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A Comprehensive Analysis of Listening and Speaking Challenges: The Case of Second-Year LMD Students at Naama University Center

تحليل شامل لتحديات الاستماع والتحدث: حالة طلاب السنة الثانية نظام LMD في المركز الجامعي النعامة

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الملخص:

في مختلف السياقات الأكاديمية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، يسعى عدد كبير من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية إلى اكتساب الكفاءة في مهارات التواصل الشفهي، باعتبارها عناصر أساسية لتحقيق الطلاقة والدقة. ومع ذلك، غالبًا ما يواجه متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية صعوبة في التواصل الفعّال باستخدام اللغة المستهدفة كهدف نهائي. لكنهم يواجهون تحديات متكررة في تطوير مهارات الاستماع والتحدث. ونظرًا لأن هذه المشكلة أصبحت مؤخرًا موضع اهتمام العديد من الباحثين في هذا المجال، فإن هذه الدراسة تسلط الضوء على الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مركز جامعة النعامة عند السعي لتحسين قدراتهم في الاستماع والتحدث.

لذلك، تم تصميم أداتين بحثيتين للتحقيق في صعوبات الاستماع/التحدث التي يواجهها طلاب السنة الثانية نظام(LMD) ، وهما: الملاحظة واختبارات الكفاءة. وبناءً على ذلك، قدمت المقاربة متعددة الأساليب المستخدمة تحليلًا شاملًا للعوائق التي تعيق تطوير هذه المهارات اللغوية الأساسية، من خلال الجمع بين التقييمات الكمية والنتائج النوعية.

وتُظهر هذه النتائج، التي قد تسهم في تحديث قائمة العوائق التي تواجه التواصل في اللغة الأجنبية، دورًا محوريًا في إعلام المربين حول كيفية تطوير أو وضع استراتيجيات أكثر فعالية لتعزيز مهارات الاستماع والتحدث لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وذلك من خلال استهداف المجالات المحددة التي تحتاج إلى الاهتمام والتقييم والإصلاح.

الكلمات المفتاحيّة:

مهارات التواصل، تدريس اللغة التواصلية، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، ، تدريس مهارات الاستماع/التحدث

Abstract:

In various EFL academic contexts, a significant number of EFL learners aspire to acquire proficiency in oral communication skills as crucial elements for fluency and accuracy. Thus, EFL learners often need help to communicate effectively in the target language as an ultimate goal. However, they frequently encounter challenges in developing their listening and speaking skills. As this issue has recently been of concern to many researchers in the field, this study examines the difficulties that EFL students at Naama University Center face when striving to improve their listening and speaking abilities.

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Therefore, two research instruments have been designed to investigate listening/speaking difficulties faced by 2nd year LMD students: observation and proficiency testing. Consequently, the mixed-methods approach used has provided a comprehensive analysis of the obstacles impeding the development of these crucial language skills, combining quantitative assessments and qualitative results. These findings, which might update the list of FL communication hindrances, can inform educators about how to develop/establish more effective strategies to enhance EFL students' listening and speaking skills by targeting specific areas that require attention, evaluation, and remedy/reform.

Keywords:

Communication skills; Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); English as Foreign Language (EFL); Listening/speaking Challenges/difficulties; Teaching listening/speaking skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

The necessary development of speaking and listening skills in EFL learners affects comprehensible communication, academic performance, and career progression. However, many EFL learners, particularly in non-native English-speaking regions with limited exposure to authentic language input, struggle to acquire these skills. Even with a greater focus on communicative competence in EFL programs, many students have poor pronunciation, lack fluency, struggle to understand, and are unable to interact, which precludes them from engaging in meaningful conversations.

SLA (Second Language Acquisition) theories, i.e., Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis, and Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, have placed great emphasis on the necessity of receptive (listening) as well as productive (speaking) skills. Frameworks like these indicate that for language acquisition to occur, there is a need for comprehensible input, language output, and communication. However, in EFL contexts like Algerian universities, opportunities for authentic interaction and input are limited, affecting students' listening and speaking progress.

