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Communicative Activities in Developing the  
Speaking Skill Among EFL Learners: A case  
Study of Amzil Mhamed Secondary School.

ملاحظة: تقدم هذه الوثيقة رفقة التصريح الشرفي ليتم ختمها معا في نفس اليوم

*AA*



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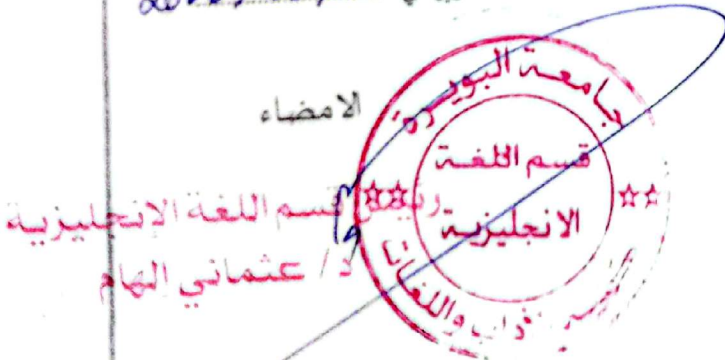
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**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**University of Akli Mouhand Oulhadj, Bouira**

**Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages**

**Department of English Language and Literature**



**Investigating the Effectiveness of Communicative  
Activities in Developing the Speaking Skill among  
EFL Learners: A Case Study of Amzil Mhamed  
Secondary School.**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature - University of  
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Didactics and Applied Languages**

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## **Dedication**

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Allah for granting me the strength, patience, and perseverance to complete this work.

It is my pleasure to dedicate this work to my beloved parents, whose love, guidance, and sacrifices have shaped me into the person I am today.

I also dedicate this work to my dear sisters and brothers, especially my brother Ahmed, for his constant encouragement, support, and belief in me from the very first year until the completion of this work. His presence has been an invaluable source of motivation and strength.

Finally, I dedicate this work to everyone who loves and supports me, even with a kind word.

## **Cherfaoui Souad**

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

As I graduate in 2026, I realize that the finest translation is turning years of patience and dreams into reality. We now stand at the end of a chapter, ready for a new beginning

I dedicate this graduation to...

" To my dear father, the man who taught me my very first words and steps, whose unwavering faith in my dreams preceded my own , may Allah grant you a long life ; to my beloved mother, after Allah, you are the secret behind my success. May Allah bless your life and keep you crown upon my head . To my sisters and brothers, my backbone ,whose presence transformed every hardship into a shared journey. I love you ,To my grandmother, my role model ,whose resilience has long been my compass in my whole life and to my cherished friend Saida, thank you for being a loyal companionship who graced both my brightest and most difficult moments . In every meaningful sense, these precious moments shall remain in my heart forever.

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the effectiveness of communicative activities in enhancing oral proficiency among Algerian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Set against a traditional educational backdrop where the speaking skill is frequently sidelined in favor of written grammar and rules, this research examines how learner-centered tasks influence learners' fluency, structural accuracy, and conversational confidence. Utilizing a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design within a mixed-methods framework, the study focuses on a quota sample of 30 final-year learners from both the scientific and foreign languages streams at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School in Haizer center. The remaining 60 learners from the same institution continued to follow conventional grammar-centered instruction and were observed by teachers but did not participate in the testing procedures. Data were gathered through pre-test, post-test, and questionnaires with practicing teachers and learners. The results reveal a notable baseline gap between the two academic streams, with scientific students initially exhibiting lower proficiency due to minimal exposure to interactive language instruction. Following the pedagogical intervention, the sampled learners demonstrated substantial growth across all assessed criteria. Teacher reports confirmed no comparable improvement among the 60 learners who continued under traditional instruction, attributing the recorded gains to the communicative intervention. Communicative activities, particularly role-plays, structured debates, and collaborative group discussions proved highly effective in reducing classroom anxiety and shyness while fostering a rise in oral self-confidence and conversational flow. Ultimately, the study validates its primary hypotheses and advocates for a systematic transition away from teacher-centered practices toward a structured, interactive curriculum within Algerian secondary education.

**Keywords:** Communicative Activities, Speaking Skill, Fluency, Self-Confidence, Secondary Education

## المخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في أثر التمارين التواصلية في تطوير مهارة التحدث والتعبير الشفهي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجزائر. وفي ظل بيئة تعليمية تقليدية تعطي الأولوية عادةً للقواعد المكتوبة والامتحانات على حساب مهارات التواصل الشفهي، يسعى هذا البحث إلى تقييم مدى تأثير المهام التفاعلية المتمركزة حول المتعلم في تعزيز طلاقة التلاميذ، ودقتهم اللغوية بالإضافة إلى ثقتهم بأنفسهم أثناء التحدث. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على منهج شبه تجريبي يدمج بين الأدوات الكمية والكيفية، حيث ركزت على عينة طبقية ممثلة أين تم اختيار 30 تلميذاً من مجموع 90 من اقسام السنة النهائية بشعبي اللغات الأجنبية والعلوم بثانوية "أمزبل محمد". وتم جمع البيانات من خلال اختبارات قبلية وبعديّة، واستبيانات موجهة للمتعلمين، بالإضافة إلى استبيانات منظمة مع الأساتذة الممارسين. وقد أظهرت النتائج وجود فجوة أولية واضحة في مستوى الأداء بين الشعبتين، إذ سجل تلاميذ الشعبة العلمية مستويات أدنى في البداية نتيجة لقلة احتكاكهم بالأنشطة التواصلية التفاعلية. ومع ذلك، أظهرت المجموعتان تحسناً ملحوظاً في كافة المعايير المقيّمة بعد تطبيق التجربة. وتبين أن الأنشطة التواصلية ولاسيما لعب الأدوار، والمناظرات المهيكلة، والمناقشات الجماعية كانت جد فعالة في كسر حاجز القلق والخجل داخل الصف، مما أدى إلى تطور ملحوظ في ثقة التلاميذ بأنفسهم وكذا انسيابية تواصلهم. وتخلص الدراسة إلى تأكيد الفرضيات المطروحة، داعيةً إلى ضرورة الانتقال المنهجي من التدريس الذي يتمحور حول المعلم إلى إدماج مناهج تفاعلية تدعم التواصل الحقيقي في التعليم الثانوي الجزائري.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التمارين التواصلية، مهارة التحدث، الطلاقة اللغوية، الثقة بالنفس، التعليم الثانوي.

