held a positive attitude towards incorporating films in the classroom. Thus, Aouar and Aboubou (2018) recommended using films as alternatives of traditional materials to support the teaching of listening and speaking in ESP classrooms as well as to help students cope with their weaknesses in these skills. Additionally they put forward some recommendations when teaching these skills in ESP classrooms which emphasized the teacher's support, the use of diverse tasks, adopting a teaching method and using materials which meet students' level of proficiency and needs, and devoting more time to students to practise speaking.

In brief, the three studies which are mentioned above were targeted to investigate the speaking skill situation in ESP classrooms in multiple Algerian universities with the goal to enhance the teaching and learning of this important skill by exploring teachers' perspectives and learners' difficulties. These researchers employed similar methods and research tools, but they focused on different samples of ESP teachers and learners from various departments. Furthermore, they have come up with significant results that overlap to a large extent. Ultimately, these researchers highlighted important issues that are related to the teaching and learning of the

speaking skill and they have proposed remedial solutions which would enable teachers to improve their teaching practices of this skill and help ESP learners to overcome the difficulties which they face when speaking English.

In fact, these studies have provided significant insights into the teaching and learning of the speaking skill in ESP classrooms in the Algerian context, yet none of them focused on investigating ESP teachers' practices by using classroom observations nor did they explored the context of private language schools. There is only one study which was conducted by Litiem and Aoudjit-Bessai (2022) in a private language school in Touggourt city, but it focused on analyzing ESP learners' needs rather than the teaching practices. Accordingly, the present study provides a new insight into the development of the speaking skill in ESP classrooms in the Algerian context for the following main reasons:

- Exploring the ESP teaching in private language schools
- Conducting the study in a region that has not yet been investigated
- Investigating the speaking skill development by focusing on observing teachers' practices in the classroom

3. Method and Procedures

3.1 Research Method and Approach

A case study method was selected in this research because it was the appropriate method to realize the intended objectives. In the same regard, Hays (2004) states that case studies provide

close investigation of issues and this can not be reached by other research methods. Moreover, Mackey and Gass (2005) claim that this method of research provides rich contextualization of the language learning process complexities. Hence, choosing this research method enabled the investigators to unfold various aspects of teachers' practices in developing the speaking skill in ESP classrooms in Touggourt city in Algeria.

The choice of this case study is attributed to the investigators' intrinsic interest in ESP studies in this context. The purpose was to have an insight into this context and improve the understanding of the teaching of the speaking skill in ESP classrooms through focusing on teachers' practices. Furthermore, among the different types of case studies, this study combined the exploratory and the descriptive types. Exploration and description allowed the investigators to understand the multiple facets of developing ESP learners' speaking skill.

Concerning the research approach, the type of the approach depends on the type of the instruments that are used for data collection and analysis (Dörnyei, 2007). If the research tool provides data in a form of numbers which are analyzed statistically, this is a quantitative approach. However, if it provides other forms of data such as words, phrases, or non-verbal signs, which are analyzed based on their content, this is referred to as a qualitative approach to research. Since the research instrument which was used in this study yielded qualitative data

(classroom observation), this research was approached qualitatively.

3.2 Participants

The target population who were concerned with this research were the ESP teachers and learners' in a private language school in Touggourt city in Algeria. This sampling frame included all the teachers who worked in private language schools and all the ESP learners who joined these schools to take ESP courses. However, because this study focused on one single case, it was important to select a group of ESP learners with their teacher in one language school. Indeed, exploring smaller groups that are selected properly saves time, cost, and effort and also provides valid results (Dörnyei, 2007). Thus, one language school was chosen in Touggourt city in order to conduct some classroom observations.

This language school was selected for easiness of access which resulted in having an accidental sample. This type refers to the situation where a sample is selected because it is easily accessible (Walliman, 2006). In fact, not all teachers and learners would like to participate in such studies for various personal and external reasons. Hence, focus was on the school that the investigators could have access to. Access to this school was gained because one of the investigators used to work in as a former ESP teacher. This language school was created to learners who wanted to develop their language skills whether in English or any other foreign language.