Prior research has indicated that challenges in listening and speaking arise from insufficient exposure to authentic language, restricted opportunities for interaction, and difficulties in phonological processing and lexical access (Goh, 2000; Vandergrift, 2007). Research has also demonstrated that proficient listening enhances vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall communicative competence. This research analyzes the particular problems of the second-year EFL students of Naama University Center, Algeria, concerning improving their listening and speaking skills. Students frequently fail because of numerous linguistic, cognitive, and environmental problems, which exist even when students have some degree of English comprehension. The challenges are addressed with the help of a mixed-method study design, which consists of classroom observations and administering a proficiency test to assess the nature and scope of the problems.

The findings aim to facilitate the obstacles that impede the performance of EFL learners at Naama University Center, and effectively enhance pedagogical efforts that may already exist for oral proficient activities in such contexts. It seeks to identify gaps that these learners encounter to help educators, curriculum planners, and policy-makers who aim to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction and foster more conducive learning environments for developing communicative competence.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Oral Communication in FL Context

Proficiency in a foreign language requires efficient oral communication. Both speakers and listeners must engage actively in communication, encompassing both productive and receptive skills, which are fundamental to efficient communication (Savignon,1997). The ability to generate language is referred to as productive skills, whereas grasping and absorbing language is referred to as receptive skills. Oral communication is a combination of these abilities that support each other mutually and concurrently. A speaker's ability to communicate effectively depends on his/her ability to perceive words, intonation, and stress patterns, whereas the ability to master productive skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation allows him/her to deliver effective information (Savignon,1997). It is also claimed by Gass and Mackey (2015) that speaking and listening are interdependent abilities that students must develop for effective communication; they write, "Effective communication depends on the ability to process and produce language effectively in real-time" (p. 10).

There is a beneficial relationship between language learners' listening and speaking skills (Brown, 2001; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari 2010,). According to Brown (2001), "Successful speech production is closely tied to successful listening comprehension"(p.275). Thus, students must develop better listening skills to generate correct and fluent communication. Language classrooms must provide adequate opportunities for learners to develop both productive and receptive oral communication skills. Furthermore, encouraging learners to express themselves verbally while actively listening and responding to others facilitates their growth as confident and skilled communicators (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

2.2. Speaking Skill: Definition, Significance, and Teaching

The skill of speaking is undoubtedly one of the most intriguing skills, especially among EFL learners, as it is an interactive process of communication.

Numerous scholars expound upon the multifaceted nature of speaking in different terms. Brown and Yule (1983) stated that "speaking is to express the needs-request, information, service, etc.," i.e., it is through which individuals can express their inquiries. In addition, speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non–verbal symbols in a variety of contexts." (Chaney 1998, p. 13). Speaking is defined as the process through which students communicate with others to attain certain goals or convey their viewpoints. Similarly, (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997) describe speaking as "an interactive process of meaning construction that involves producing, receiving, and processing information". Moreover, in any interaction, the speaker sets up several motives and goals "involved expressing ideas and opinions: expressing a wish or a desire to do something, negotiating and/or solving a particular problem, or establishing and maintaining social relationships and friendships. Besides, fluency, accuracy, and confidence are important goals in speaking" (McDonough and Shaw quoted in Gilang 2017, pp. 7-8).

In a language classroom, it is the teacher's role to prepare students as much as possible to be able to speak English and enhance their communicative abilities. Educators must be mindful of the fact that oral fluency is a primary aim that must be reached while teaching the productive skill of speaking with a keen focus on strengthening their students' ability to compose appropriate spoken utterances. Thus, fluency and accuracy are essential in teaching speaking skills to acquire linguistic proficiency and effectively guide students toward academic accomplishments.

Furthermore, learner's communicative competence has often been the long-term goal of language teachers. Thus, besides fluency and accuracy, teachers should be aware of learners' achievement in vocabulary selection, grammar correctness, and context appropriateness. In addition, pronunciation has a great impact on understanding, in this vein, Cook (2001), Penny Ur (1996), Harmer (2006), and Thornbury (2008) propose a variety of techniques to improve pronunciation skills, including imitation, sound discrimination, phonetic transcription, recording and comparing learners' speech, drills, dialogues, rhythm exercises, and error correction.

Therefore, communicative language teaching (CLT), which is described as "an approach to foreign or second language teaching that emphasizes that the goal of language learning is communicative competence" (Richards *et al*. 1992, P. 65) has shown a great positive impact on spoken English improvement. CLT techniques are based on creating appropriate communicative situations in which students may apply classroom instructions independently, such as the integration of L1 in CLT classes, visual aids, and role-playing. Those elements might reduce learners' anxiety and foster positive attitudes towards learning the target language. Moreover, cooperative learning, rooted in social constructivism, encourages cooperation, critical thinking, and effective articulation, aligning with the communication approach. Hence, CLT promotes the teaching of speaking through participatory and authentic exercises that reflect real-life circumstances.