### **List of Abbreviations**

**CA:** Communicative Activities

**CBA:** Competency Based Approach.

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**ELT:** English Language Teaching.

**ESL:** English as a Second Language.

**FLL:** Foreign Language Learners.

**GMT:** Grammar Translation Method.

**SLL:** Second Language Learners.

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# **General Introduction**

## **Statement of the problem**

The global dominance of English across scientific, academic, commercial, and diplomatic domains has made oral proficiency not merely a desirable attainment but a functional demand for meaningful participation in contemporary international life (Crystal, 2003). Among the skills that constitute language competence, speaking occupies a distinctively fundamental position: it is the most required skill and indicator of communicative ability, the primary medium through which meaning is negotiated and social relations are managed in real time. And yet, speaking is the one skill that teachers almost never focus on in EFL instruction (Brown, 2007). This results in learners who can pass a written grammar test with ease, yet struggle to keep a real conversation going beyond a handful of rehearsed phrases, and this is globally familiar: sufficient passive knowledge to pass a written grammar examination, but insufficient procedural capacity to sustain a spoken exchange beyond a few formulaic exchanges.

This gap reflects longstanding pedagogical traditions in which grammatical accuracy, written performance, and examination preparation have received greater emphasis than interactive oral practice (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Communicative activities represent the most theoretically grounded and empirically supported corrective to this imbalance, generating the conditions of authentic purpose, informational need, and interactional pressure under which productive oral competence actually develops (Littlewood, 1981; Harmer, 2007).

Against this backdrop, the present research examines the role of communicative activities in developing speaking competence and bridging the gap between classroom instruction and authentic language use.

Despite the growing importance of English globally, oral communication has received comparatively less instructional attention than written grammar and exam preparation in many Algerian secondary institutions. Several studies have addressed challenges related to EFL learners in different contexts. Dib (2021), in *The Role of Jokes and Storytelling in Promoting Oral Proficiency*, found that jokes and storytelling are effective classroom tasks that promote interaction and foster oral proficiency. Saadi (2021), in *Teachers' Attitudes towards Speaking Tasks in Secondary Schools*, analyzed teachers' views and concluded that curriculum constraints pushed them to focus on grammar and writing, neglecting speaking tasks. Similarly, Belit Brahim and Ait Bouchouche Fadhila (2021), in *Speaking Instruction Challenges in Algerian Secondary Schools*, reported that classroom activities were limited due to traditional instruction, weak teacher training, and exam pressure.

Arab studies also highlight similar issues. A study on Libyan EFL learners in Malaysia (2021), entitled "The Impact of Communicative Activities on Vocabulary and Oral Proficiency", main findings revealed that games and information-gap activities enhanced speaking, particularly vocabulary, with female learners achieving higher levels of development. Hidalgo et al. (2021), in "Enhancing Secondary School Learners' Speaking Skills through Communicative Tasks", found that role plays, group discussions, and debates led to significant improvement in speaking performance.

Worldwide research further supports this view. Al-Garni and Almuhammadi (2019), in *Effect of CLT Activities on EFL Speaking Skills*, examined 21 female students and showed that role plays and interviews significantly improved speaking skills. Pavlovskaya et al. (2022), in *Communicative Tasks and Student Fluency*, indicated that communicative tasks improved fluency and self-confidence and were officially adopted for national exam preparation. Demir and Aydin (2022), in *Communicative vs. Traditional Methods: Comparative Study*, concluded that group discussions and role play produced remarkable progress in fluency, accuracy, and classroom interaction compared to traditional methods. Likewise, Dong (2025), in *Overcoming Linguistic Silence through Communicative Activities*, showed that interactive tasks helped learners overcome linguistic silence, improving fluency and self-confidence.

Although these studies addressed communication challenges and pronunciation issues, most focused on university contexts or single aspects of speaking. At the secondary level, to the authors' knowledge, few published studies address the combined impact of communicative activities on fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence simultaneously. Learners are expected to master the four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Yet speaking, a core dimension of communicative competence, tends to receive less instructional attention, creating a gap between learners' productive capacity and the language they aim to use. These factors, combined with the researchers' own classroom experience of how communicative tasks transformed reticent learners into more confident and fluent speakers, motivated the present case study. Accordingly, this research investigates the effectiveness of communicative activities in developing speaking skills among EFL learners at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School.

### Aims and Significance of the Study

The present study is guided by the following fundamental objectives.

First, the study investigates the effectiveness of communicative activities in developing speaking skill among EFL learners at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School. Secondly, it aims to find

out which components of Speaking such as fluency, accuracy and self-confidence are mostly developed. Finally, it seeks to examine how communicative activities support learners in developing their capacity to use English effectively in authentic, real-world communicative contexts.