Concerning teachers who belonged to this school, they were not obliged to use one specific course or syllabi. They were free to design their own courses depending on their learners' needs. In relation to learners who participated in this study, they were adults who were interested in learning English for personal reasons. Their total number was 10 including 06 males and 04 females. Their needs were assessed by their teacher before taking the course. According to their teacher, their goal from learning English was to develop their speaking proficiency. Thus, a course was designed by the teacher to improve their speaking ability in English.

3.3 Research Tools

The selected research instrument is classroom observation. In this case study, a description of the interactions occurring between the teacher and learners is required. These types of interactions are best examined by using observation which constitutes a powerful tool in case studies (Hays, 2004). Furthermore, the use of observation in foreign language research contributes to a deep understanding of the different aspects of the teaching and the learning processes. Similarly, Mackey and Gass (2005) state: "observations are a useful means for gathering in-depth information about such phenomena as the types of language, activities, interactions, instruction, and events that occur in second and foreign language classrooms." (p. 186). Observation, then, provides the researcher with a vivid picture of teachers' practices and learners' behaviour in addition to the interactions occurring in

the classroom.

Therefore, a semi-structured observation form was designed to examine teachers' practices when developing learners' speaking skill in ESP classrooms. This type of observation allows the investigator to collect detailed descriptions of the phenomena under investigation (Mackey and Gass, 2005). The observation form was organized into two main sections: Setting and Observation Section. Setting Section focused on collecting general information about the sessions including the date of the session, its time, place, number of learners, and the duration of the session. Such information about the sessions provide an idea about the setting where they occurred to determine any impact it may have on learners' speaking skill. As far as the Observation Section, it involved four sub-sections. They are: Teaching Materials, Themes, Language Structures, and Tasks, Teacher's Role, and finally Assessment and Feedback. Observation focused on exploring these aspects and their impact on learners' speaking skill.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The study was carried out in January 2022 in a private language school in Touggourt city in Algeria. The period which was allotted to the investigator to conduct classroom observations was two weeks. During these weeks, the number of the sessions which were observed was five. The procedures of collecting data went through the following steps. First, the teacher and learners were made aware of the study and its purpose. In addition,

they were informed that the study ensures anonymity and confidentiality and that the data they provided may be used for publication purposes only. The second step was the class visit in which the teacher introduced the observer (one of the investigators) to learners. Then, the investigator sat in the back of the classroom observing what was occurring and taking notes on the observation form. During observation, the investigator took the role of a complete observer so as not to intervene or disturb the participants during the sessions. This role helps to minimize the influence of views and ideas on those who are being observed and allows the researcher to have a full focus on recording data (Foster, 2006). After collecting data, they were subjected to analysis in order to answer the research question of this study. The results of this analysis are presented and interpreted in the subsequent section.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Setting

The following table presents some general information on the observed sessions.

Table 1. General Information on the Observed Sessions

	Session n°1	Session n°2	Session n°3	Session n°4	Session n°5
Date	03/01/2022	08/01/2022	10/01/2022	15/01/2022	17/01/2022
Time	09:00 A.M	14:00 P.M	10:00 A.M	14:00 P.M	10:00 A.M
Place	Classroom	Classroom	Classroom	Classroom	Classroom
Class Size	10	09	10	10	10
Duration	120 minutes	120 minutes	120 minutes	120 minutes	120 minutes

Source: Classroom Observations

The table shows that the five sessions shared similar characteristics. First, in relation to the date, all of the sessions were during January 2022. Second, concerning their time, three sessions were in the morning (session n°1, 3, and 5), while two sessions were in the afternoon (session n°2 and 4). Third, all the sessions took place in a classroom. As far as the number of learners who attended, about 10 learners were present in each session. Last, regarding the duration of the sessions, the five sessions took 120 minutes long. In short, all the sessions occurred in approximately similar settings.

4.2 Observation Section

4.2.1 Teaching Materials

From classroom observation, it was noticed that the teacher used various materials. For instance, in session n°1 which focused on the two skills listening and speaking, she used a smartphone to share a video with learners who also used their earphones while watching the video. Observation showed that the use of smartphones provided opportunities for learners to listen to authentic English and stimulated them to express their opinions about the content of the video.