2.3. Listening Skills: Definition, Significance, and Teaching

Listening as a receptive skill plays a vital role in humans. Purdy (1997, p. 8) considers it as "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings." Individuals would struggle to collect the knowledge needed to speak successfully if they did not have great listening skills, as stated by Nunan (1998) in her *Teaching ESL/EFL Speaking and Listening*, "more than half of the time spent using a foreign language is devoted to listening." Several studies on listening skills highlight its significance and the relevance of its improvement among FL students. Listening includes complicated processes that alter our comprehension of auditory information from the moment it is pronounced through its processing in the brain. Bottom-up and top-down processing are the two primary stages of listening. Bottom-up processing entails analyzing incoming information such as sounds, words, phrases, sentences, and texts to determine their meaning. It is based on the listener's lexical and grammatical proficiency and their awareness of language structures. The process moves from the lowest level, like auditory phonetics and phonemes, to the highest level, such as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Top-down processing, on the other hand, is controlled by the listener's prior knowledge and context. It entails comprehending the information through the use of prior knowledge, schemas, and situational/contextual cues. The listener deduces the meaning and aim of the speaker's message. Understanding these listening processes and techniques is critical for instructors to construct effective listening activities that correspond to their students' preferred listening strategies.

For the sake of teaching listening effectively, teachers must prepare students with the ability to comprehend, interpret, and respond to auditory stimuli. Such activities can be carried out to predict speech, interpret words or utterances, identify relevant matters, and recognize the speaker's intention (Willis, 1981). Teachers establish those factors through audio resources and interactive activities to facilitate active engagement and foster attentiveness and empathy in the listening process. Moreover, according to Underwood (1997, p. 28), listening strategies are procedures or activities that contribute to better comprehension and recall of listening input. While many lessons are centered on the premise of providing students with lots of English practice, many assumptions claim that listening should also be taught.

2.4. Speaking/Listening Difficulties

Several studies on EFL educational settings have tackled the different problems that learners encounter at different levels. However, the present article is devoted to scrutinizing the oral communicative skills and the deficiencies in EFL education, even though a summary of frequent problems is stated below:

Despite the importance of reinforcing learners' linguistic skills in EFL situations, grammar structures, vocabulary limitations, and wrong pronunciation are among the most common speaking problems (Foppoli, 2009). In 2009, a study was carried out by Togatorop, which focused on the challenges that students encountered when speaking English, the findings revealed that students were unable to express themselves adequately owing to a lack of vocabulary and poor grasp of grammar. In the same vein, Rababah (2003) claims that Arab learners are plagued while participating in communicative interactions since they have a limited vocabulary, making them unable to continue the dialogues. A lack of vocabulary can impede speaking and comprehending others, resulting in a communication breakdown. Additionally, clear and good pronunciation is one of the factors of understandable communication; otherwise, the entire conversation exchange would be difficult to follow, creating a barrier for EFL learners (Dan, 2006).

A study conducted by Benmezal, W. and Bensemmane, F. (2022) involving 110 first-year students at the Teacher Training College in Bouzareah, Algiers, revealed that, despite the students' consistent engagement with diverse forms of English materials outside the classroom, they encountered difficulties in recognizing assimilated English vocabulary.

This correlates with the works of other researchers such as Gao (2014), Goh (2000), and Hamouda (2013), who also pointed out that ESL/EFL learners do not recognize words due to their unawareness of connected speech. Hamouda (2013) also studied 60 first-year male Saudi EFL learners and found they had to deal with the new vocabulary speech rate, pronunciation, and recognizing words in both spoken and written texts. A similar study conducted by Alzamil (2021) on a sample of 87 Saudi female students found the same results: having issues related to speech rate, speech pronunciation, speech vocabulary, and background knowledge. Saudi students share these challenges, as do Algerian non-native EFL learners, who also face similar difficulties in recognizing words, processing fast speech, and coping with pronunciation and vocabulary limitations.

Arabic students, especially in Algeria, are unique when it comes to English language learning. One major issue is the preference for using Arabic instead of English in communications, which makes it difficult for them to attain the desired language proficiency. Additionally, the English language syllabi of some of the institutions may not be adequate for their requirements. (Al-Hassaani & Al-Saalmi, 2022: 330).