This study is significant for its dual contribution to theory and practice. It provides evidence on the effectiveness of communicative activities in enhancing EFL learners' speaking skill, while also applying these insights in authentic classroom contexts. By focusing on secondary school learners at a sensitive stage of transition, the research integrates communicative tasks into pedagogy and highlights their role in fostering fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence. Practically, it paves the way for curriculum innovation and elevates the status of speaking within Algerian secondary education.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The present research is directed by the following questions:

- To what extent do Communicative activities improve EFL learners' speaking skill?
- How do communicative activities affect learners' fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence?
- What role do teachers play in implementing communicative activities to enhance learners' oral performance?

The questions asked above need to be answered by referring to these following hypotheses:

- ❖ The use of communicative activities significantly improves EFL learners' speaking skill.
- ❖ Communicative activities have a positive effect on EFL learners' speaking fluency, grammatical/lexical accuracy, and self-confidence.
- ❖ Teachers' use of communicative activities helps learners improve their oral performance in speaking.

### **Research Method**

The study adopts a quasi-experimental design to investigate the improvement of speaking skill among secondary school EFL learners. It employs a mixed-methods approach, which allows for a coherent integration of quantitative and qualitative findings. The research utilizes a quota sample of 30 final-year learners—consisting of 15 students from the scientific stream and 15 from the foreign languages stream—drawn from a total grade population of 90. Data collection

instruments included a pre-test and a post-test administered to evaluate the efficacy of the communicative intervention, supplemented by descriptive questionnaires distributed to both practicing teachers and learners.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This research is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a complete theoretical background about the speaking skill coupled with communicative activities and their types and characteristics, in addition to its importance, alongside the challenges facing learners and proposed strategies for the development of the speaking skill. Moreover, the second chapter is addressed to illustrate the research approach, design and instruments. As for the third chapter, it is devoted to the practical side of this work, since it concerns data analysis and interpretation of the main findings collected from pre-test and post-tests with the questionnaire considering it a supportive tool in addition to the interpretation of results collected from the speaking tasks implemented.

**Chapter one**  
**Literature Review**

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Framework**

### **Section One The speaking skill**

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the speaking skill, beginning with its definition and key aspects before addressing its significance in foreign language learning. Speaking is first examined as a productive skill deployed in real-life communicative situations, then considered as a medium of social interaction that fosters meaningful relationships among individuals, both inside and beyond the classroom.

This chapter also addresses the aspects of speaking skill, focusing on their development, that are: fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence which together they form the basis of an effective oral performance. Lastly, this chapter also outlines the difficulties and challenges that EFL learners may encounter when practicing speaking in multiple contexts.

#### **1. Speaking as a Productive Skill**

Many EFL learners tend to prioritize grammar and vocabulary acquisition over speaking development, despite the fact that oral communication represents one of the most fundamental skills in the language teaching and learning process. Moreover, this skill has been conceptualized in various ways, with researchers offering definitions that reflect their individual perspectives. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2015) defines speaking as “the activity of giving speeches” and more broadly as oral communication used to convey meaning in interactive contexts.

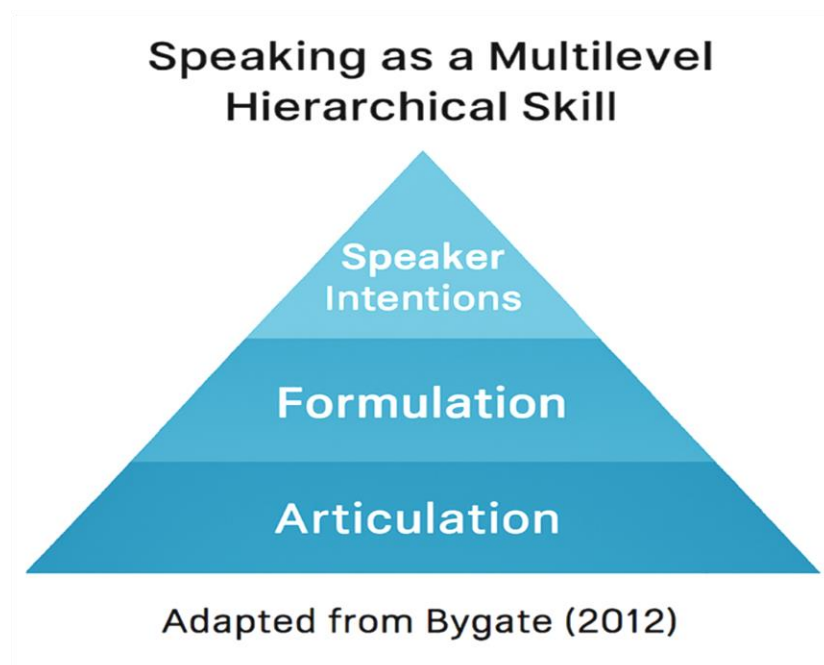
At its core, oral production requires the simultaneous orchestration of phonological, grammatical, and lexical resources toward the construction of shared meaning (Nunan, 2003). This makes speaking qualitatively distinct from random sound production: it is a purposeful, rule-governed act in which multiple linguistic systems operate in concert to achieve communicative goals.

Speaking extends beyond mere sound production to encompass complex cognitive and social processes. Burns and Joyce (1997) characterize oral communication as an inherently interactive process in which speakers manage the flow of exchange and continuously negotiate shared understanding. Effective speaking therefore demands far more than phonological accuracy: it requires the integration of semantic intent, social awareness, and real-time strategic adjustment into a single unified act.