On the other hand, in session n°2 which was about developing oral presentation skills, the teacher used electronic dictionaries and visual aids. Dictionaries were used to help learners to translate words from Arabic to English so as to facilitate comprehension and learn new words, whereas visual aids such as

cards, pictures, videos, and power point slides were used to help learners to display their work and to organize their presentations. Observation showed that learners engaged actively in using dictionaries and learning new words which contributed in developing their speaking skill by improving their ability to express themselves accurately. In addition, visual aids enhanced learners' ability to deliver information clearly and coherently. The use of these materials as additional supports for learners to express their ideas expanded opportunities for oral interaction between learners.

Similarly, the teacher in session n°4 used picture in the form of printed cards to make learners practise the use of communication strategies. These pictures served in stimulating learners' oral interaction. Learners could visualize the objects and the themes that they were supposed to speak about. Meanwhile, in session n°3 and 5, which were about how to engage in dialogues by using some speaking strategies and discourse markers, the teacher used real-life scenarios. This enhanced dialogue practicing and provided a context to help learners understand the relevance and application of communication strategies and discourse markers in authentic situations.

Generally speaking, the teacher used multiple materials to improve learners' speaking ability. While the materials which were used in session n°1 provided a valuable exposure to authentic English, the materials which were employed in session n°2 were appropriate for developing learners' oral presentation

skills as they contributed in developing practical skills that ESP learners need. Moreover, the materials which were used in sessions n°3, 4 and 5 contributed to the improvement of learners' speaking skill by practising dialogues and mastering the use of communication strategies and discourse markers.

On the basis of these results, it has been found out that the teacher employed various and new materials including technological tools such as smart phones, earphones, videos, electronic dictionaries, power point slides, and visual aids such as pictures, cards, and simulated dialogues of real-life scenarios. According to Djaileb and Zitouni (2013), the use of different and up-to date materials is highly recommended in ESP teaching. Therefore, incorporating technology in ESP classrooms is very significant.

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), some of the reasons for using technological materials in ESP teaching is that they are a source of language and motivation. This type of materials expose ESP learners to authentic English and increase their motivation to interact. This was realized in session n°1 in which the teacher used a video that was extracted from a film to develop speaking through listening. In reference to the previously mentioned study of Aouar and Aboubou (2018), ESP learners have a positive attitude towards integrating films which are considered as one of the best alternatives of old-fashioned materials to support the teaching of listening and speaking in ESP contexts. In addition, Georg Lindner (2014) has proved that

teachers use films and music files as they are rich sources of authentic materials for teaching listening and speaking.

As far as the role of these materials in developing learners' speaking ability, it was revealed that they had a significant impact in engaging learners in tasks and discussions, yet they contributed differently in developing their speaking ability. While the video was a source that provided learners with some language structures which were important for speaking, it did not directly make learners develop their speaking abilities effectively. However, visual aids and simulated dialogues of real-life scenarios were more effective in making learners practise the language structures and develop their speaking abilities.

4.2.2 Themes, Language Structures, and Tasks

In relation to themes, the five sessions were targeted to develop learners' speaking skill through various topics. The video which was used in session n°1 was extracted from CJ7 Film which is a science fiction work. The film is about the story of a poor father and his child who lived in miserable conditions. Then, their life was changed after the little boy got a magic toy from outer space and which realized all his dreams. When the teacher was asked why she chose such a film, she stated that science fiction topics were among the themes that learners preferred in the needs analysis interview. What it was noticed about the extracted video was that the themes were about poverty, ethics, and the impact of money possession on

happiness. There was not any sensitive or unethical scenes which showed the teacher's awareness of deciding upon the quality and the content of this material.

As far as the other sessions, they covered topics which were related to real-world phenomena and learners' daily life. In session n°2 which focused on developing learners' oral presentation skills, learners were asked to select topics which were related to their field of study, work, or interests. Besides, learners in sessions n°3, 4, and 5, which were respectively about managing through dialogues and conversations by practicing communication strategies and discourse markers, discussed daily-life issues and current events. Observation revealed that involving learners in selecting the topics of discussion increased their interest in speaking. In general, the five sessions tackled interesting topics for learners which were practical in stimulating discussions and enhancing their oral interaction.