A study conducted by Yahia, F. (2024) revealed that the Arabic language significantly impacts the speaking proficiency of Algerian learners. Numerous students encounter difficulties with word order due to Arabic's structural characteristics, which often position the verb prior to the subject. Consequently, 74.66% of students recognized this error. Additionally, the lack of opportunities for practicing English in daily life, particularly in environments where Arabic or French predominates, significantly impedes the development of speaking skills. In the jargon, it is known as code-switching. Moreover, students prefer using Arabic/English or bilingual dictionaries instead of monolingual English EFL dictionaries. Learners using such resources are less likely to appreciate the context of words and meanings and engage with the language. Other learners reported shyness as the reason for their limitation in speaking English (17.33%). They reported that their Arabic accent affects their English accent, which, in turn, hinders their ability to speak English fluently.

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3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, to provide a comprehension of the speaking/listening challenges encountered by Naama EFL 2nd-year students. The mixed-methods approach was selected to triangulate data, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the research problem.

The study commences with a pre-test to examine Naama EFL 2nd-year students' baseline listening and speaking skills. Following the initial assessment, observations were used to get in-depth insights into the students' experiences, perceptions, and obstacles encountered during their oral sessions. This study was designed to address the following main questions:

1. What are the main Speaking/Listening difficulties encountered by EFL second-year students at the University Center of Naama, Algeria?
2. What are the causes or reasons for these difficulties, and how can learners overcome them?

3.1- *Participants*

This study took place in Naama, Algeria, at the Salhi-Ahmed University Centre. Seventy second-year (70) English as a foreign language (EFL) students, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty-six, made up the study's sample population. The eight-year English curriculum that the 31 males and 39 females followed included four years in middle school, three years in high school, and one year in college. All of the participants were non-native speakers with moderate levels of ability. Based on their results in previous English classes, their professors had observed difficulties with their speaking and listening skills. Thus, they were chosen as a representative sample for the study.

Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Male	31	44.3%
Female	39	55.7%
Total Students	70	100%

Table 1. Participants Distribution

3.2. Research instruments

The research instruments are as follows:

3.2.1. Test:

Before receiving oral expression lectures, participants were asked to take a test to determine their level of oral comprehension and to examine their listening/speaking difficulties. The test was based on an audio dialogue between two native English speakers. It comprised (5) exercises, each of which included five elements. In the first exercise, students were required to complete a gapped text with five blanks. For the second exercise, words were arranged in lists according to their difficulty level. The third exercise includes questions of comprehension. For the speaking test, students were given two minutes to orally summarize what was discussed by the two native English speakers in the audio. In the last activity, students were asked to talk about their future career objectives and why they chose that path for no more than two minutes. These activities were designed to address the challenging speaking and listening skills areas that require significant rehearsal.

3.2.2. Observation:

Students are observed in their natural environment to collect qualitative/quantitative data regarding speaking and listening skills (identifying patterns, behaviors, and interactions). This research tool was chosen because it is considered a form of qualitative inquiry that enables the researcher to describe activities as they happen in the classroom and collect linguistic and interactional data for later analysis (Mackey & Gass, 2005). During Oral Expression sessions, the researcher carefully observes learners participating in speaking and listening activities, taking note of specific aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, comprehension, participation, and interaction. Additionally, the researcher considered the class size, seating arrangements, teaching techniques, and materials used, as these factors may impact speaking and listening.

The observation checklist and proficiency assessments were formulated according to established criteria and subsequently evaluated for validity and suitability by experienced instructors. Pilot observations and assessments were undertaken to enhance clarity, evaluate difficulty, and ensure the reliability of the evaluation of students' oral competencies.

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4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The obtained data is analyzed using statistical techniques, such as descriptive statistics, and this section will systematically analyze the main results obtained from the two data collection methods.

4.1. Test

The following tables summarize the main results collected from the test:

Exercises	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers	No Answers
1	35%	55%	10%
2	39%	46%	15%
3	30%	43%	27%
Total	34,6%	48%	17,4%

Table 2. Listening Skills Test Results

Table2 presents the examined group's listening test results by showing the overall average of correct, incorrect, and left answers. According to the percentages in the table, the average of accurate answers was 34,6%, while the average of incorrect responses was 48%, leaving an average of 17,4% without an answer. These findings indicate that the participants in this research had substantial listening comprehension difficulties.