Moreover, a considerable body of scholarship has addressed speaking from an Arab intellectual tradition, especially Al-Ghazali, who emphasized the significance of speaking as a meaningful means of performance in his famous work *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, as he described sound as an interpreter of the heart and a guide of the mind, showing how speaking is strongly attached to people's minds. Speaking involves the dynamic exchange of meaning using both verbal and nonverbal channels (Chaney & Burke, 1998). As a real-life activity, speaking enables speakers to exchange ideas and build relationships with listeners (Thornbury, 2005). Speaking significantly shapes first impressions and social judgments (Hedge, 2000), and this shows that it is a reflective mirror of people's thinking and personalities, as well as the impressions they create of different minds and personalities. As an idea expressed in the Arabic maxim “تكلّم حتى أراك” (translated as “Speak, so that I may see you”), attributed to Socrates (as cited in Smith, 2015, p. 42).

## 2. Speaking as a social communication skill

Considering the social view of speaking, Richards and Rodgers (2001) foreground the social dimension of oral communication, arguing that the capacity to speak binds individuals to their communities and that its absence condemns speakers to a form of social isolation. Within the CLT framework they elaborate, language is understood not as a private cognitive possession but as a socially constructed resource whose meaning emerges through interaction rather than residing in isolated forms. This refers to another dimension of speaking, which is the social view. Bygate (1987) reinforces this social reading, positioning speaking as the primary mechanism through which individuals sustain membership in their linguistic and cultural communities. In 2012, he presented a model in which he described the stages of learning speaking.



*Figure 1 : Steps of the speaking skill (Adapted by the researchers).*

This model shows that spoken words begin with intentions, that is with what speakers wish to express and the words chosen to convey meaning. Afterwards, sound units align in harmony to produce verbal utterances. Nevertheless, in the famous book *Teaching Speaking: A Holistic Approach* (Cambridge), Goh and Burns (2012) argue compellingly that oral production transcends its phonological surface: every speaking act simultaneously constructs the speaker's identity and shapes the relational dynamic between interlocutors, which means that speaking is an integral part of language and one of the key components that shape individual identity and social relationships. Burkart (1998, p. 11) as well highlights the same idea stating that "they assess their progress in terms of the accomplishments in spoken communication..." So speaking is also a criterion for measuring knowledge in learning foreign languages.

This perspective underscores that speaking is not merely a marker of prestige or social sophistication. Rather, it carries different crucial roles, since it can elevate or diminish a person's status depending on their ability to meet life's needs, or failure to do so. As a matter of fact, Thornbury (2005) observes that speaking, despite being the most pervasive of all daily human activities, tends to receive less systematic attention in formal education than other language skills. It described explicitly the major role of this proficiency in our life, as people need it, similarly to the need for vision or to human limbs that are necessary for movement.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that speaking is an activity in which the speaker produces utterances to express his or her thoughts in order to exchange information. In

addition, it is the most important faculty that learners should acquire at the beginning of the process of learning a new language, and it is also the most difficult one through which mastery of language can be judged.

### **3. Aspects of the speaking skill**

#### **3.1. Fluency**

Fluency means the ability to connect speech units smoothly, without strain, slowness, or hesitation. It is linked to language production and the processes that require time. Faerch argues that effective speaking draws on both linguistic and pragmatic competence, alongside procedural knowledge of speech production.

Faerch et al. (1984) conceptualize fluency not as a unitary trait but as a multidimensional component of communicative competence, distinguishing three analytically separable forms:

- **Systematic fluency:** linking propositions and speech acts.
- **Lexical fluency:** connecting words and constituents.
- **Articulatory fluency:** combining speech segments.

Speaking also refers to the natural use of language in meaningful interaction, as well as the ability to speak smoothly, quickly and easily. Richards (2006, p. 14) stated that CLT prioritizes fluency development showing the link between speaking and communicative tasks.

#### **3.2. Accuracy**

Accuracy in second language acquisition (SLA) is often overshadowed by fluency, since learners usually focus on developing fluency. However, accuracy remains essential for communication. It refers to producing grammatically correct sentences, using vocabulary appropriately, and maintaining good pronunciation. Accuracy, broadly understood, refers to the degree of correctness with which learners deploy the grammatical, phonological, and lexical resources of the target language in their spoken and written production. Furthermore, Sheehan (1996) noted that learners often prioritize fluency over grammatical precision, which can lead to errors and misunderstandings, as fluency and accuracy development tend to be inversely related. In contrast, Harmer (2001) draws a useful pedagogical distinction: accuracy tends to consolidate through controlled, form-focused practice, whereas fluency develops through less constrained communicative use where attention is directed toward meaning rather than form. Both, however, are necessary for communicative competence.

#### **3.3. Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence is a crucial aspect of speaking skill, as it directly influences learners' readiness to communicate and how well they perform in conversations. Learners who lack self-confidence tend to hesitate, avoid participation, or produce minimal output. By contrast, confident learners are more willing to take linguistic risks, contribute ideas, and engage actively in discussions.

According to Brown (Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, 2001, p. 62), confidence is closely tied to motivation and self-esteem, which play a vital role in successful language learning. Learners who believe in their ability to use the language are more likely to participate in communicative activities and improve their oral proficiency. Similarly, Tsui (English Conversation, 1996, p. 145) emphasized that self-confidence reduces anxiety and fosters a positive attitude toward speaking, allowing learners to focus on meaning rather than fear of making mistakes.