In relation to tasks, session n°1 included listening comprehension questions to check for learners' understanding and promote discussion. The language structures which were practised during discussions included vocabulary that were related to family, emotions, ethical behaviour, and daily activities, intonation in questions and replies, and the present simple tense. All the examples which included these structures were extracted from the video. In this session, it was revealed that the use of comprehension questions and discussions enabled learners to interact

about the themes of the video, acquired new words, and improved some grammatical and phonological aspects which were important in enhancing their listening and speaking abilities. Yet, overemphasis on comprehension tasks limited opportunities for authentic and interactive speaking tasks.

On the other hand, the language structures which were used in session n°2 were related to greetings, introducing oneself, and presenting topics that were related to learners' fields of study and interests. The tasks involved topic selection and outlining, card organization in which learners arranged their presentations' content onto cards, guided practice of presentation, and free practice in which learners were assigned to prepare similar presentations at home. These tasks enhanced learners' ability to express their ideas coherently and fluently through repeated practice. Moreover, they promoted oral interaction among learners by making them observe and learn from each other through peer presentations. Furthermore, they encouraged independent practice at home reinforcing the skills learned in class. In short, the tasks that were used in this session served in developing learners' oral presentation skills which constituted a significant step for further development of learners' speaking skill.

In session n°3, the tasks included dialogue construction in pair work and **practicing** simulated conversations. **In the first task**, learners practised the techniques of how to manage dialogues using multiple functional expressions

including asking for clarification, interrupting speakers, asking fast-paced speakers to speak slowly, and requesting repetition, whereas the second task emphasized **practising dialogues to reinforce the learning of these expressions through repetition**. **Observation showed that these tasks improved learners' communicative skills as they provided them with practical techniques to engage in dialogues and conversations with English speakers which promoted preparing them for real-life situations.**

In session n°4, which was about learning communication strategies, such as providing synonyms, using opposites, giving examples, and employing descriptive language, the tasks included practising these strategies in pairs by taking turns to describe objects and situations, sharing the descriptions with peers who tried to guess the name of the objects, and presenting these descriptions to the whole class. Through these tasks, learners became more proficient in describing objects and situations in English. Furthermore, they reduced the use of their native language. In addition, the tasks encouraged peer review and collaborative activities which promoted oral interaction among learners. In short, the tasks which were employed in this session provided learners with practical techniques to improve their speaking skill.

Session n°5 included three tasks: oral practice, discussion, and peer interaction. In the first task, learners used to answer the teacher's questions by constructing sentences and incorporating discourse

markers, such as markers for sequencing ideas, adding information, and seeking clarification.. The discussion task included speaking about various topics using discourse markers to express ideas, provide information, and ask questions. Concerning the last task, learners interacted with each other in discussions practising discourse markers. It was noticed that these tasks improved fluency where learners' conversations sounded more natural with the use of discourse markers. Moreover, **learners' could develop their communicative skills** in English **as they** leaned how to initiate and maintain conversations, express opinions, and seek clarification. In brief, these tasks provided learners with practical tools to improve their speaking skill.

To conclude, the five observed sessions were targeted to develop learners' speaking skill but they included various themes, language structures, and tasks. In relation to themes, the sessions covered science fiction topics (e.g., session n°1), learners' interests (e.g., session n°2), daily conversations (e.g., session n°3) and practical communication strategies (e.g., sessions n°4 and 5). These themes were based on learners' interests and preferences, which promoted their engagement in tasks and oral interaction. These findings go in parallel with Djaileb and Zitouni's (2013) study which calls for topic relevance to learners' interests to promote their communicative ability. As a result, the choice of themes has an important effect on learners' engagement in speaking tasks.

Concerning the language structures,

all the words, grammatical, and syntactical structures were appropriate to discuss the selected themes. These structures played an important role in increasing learners' oral interaction. Learners did not face difficulties to use words and expressions that were related to their interests and daily life conversations. Consequently, using appropriate and relevant language content significantly impacts learners' speaking skill development.