Score Range	Number of Students
1-2	35
2-3	15
3-4	10
4-5	10

Table 3. Speaking Skills Test Results

Average Speaking Score: 2.5 Median Speaking Score: 2.4

The students' average speaking score is 2.5, signifying an inferior speaking skill level. The majority of students (35 out of 70) had scores between 1 and 2, indicating that they encountered difficulties in their speaking abilities; whereas, students with scores between 2.1 and 3.0 show potential for improvement. In addition, ten students had scores ranging from 3.1 to 4.0, indicating moderate speaking skills. However, the students who scored between 4 and 5, demonstrate a relatively higher level of speaking ability. As can be seen from the clustering around the lowest score range, a substantial percentage of the cohort had difficulty in expressing themselves effectively in speaking assessment.

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4.2. Observation Result

Through observation, the researcher gains vital insights into the learners' speaking/listening challenges, their degree of proficiency, and frequent patterns of speaking/listening errors and difficulties. Observation is recorded systematically using detailed notes, and data is organized in a structured manner.

Students' skill/Proficiency level	*High N=70*	*Moderate N=70*	*Low N=70*
Fluency	10 (14,29%)	22 (31,43%)	38 (54,29%)
Accuracy	12 (17,14%)	25 (35,71%)	33 (47,14%)
Pronunciation	20 (28,57%)	20 (28,57%)	30 (42,86%)
Vocabulary	20 (28,57%)	25 (35,71%)	25 (35,71%)
Comprehension	18 (25,71%)	40 (57,14%)	12 (17,14%)
Participation	27 (38,57%)	34 (48,57%)	09 (12,86%)
Interaction	20(28,57%)	40 (57,14%)	10 (14,29%)
Responds in a relevant way	17 (24,29%)	34 (48,57%)	19 (27,14%)
Body Language	15 (21,43%)	25 (35,71%)	30 (42,86%)
Ask for clarification	08 (11,43%)	36 (51,43%)	26 (37,14%)
Summarized what was said	19 (27,14%)	35 (50%)	16 (22,86%)

Table 4. Observation Checklist in Oral Expression Sessions

In Table 4, based on a scale of high, moderate, and low proficiency levels among a total of 70 students, the data is presented as students' numbers to illustrate the distribution of proficiency across several specific dimensions (skills). For instance, the fluency level observed during the (08) oral expression sessions indicates that 10 (14,29%) students demonstrated high fluency, whereas 22 **(**31,43%) students showed moderate fluency, yet 38 (54,29%) students had low fluency. Accordingly, the participants show distinctive levels but are almost moderate in each skill class.

Furthermore, there are various illustrative examples concerning listening/speaking errors noted by the researcher during the observation process, such as:

1. **Grammar difficulties:** "It's helps me", instead of "it helps me"; i.e., having difficulty in syntactic patterns and the proper use of contractions and possession, e.g. "its and it's".
2. **Pronunciation difficulties:** "comfortable, spent, that" to "/kʌmfərteɪbəl, spænt, dæt/" instead of */kʌmfərtəbəl/, /spɛnt/, / ðæt/ respectively.
3. **Fluency and accuracy issues:** Participants make efforts to keep up with the pace of a conversation by taking time to select the appropriate terms and patterns in the appropriate context.
4. **Lack of vocabulary:** The participants use terminologies from their linguistic repertoire (Arabic/French) as language problem-solving strategies because they lack English lexis.
5. **Confusion between stative and dynamic verbs:** "I am knowing myself that I am a good student" instead of "I know myself".
6. **Incorrect verb usage:** "He have a nap" instead of "He took a nap."
7. **French Phonological Interference:** Pronouncing "Solution," "Restaurant," "Danger," and "Original" as: /sɔlisjɔ̃/, /rɛstɔrɑ̃/, /dɑ̃ʒe/, and /ɔ.ri.ʒi.nal/ instead of /səˈluːʃᵊn/, /rɛstᵊrɒnt/, /deɪnʤə/, /əˈrɪʤᵊnᵊl/.
8. **Confusion between short and long vowels:** "Ship" and "sheep" are pronounced the same.
9. **Difficulty with *silent letters*:** Pronouncing the "b" in "doubt" or the "k" in "knee."
10. **Prepositions Errors:** "Married with" instead of "Married to."
11. **Code-Switching (French):** "Don't be lâche" instead of "Don't be a coward, or don't be such a yellow belly."
12. **Negation Errors:** "I don't like nothing" instead of "I Don't Like anything."