Developing self-confidence requires supportive classroom environments, opportunities for meaningful practice, and constructive feedback. When learners feel supported and encouraged, they are more likely to participate actively, express themselves freely, and engage meaningfully in oral tasks. In this way, self-confidence becomes a foundation for successful oral performance and **overall communicative competence.**

#### **4. Basic types of the speaking skill**

##### **4.1. Imitative Speaking**

At foundational levels, learners engage in imitative practice—reproducing sounds and phrases to develop phonological control and pronunciation accuracy. This preparatory stage establishes sound system mastery before advancing to communicative tasks (Brown, 2001).

##### **4.2. Intensive Speaking**

Intensive speaking involves controlled, form-focused practice to strengthen structural command through activities like reading aloud and sentence completion (Brown, 2001).

##### **4.3. Interactive Speaking**

Interactive tasks demand sustained exchanges involving meaning negotiation and conversational management, mirroring authentic communication (Brown, 2001).

##### **4.4. Extensive Speaking**

Extensive speaking requires sustained monologues where learners demonstrate organization, fluency, and discourse competence through presentations and storytelling (Brown, 2001).

## 5. Importance of Teaching speaking in EFL/ESL Contexts

Baker and Westrup (2003) identify several overlapping functions that speaking serves in the language classroom, each of which has direct implications for pedagogy:

- ✧ Core means of communication: Speaking is the closest means that learners use to exchange ideas and interact with each other and build relationships, or the skill that brings language into actual use.
- ✧ Develops confidence and fluency: Helping learners to speak confidently without being afraid of making any mistakes, especially that these two elements are more important than accuracy at early stages of language acquisition as they present the first goal to effective communication.
- ✧ interactive nature speaking: oral communication demands respond and listening between learners to build up a conversation, which follows a given flow. This process enhances speaking once they express ideas they may agree or disagree with.
- ✧ classroom strategies: Maximizing speaking opportunities within the classroom setting comes with the teacher's encouragement to learners during the sessions, this comes with designed tasks for instance, group discussions, role plays, information gap activities ...etc., to develop communicative abilities that require speaking from the first place.

## **6. Internal and External Challenges Hindering the Speaking skill**

### **6.1. Internal challenges**

#### **6.1.1. Anxiety and Low Confidence**

Psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation often silence learners. In this context, Horwitz (2001) identifies anxiety as the dominant affective obstacle to oral production, arguing that elevated apprehension directly suppresses communicative willingness and degrades fluency by diverting cognitive resources away from language processing toward self-monitoring and avoidance.

#### **6.1.2. Limited Vocabulary and Grammar**

Learners frequently struggle to retrieve words and apply grammar in real time (in the moment needed) Nation (2011) demonstrates that lexical gaps are particularly debilitating in spoken production because speech is time-pressured: when the required word is unavailable, the entire communicative act stalls, producing hesitation, circumlocution, or breakdown.

### **6.1.3. Pronunciation Difficulties**

Pronunciation errors create misunderstandings and discourage learners from speaking. Pronunciation difficulties create communication breakdown and discourage participation, as learners fear accent-based judgment (Gilakjani, 2012).

### **6.1.4. Cognitive Processing Load**

Speaking requires simultaneous thinking, vocabulary recall, and grammar application. The simultaneous demands of real-time language processing impose significant cognitive load, resulting in hesitations and reduced fluency (Levelt, 1989).

## **6.2. External Challenges Hindering Speaking**

### **6.2.1. Curriculum and Assessment Constraints**

Institutional curricula and exams often marginalize oral skills. As Richards (2008) points out that “Traditional classrooms often prioritize grammar and writing, leaving speaking underdeveloped” (p. 21). Luoma (2004) adds that “Testing systems that neglect speaking skills discourage learners from investing effort in oral practice” (p. 5). Learners thus deprioritize speaking.

### **6.2.2. Lack of Infrastructure**

The absence of language labs and authentic practice opportunities limits oral development, in this regard, Taban (2023) highlights that “Lack of language lab is one of the vital challenges learners and teachers encounter in developing their speaking skills” (p. 14). Brown (2007) confirms that “Without authentic communicative practice, learners struggle to transfer classroom knowledge to real-world speaking” (p. 45).

### **6.2.3. Overcrowded Classrooms**

Large classroom sizes reduce speaking opportunities and restrict teacher feedback, since how would classroom interaction be successful if the setting itself is not suitable enough. Taban (2023) confirms that “Students have obstacles in EFL-speaking classrooms, like fear of making mistakes, shyness, limited vocabulary knowledge, and large class sizes” (p. 16). Overcrowding amplifies internal anxieties and discourages oral participation. Therefore, such circumstances can limit learners’ opportunities to develop as fluent speakers.

### **6.2.4. Teacher-Centered Pedagogy**

Many institutions rely on traditional, lecture-based methods rather than communicative approaches. Richards and Rodgers (2001) observe that despite CLT's explicit requirement for authentic interaction opportunities, many institutional contexts continue to organize teaching around teacher-led transmission, which may limit the interactive conditions that support communicative competence development. Internal challenges such as anxiety, limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and cognitive overload intersect with external challenges like curriculum constraints, lack of infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and teacher-centered pedagogy. Together, these barriers create a systemic cycle that hinders EFL learners' oral proficiency and communicative competence