Regarding tasks, some sessions focused on individual tasks like session n°1 (watching videos and answering questions), whereas the other sessions included collaborative activities and various interactive tasks (peer interaction and discussion). These tasks offered opportunities for a varied practice which increased learners' oral participation and encouraged interaction between the teacher and learners as well as among learners. Besides, speaking tasks like dialogues and discussions promoted peer interaction and created opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful conversations. In the same regard, Djaileb and Zitouni (2013) and Addi (2014-2015) recommended using such tasks and practices to improve ESP learners' speaking skill.

In general, the themes, language structures, and tasks influenced ESP learners' speaking skill significantly. The sessions which gave importance to the communicative skills, covered interesting topics, involved relevant language structures, and incorporated interactive speaking tasks were more effective in enhancing learners' oral interaction and

speaking skill. As a result, a careful selection of the formers is necessary to boost learners' speaking ability.

4.2.3 Teacher's Role

This sub-section of the observation examined how the teacher in the five sessions contributed in promoting learners' oral interaction in English. This included the language that the teacher used to address learners, the techniques that she used to engage learners in tasks and activities, and the way she facilitated their comprehension and engagement. This also included the effect of these practices on learners by examining the extent to which learners were responsive to their teacher and the level of their oral interaction in English.

The first aspect which observation focused on was the teacher's use of language. Observation showed that the teacher used English as the primary language of instruction with occasional shift to Arabic (learners' native language) in all the sessions. The use of learners' native language was restricted to explaining difficult words and facilitating comprehension. This made learners exposed to the use of English and limited their reliance on their native language.

What was also observed was adopting a learner-centered approach in the five sessions. The teacher involved learners in topic selection. In addition, she created opportunities for them to engage in tasks, participate and interact orally in English, and take part in discussions. Little teacher's talk and more oral performance from learners was recorded.

Moreover, the interaction was not limited to a teacher-learner type, but it ranged between peer and group discussions. Learners participated actively in tasks and engaged in discussions with the teachers and with each other.

Additionally, the teacher took several roles during the sessions. In sessions n° 1 and 2, she was a facilitator and a guide, while in sessions n°3, 4, and 5, she played the role of a facilitator and a language model. The teacher used to guide and assist learners during tasks and model the use of language structures and practices. What was also observed is that the teacher helped learners to overcome their difficulties while speaking English. She used to ask questions and wait for learners' answers. In case no one answered, the teacher used to support learners to speak by encouraging them, giving positive feedback, and providing them with communication strategies to express themselves easily.

Examining the teacher's role in the five sessions offered a comprehensive explanation of its impact on the improvement of the learners' speaking skill. The analysis of observational data confirmed the significance of teacher's role in promoting learners' oral interaction in English. The use of English, adopting a learner-centered approach, using pair and group work, and teacher's assistance were among the major factors which were responsible for a high oral interaction from learners. According to Aouar and Aboubou (2018), the teacher's support is one of the important factors in improving ESP learners' speaking skill. By adopting

these practices, it has been found out that the teacher had a positive impact on learners' speaking skill.

4.2.4 Assessment and Feedback

Observation revealed that the teacher followed informal methods to assess learners' oral proficiency like questioning and observation of learners' performance. For instance, in session n°1, the teacher's questions created opportunities for extended responses from learners to encourage deep understanding and extensive oral interaction by discussing the content of the video. By making learners recall what they saw in the video, the teacher had insights into their comprehension and speaking abilities.

On the other hand, the teacher in session n°2 and 4 used three types of assessment: observation, peer, and self-assessment. First, in session n°2, she used to observe learners' oral performance while presenting their topics. Additionally, she employed peer assessment when learners presented their topics to each others. Moreover, she used self-assessment method when learners were asked to repeat the presentation process discussing a different topic at home and to record themselves. Similarly, the teacher in session n°4 employed the same three types of assessment. She used to observe learners' performance while using communication strategies. Second, she asked learners present their descriptions of objects to each other. Third, she asked them to do a similar task at home.

However, sessions n°3 and 5 were

characterized by the use of one assessment method which was observation. The teacher used to observe learners during tasks. For example, in session n°3, she could observe learners' abilities to interrupt, ask for clarification, and engage in conversation while doing the dialogue task. Besides, in session n°5, she could observe learners' performance and assess their abilities to apply discourse markers effectively in their speaking.