Furthermore, the researcher identified substantial **psychological and linguistic obstacles** that hindered students' speaking and listening competencies. Anxiety has emerged as a predominant factor, frequently presenting as reluctance in verbal communication and challenges in the comprehension of spoken language. Anxious students encountered difficulties in sustaining concentration during listening activities, and their trepidation regarding verbal communication resulted in additional cognitive burdens. Notably, apprehension regarding judgment and a deficiency in self-confidence were especially pronounced among students with lower performance levels, particularly when they were called upon to speak after their more proficient counterparts, as they harbored concerns about unfavorable comparisons. The apprehension associated with the possibility of making errors further discouraged

spontaneous participation, leading some students to refrain from speaking or responding to oral prompts, even though they comprehended the material. Furthermore, fatigue negatively impacted performance, as students suffering from cognitive exhaustion exhibited reduced attentiveness during listening activities and demonstrated impaired articulation in speaking tasks.

In conjunction with these psychological factors, linguistic challenges further impeded students' listening comprehension. Numerous individuals experienced challenges with unfamiliar vocabulary, and the comprehension of British dialects presented a specific obstacle, hindering their capacity to engage with spoken discourse effectively. The accelerated speed of speech in both listening materials and conversational interactions exacerbated these challenges, as students found it difficult to process information swiftly enough to comprehend the intended meaning completely. Furthermore, external distractions, including ambient commotion within the classroom, significantly hindered their concentration capacity during listening activities, frequently leading to misinterpretation or a total loss of information. The researcher became aware of these challenges through direct interaction with students, fostering an environment of open communication. Nevertheless, students candidly recognized that their hesitance stemmed from a confluence of psychological and linguistic obstacles, thereby highlighting the intricate relationship between emotional and cognitive elements in influencing their challenges in speaking and listening.

4. Discussion of the Results

The findings revealed that practically all students experience speaking/listening difficulties due to various factors that are merely linguistic and psychological.

The observed linguistic errors among students indicate persistent challenges in fundamental aspects of English language acquisition, particularly in grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and lexical competence. The grammatical errors documented, such as the misuse of contractions ("It's helps me" instead of "It helps me") and incorrect verb conjugation ("He have a nap" instead of "He took a nap"), suggest difficulties in morphosyntactic processing. Similarly, confusion between stative and dynamic verbs ("I am knowing myself" instead of "I know myself") underscores the complexity of distinguishing between aspectual properties in English, an area requiring explicit instruction and corrective feedback. Phonological errors, including mispronunciations of silent-letter words, and the influence of French phonology (e.g., /sɔlisjɔ̃/ for "solution") illustrate how native phonetic structures impact second-language acquisition. Therefore, deficits such as mispronunciation, morphological and

syntactic misuse, and misunderstanding are all referred to factors as the speakers' strong accent, unfamiliar vocabulary, test anxiety, background noise, information overload (the feeling that a lot of information has been presented in a short time), and cultural differences (miscommunications caused by variations in cultural references, proverbs, jokes, or idiomatic expression).

Likewise, there are several difficulties related to psychological factors involved in learning a new language/knowledge, such as fear of judgment, and frustration in public, which can inhibit the efficient learning process. The results reveal other barriers to effective communication, which are nervousness, fear of making errors, fear of being laughed at, and anxiety and shyness, which are considered the most significant psychological barriers to speaking reluctance in Brown's contention (2001). Besides, Glossophobia and fear of being negatively evaluated and judged make learners uncomfortable and less motivated in oral tasks. Moreover, learner's lack of confidence and self-esteem lead to insecurity when communicating in English, which may cause avoidance of speaking or even refutation of any potential improvement.