### 7. Illustrative Diagram of Internal and External Challenges

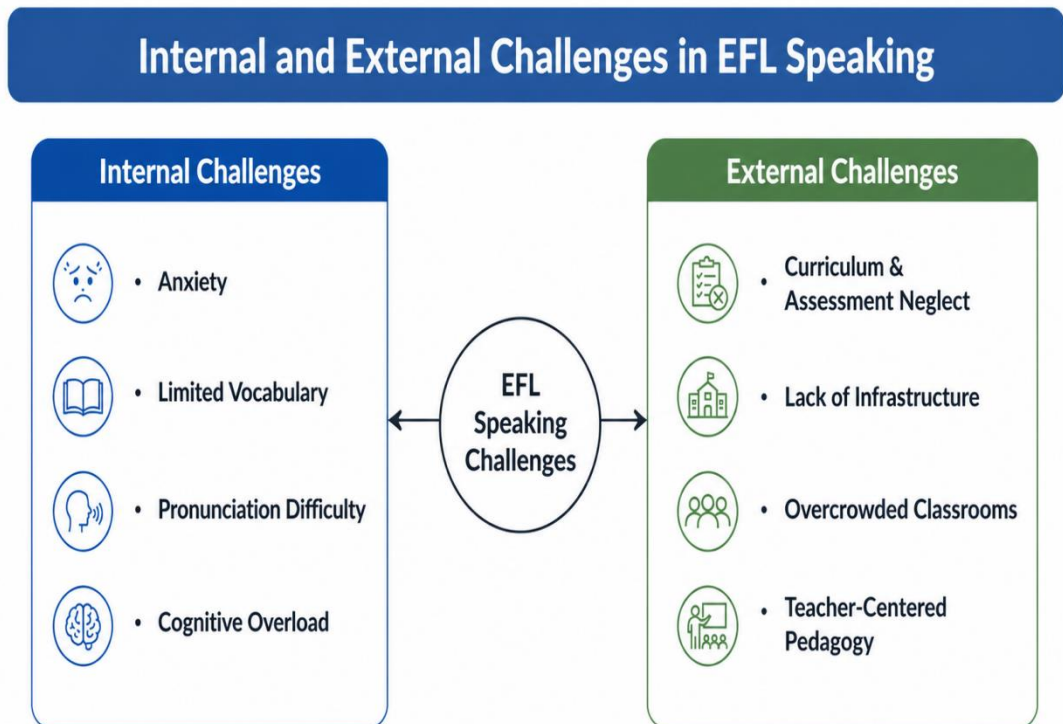


Figure 2 : Internal and external challenges in EFL speaking. (Adapted by the researchers).

## **Section Two: Communicative Activities as Effective Strategies to Develop EFL Learners' Speaking Skill**

### **Introduction**

Enhancing EFL learners' speaking skill is a central concern in contemporary language pedagogy. Traditional drilling-based sessions, however extensive, have proven insufficient for fostering genuine communicative competence. Furthermore, conventional learning environments do not always provide learners with the authentic contexts that support comfortable and spontaneous oral expression. This section examines communicative activities as effective pedagogical tools for developing speaking skills, with particular attention to their implementation within recognized educational frameworks such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the Competency-Based Approach (CBA), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

#### **1. Defining Communicative Activities**

Communicative activities have been defined from multiple theoretical perspectives. As defined in a research paper presented in an international conference on English language teaching in 2019 (America), Milal and Laily described communicative activities as: "communicative activities are conducted based on the belief that language is naturally functional for communication, rather than being merely formal or structural" (Milal & Laily, 2019, p. 3). This perspective holds that communicative activities are grounded in the view that language is a functional tool for communication, encompassing the exchange of ideas, problem-solving, and inquiry. They represent the stage at which acquired knowledge is transformed into active, authentic practice.

While Littlewood (1981) defines communicative activities by their functional orientation: their distinguishing characteristic is that they position learners as genuine language users engaged in authentic communicative exchange, rather than as formal system manipulators executing linguistic drills. It shows the role they play as an effective educational strategy that enables second language learners (SLL) and foreign language learners (FLL) to practice the target language in contextually meaningful communication.

Similarly, Savignon (1983) approaches communicative activities from a competence-development perspective, arguing that their defining quality is their capacity to engage learners simultaneously in authentic interaction, meaning negotiation, and the fluid integration of receptive and productive skills, conditions that structured drills systematically exclude. This integration is not incidental: productive oral competence is inseparable from receptive engagement, and any

pedagogy that treats speaking in isolation from listening or reading misrepresents the nature of real communicative exchange.

Moreover, Richards (2006) characterizes communicative activities in CLT as tasks whose design prioritises pragmatic language use and genuine information exchange over formal accuracy a reorientation that places the real communicative needs of the learner at the centre of the instructional encounter. Nowhere is this more consequential than in speaking development, where authentic interaction is not a supplementary enrichment but the very medium through which oral competence is built.

## **2. Types of communicative activities**

Communicative activities are one of the most effective pedagogical means that encourage learners to use a second language in real situations, since they show a great contribution to the enhancement of oral interaction. In EFL classrooms, the teachers' primary goal is to strengthen learners communicative competence and this can be realized through carefully designed tasks that enable them to express ideas in a natural, spontaneous way and develop their vocabulary by exchanging opinions and information.

In more practical terms, speaking using communicative activities are engaged under the teachers' supervision and guidance, Learners will be able to gradually enhance their speaking skill, as confirmed by Richards and Rodgers (2001) the success of communicative activities developed largely on teachers' ability to design tasks that are meaningful, varied and appropriate to learner's needs. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

### **2.1. Role Play**

Role play as a pedagogical device draws its theoretical legitimacy from two foundational learning traditions. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory positions collaborative, contextualized activity as the primary engine of cognitive development, while Piaget's (1936) constructivist framework argues that learners build knowledge through active engagement with their environment rather than passive reception of transmitted content. Both traditions converge in supporting simulation-based learning as a means of bridging the gap between classroom practice and authentic social participation.