These assessment methods focused on the correct use of language structures as well as the main aspects of the speaking skill like pronunciation and fluency. It was also observed that the teacher, in the five sessions, enhanced these practices with an immediate and constructive feedback to learners. Errors' correction increased learners' awareness of their errors and correct language use fostered their speaking accuracy in real-time. Moreover, it had a significant effect on learners' oral interaction and speaking skill development since it was not only targeted to correct errors but also to provide learners with guidance for improvement. In sessions n°1, 4, and 5, the teacher's feedback was accompanied by positive reinforcement by praising learners for their correct pronunciation which encouraged them to speak English. As a result, a high oral interaction was observed in these sessions.

In brief, the use of various assessment methods like observation, questioning, peer, and self-assessment enabled the teacher to monitor learners' progress while performing speaking tasks. In addition, immediate and constructive

feedback during speaking tasks helped to increase learners' accuracy in speaking. Furthermore, feedback which was strengthened by positive reinforcement had a crucial impact on motivating learners to engage in tasks and practise speaking. These results stress the importance of assessment practices and feedback provision in the development of learners' speaking skill.

Assessment practices and feedback methods had a significant influence on learners' oral interaction in these ESP classrooms. The teacher in the five sessions could observe learners' performance and presentations and assess their abilities to use the learned structures effectively when speaking English. While some sessions included one or two methods of assessment such as questioning and observation (session n°1, 3 and 5), other sessions were featured by multiple methods to include peer and self-assessment (session n° 2 and 4). The latter contributed to a collaborative learning environment which facilitated the development of learners' speaking skill by making learners listen to each others. Furthermore, it encouraged self-assessment and reflection. In short, the assessment methods which the teacher employed to assess learners' oral proficiency proved their effectiveness in promoting oral interaction and enhancing learners' speaking skill.

Similarly, the feedback techniques which were used in the sessions increased engagement and motivation since learners participated actively in tasks and discussions. The constructive teacher's

feedback that was characterized by positive reinforcement of correct language use increased learners' confidence in speaking English. It was observed that learners were eager to speak despite the errors that they made. In reference to the study of Addi (2014-2015), ineffective techniques of errors' correction cause serious difficulties for ESP learners to develop their speaking ability and the more the teacher is thoughtful about correction techniques, the easier it would be for learners to speak English. Hence, by providing immediate feedback and positive reinforcement, the teacher created a supportive learning environment which contributed in increasing accuracy and confidence in speaking English. Generally speaking, these practices served in increasing learners' oral interaction and promoting their speaking skill.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper presented the results of a study on teachers' practices of teaching speaking in ESP classrooms in Algeria by focusing on a private language school in Touggourt City. Through classroom observations, various aspects were closely examined. In view of the study's findings, some pedagogical implications are drawn regarding the teaching of the speaking skill in ESP classrooms. Firstly, teachers should select materials which create opportunities for an authentic speaking practice and engagement like visual aids. Secondly, they should involve learners in selecting topics to increase their motivation to speak. Furthermore, the use of interactive tasks is highly recommended to create opportunities for

oral interaction among learners, such as dialogues and discussions. Moreover, the teacher's approach, his/ her use of language, and the techniques s/he uses are important factors in helping learners to develop their speaking ability. Finally, teachers should employ effective assessment methods and feedback techniques so as to maintain a supportive learning environment for learners. By adopting these practices, teachers can help ESP learners improve their speaking proficiency.

In brief, the results of this study stress the importance of incorporating diverse and new teaching materials, relevant themes and language structures to learners, and interactive tasks. Furthermore, they highlight the importance of the teacher's role in enhancing learners' speaking skill by adopting a learner-centered approach, using alternative assessment methods, and immediate and constructive feedback techniques. To conclude, the findings of this study might not apply to other contexts of ESP teaching, though this research work is a significant step towards further research on teachers' practices in this field that has not been investigated thoroughly. Hence, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the improvement of teachers' practices in ESP classrooms as well as the courses that are aimed at improving ESP learners' speaking skill in broader contexts.

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7. Appendices

Classroom Observation Framework

Section I: Setting

Date	
Time	
Place	
Class Size	
Duration	

Section II: Observation Section

- Teaching Materials

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- Themes, Language Structures, and Tasks

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- Teacher's Role

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- Assessment and Feedback

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