Furthermore, listening difficulties are related to factors such as speech rate, phonological aspects, learners' use of text cues, memory, and prior background knowledge. Additionally, the sources of the overall listening problems found during this research are categorized into two sources: learner and teacher (depending on Bingol *et al*.2014),

1. Difficulties Caused by Students: Students' strategies or physical characteristics can also affect this kind of problem. To clarify, here are the most common ones:(a) Understanding Every Word: Most students do not seem to be capable of quickly transferring that skill to a foreign language. (b). meaning of the preceding words(c). Recognizing the Main Phrases/ words (d). Recognizing Known Words: The majority of students forget words because they are preoccupied with other things and also because they are thinking about them in written form. This is an issue because their attraction is solely based on how to analyze it. (e) Variations in Accents(f). Listening Stamina: This signifies that the learner listens until his brain reaches saturation point (g). Background Noise: Coping with background noise is another skill that can put a learner in problems with English language listening.

2. Teachers-sourced problems:

Teachers of foreign language listening play a critical role in helping their students improve their listening capabilities; however, some teachers may not give much importance to this area. Among the significant challenges mentioned are a) Recorded Material Quality, b) Cultural Differences: to accommodate cultural differences, teachers should provide background information on the listening activities before the activities begin, c) Teachers' Accents, and d) The length and speed of listening activities.

Deficiencies in listening/speaking skills can pose a serious issue in the social community since they are primarily used to communicate and connect for various life purposes.

In Algeria, students are required to contend with both the French language and various regional dialects, which introduces an additional layer of complexity to the process of acquiring proficiency in English. The impact of the Arabic language transcends mere grammar and vocabulary, influencing students' cognitive processes and interpersonal interactions when they engage with the English language. Therefore, teachers should constructively evaluate students' oral communication skills, using methods such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and teacher assessment, with feedback tailored to individual students' needs, focusing on their aptitudes and highlighting areas of weakness and requirements for reform and improvement.

In teaching listening, instructors should use various techniques, which are mostly audio/or audiovisual, and incorporate listening with other skills such as reading, writing, and speaking to strengthen language acquisition and competency and encourage interactive and penalty-free learning settings that increase students' motivation and efficiency (Brown, 1994; Wu Zhengfu, 1991). Furthermore, they should emphasize the development of students' micro skills in listening comprehension, such as discernment in pronunciation, intonation, and language flow, as the progress of predictive abilities to estimate word meanings and detect key information. Besides, effective listening comprehension instruction uses different real resources, sets clear objectives, and employs pre-listening exercises to activate prior knowledge. Moreover, it is crucial to transmit cultural knowledge by breaking down barriers between the target language culture and the learners' native cultures and combining intensive and extensive listening practices, in which intensive listening strengthens basic skills, whereas extensive listening strengthens comprehension.

Integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) through peer interactions, role-playing, and pronunciation drills can enhance fluency and confidence. Additionally, explicit phonetic instruction and contrastive analysis of English and L1 phonetic systems may help reduce pronunciation errors.

Additionally, addressing psychological barriers requires creating a supportive classroom environment, implementing graded oral participation strategies, and utilizing low-anxiety speaking activities to build confidence. Future studies could explore the long-term impact of these interventions on EFL learners' oral proficiency development.

5. CONCLUSION

The current study was conducted to understand the challenges second-year (EFL) students encounter when attempting to develop their listening and speaking capabilities. The study indicates that EFL students encounter various challenges, some of which are linguistic in nature, whereas others are psychological. Students' speaking and listening problems are mostly related to a lack of necessary vocabulary and grammar structures, mispronunciation of words, feeling embarrassed to make mistakes, lacking confidence, difficulties comprehending strong accents, fast speaking rate, and judgment apprehension. Besides, students' lack of exposure to English outside classrooms may contribute to those speaking/listening issues because of lack of practice and training. In light of those findings, English teachers must employ a variety of specific strategies to create an immersive environment that fosters meaningful communication, encourage students to engage in a variety of communication activities that will help them become more effective communicators, make learning more relevant and enjoyable, and help them acquire confidence in communicating properly in English.

These findings underscore the imperative for enhancements to the curriculum that integrate explicit phonetic instruction, organized speaking exercises, and a variety of auditory resources to facilitate the development of communicative competence among students. Teacher training programs ought to emphasize strategies for error correction, metacognitive listening techniques, and anxiety reduction methods to cultivate more effective learning environments. Furthermore, policymakers should promote the implementation of reduced class sizes and communication-based language policies that enhance oral proficiency.

Subsequent research endeavors should investigate the enduring impacts of these interventions on the language acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Ultimately, these findings and recommendations will provide educators and stakeholders with valuable insights into EFL training and encourage more effective strategies to improve English learners' listening and speaking competencies in light of technological progress and global openness.

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