Jacob Moreno, one of the pioneers of social psychology, first embodied this approach when he implemented it in psychodrama to understand human behavior based on emotions and responses to different circumstances. (Moreno, 1946). Moreover, Piaget (1936) asserted that learning based on role-play serves as a means of knowledge construction, since it occurs through active

engagement and interaction with the environment. In fact, this idea of knowledge construction goes back to constructivism that developed between the 1920s and 1936 onwards.

Within the communicative approach, role-play witnessed a revival and expansion, contributing to the development of communicative competence among EFL learners. This spread because of several factors, including:

- Ability to reduce anxiety and shyness, hence opening chances for classroom engagement and strengthening self-confidence.
- Boosting collaboration between learners and allowing them to use language in various situations.

## **2.2. Group discussions**

Group discussions are considered one of the most important activities in foreign language learning EFL and second language learning because they play a major role in shifting the focus from teacher-centered input to learners' interaction with classmates. In turn, they have shown a great impact on fostering learners' speaking skills. They are well-designed activities in which learners discuss assigned topics, solve problems, ask questions, and exchange ideas. Typically, they involve 3 to 6 learners who are guided by a given task while the teacher facilitates the discussion to ensure effectiveness of the topic (Johnson & Morrow, 1981).

Recent research stresses the success of collaborative tasks in improving speaking among learners by helping them overcome oral expression difficulties such as stress, shyness, and anxiety. Researchers also noticed learners' comfort and confidence in speaking. This shows that communicative activities are tasks that create a communicative environment engaging learners to use the target language effectively. Furthermore, Asguanti, Situmeang, and Priyatna (2025) reported that learners engaged in group discussions showed greater competence and interaction, which points to the effectiveness of fostering oral performance, and this aligns with the focus of the present research.

## **2.3. Debates**

For debates to bring valuable outcomes, teachers must select topics that capture learners' attention and interests, and subject matter that is related or relevant to current issues. The classroom is then divided into two teams: one opposing and the other supporting the motion. Each team needs to carefully study its position, gather claims supported with suitable evidence, and clarify each idea in front of the class for the purpose of persuasion. In this context, Zare and Othman (2013)

document the dual contribution of structured classroom debate to language development: the preparation phase, which requires learners to research positions and construct evidence-based arguments, drives lexical expansion and grammatical precision, while the live exchange phase develops the real-time processing speed and organizational coherence that constitute productive fluency. At the same time, fluency also develops thanks to continuous and organized speech, which reduces diminished self-confidence. Once learners feel comfortable, speech flows more smoothly. Therefore, classroom debates are considered an effective tool that improves learners' speaking abilities.

#### **2.4. Information gap activities**

Johnson and Morrow (1981) identify information gap as the structural condition that gives communicative activities their authentic character: when one interlocutor possesses information the other requires, the exchange ceases to be a linguistic exercise and becomes a genuine communicative transaction driven by real informational need. Additionally, Harmer (1991) emphasizes that speaking becomes easier when learners hold different pieces of information and must exchange what is missing. Other university studies in Uzbekistan (2020) confirmed the role of such activities in developing motivation and communicative skills. The effectiveness of this activity is maximized when teachers explain the procedure clearly, ensuring learners focus on the main points of the tasks.

#### **2.5. Using audio-visuals**

Richards and Rodgers (2001) described visual aids as supportive educational materials that contain visual and sound elements to illustrate teaching content. They include resources such as pictures, audio-books, and videos. These aids support the teaching-learning process, ensuring lessons are easily grasped. Most importantly, they create dynamic settings where learners listen, see, and practice speaking, for example by recording dialogues and videos.

#### **2.6. Storytelling**

Storytelling is considered one of the most enjoyable and powerful educational tools to develop fluency. When learners narrate personal experiences or reconstruct stories from pictures, they use the target language naturally, reducing hesitation and producing a smooth flow of ideas. Richards (2006) noted that communicative activities bring learners together, and when learners share personal stories, their fluency increases due to motivation and eagerness to narrate something exciting. Heaven (2000, p. 75) identified storytelling as a motivating technique, stating: "Factual

and conceptual information is learned faster and better, and will be remembered longer, recalled more readily, applied more accurately when that information is delivered as a well-told story.”

### **2.7. Presentations**

In English language teaching (ELT) and EFL contexts, presentations are a type of communicative activity established for the purpose of boosting self-reliance, engaging learners in communication, and fostering fluency with the capacity to arrange ideas, as defined by Harmer (2007, p. 123). Drawing upon the insights of Richards and Rodgers (2001), oral presentations play a major role in active engagement and are effective in training learners on language use.

### **2.8. Dialogue**

Dialogues stand as a didactic strategy and pedagogical technique that enhance learners' fluency and self-confidence. Where teachers provide a chance to learners for talks in designed task, by asking them through open-ended questions so that they respond orally, when dealing with a given topic, it functions as effective device in promoting learners' collaboration, whether through exchanging information, beliefs, or feelings spontaneously. In this context, Hymes (1972, pp. 269–293) described dialogue as an effective tool for language use and grammar in diverse contexts.

### **2.9. Classroom interaction**

A communicative task where both teachers and learners exchange ideas, ask and answer questions dynamically. It is a very useful tool for the refinement of communicative skills, fostering fluency and active reception of information authentically, as noted by Richards and Rodgers: “Communicative activities are purposeful tasks designed to promote authentic interaction” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 90). This refers to their role in boosting classroom collaboration and interaction among learners using a foreign language.

## **3. Communicative competence**

In the early 1970s, language teaching was influenced by structuralism, which viewed language as a set of grammatical structures and vocabulary aimed at mastering rules. This perception, which treated language as a closed system of laws, pushed Dell Hymes to criticize it through his famous statement: Hymes (1972) challenged the dominant structuralist orthodoxy by

demonstrating that grammatical knowledge without sociolinguistic competence is communicatively inert: knowing the rules of a language is insufficient without knowing when, where, with whom, and for what purposes those rules are appropriately deployed.

In the same context, Littlewood (1981, p. 3) asserted the impossibility of theory without practice, emphasizing that language learning must be grounded in classroom implementations. He explained that communicative competence involves both functional aspects of language use (to combine meanings) and social aspects (to involve them in social contexts). Littlewood (1981) elaborates this point by describing communicative competence as a socially situated repertoire, the accumulated capacity to judge appropriately when to speak and when silence is more fitting, what topics are admissible with specific interlocutors, and how to evaluate the communicative success of one's own and others' contributions.

#### **4. Competency-Based Approach (CBA)**

The competency-based approach emerged in the United States within studies focusing on the actual performance of EFL and ESL learners. Traditional intelligence tests did not necessarily reflect real learners' abilities. McClelland (1973) criticized this in his famous article *Testing for Competence Rather Than Intelligence*, emphasizing the need to measure learners' actual performance, behavior, and skills through real-life tasks. McClelland (1973) repositions competence as a performance-oriented construct rooted in observable behaviour and motivational disposition rather than in abstract cognitive capacity, arguing that this broader conception cannot be captured by intelligence testing alone.

From this intellectual background, scholars such as Perrenoud (1997) and Roegiers (2000) developed CBA into a pedagogical framework that employs learners' capacities and knowledge to solve complex educational situations, thereby making the learner the center of the learning process. Roegiers (2000, p. 15) explained competence as: "L'intégration de savoir, savoir-faire et attitude dans une situation-problème." Similarly, Perrenoud (1997) gave competence a dynamic view, considering it a process that mobilizes multiple cognitive resources to face a family of situations.

In Algeria, CBA was officially adopted in 2003 as the main teaching approach in secondary schools, aiming to enable learners to become active participants capable of applying their language skills in real contexts to meet the needs of society and the labor market.

#### **5. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

Communicative language teaching is the theoretical framework that most directly underpins this study, and it merits critical evaluation rather than simple endorsement. CLT emerged in the

1970s as a principled reaction to grammar-translation and audio-lingual drilling, shifting the conception of language from a structural system to be memorized into a sociolinguistic tool to be deployed in meaningful interaction. Brumfit and Johnson (1979) articulate the foundational CLT principle that grammatical form derives its pedagogical legitimacy entirely from its serviceability to communicative function: form is not the destination of language learning but a vehicle toward it. Richards and Rodgers (2001) usefully caution that CLT is not a single method but an umbrella approach, encompassing diverse implementations from task-based language teaching to content-based instruction, all united by the priority of communicative competence over structural accuracy. However, CLT is not without its critics, and intellectual honesty demands that these objections be addressed before the approach is applied to the Algerian secondary context. Swan (2005) argued influentially that CLT rests on questionable assumptions: that learners learn language by using it, that errors should be tolerated in the name of fluency, and that grammar instruction is largely unnecessary. He contended that these assumptions, derived primarily from English-speaking Western contexts, do not transfer straightforwardly to educational cultures where examinations are grammar-focused and large class sizes make individualized communicative feedback impractical. Hu (2005) extended this critique to Asian EFL contexts, arguing that CLT's learner-centered, interaction-based model conflicts with deeply embedded Confucian pedagogical norms. Both critiques carry partial relevance to Algeria: the national baccalauréat continues to prioritize written grammatical accuracy, and the classroom sizes documented in this study (overcrowding is explicitly identified as a structural barrier) make the full CLT ideal difficult to realize. The present study's position, derived from these critical readings, is that CLT is not adopted here as an ideology but as a pragmatic, evidence-based toolkit. Communicative activities are not deployed as a wholesale replacement for form-focused instruction but as a complement to existing practice, with the aim of giving learners more opportunities to activate their grammatical knowledge in real communicative interaction. This is precisely the gap that Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis and Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, taken together, would predict: comprehensible input alone produces receptive competence; it is only through pushed output, the pressure to produce language under communicative conditions that procedural oral fluency develops. In the Algerian secondary school context studied, where written exam preparation receives considerable instructional time, even a limited, structured communicative intervention produced measurable and positive effects, as this study demonstrates.

## 6. The Role of learners in the Speaking Skill Process

Learners of EFL speaking skills play an essential role in information exchange, as they require the use of the target language for meaningful interaction. They engage in turn-taking, negotiation of meaning, and conversations with classmates, which helps reduce anxiety and stress when they speak comfortably through activities such as storytelling, group discussions, or self-expression in front of audiences. Active engagement is necessary for the development of oral proficiency, achieved through multiple speaking activities; whether intensive drills, interactive dialogues, extensive tasks, or responsive exchanges. These gradually build learners into self-assured speakers capable of refining their speaking skills. Learners are no longer passive recipients of information but dynamic participants in interaction with teachers and classmates. In light of this, Buscaglia (1982) stated: “Change is the end result of all true learning” (p. 58). Thus, change comes through conscious practice and eagerness to become better learners able to overcome their fears.

## 7. The Role of the Teacher in Promoting the Speaking Skill

The teacher’s mission in teaching speaking goes beyond presenting content. Teachers should design tasks that capture learners’ attention and keep them motivated. For instance, role-play and group discussions give learners opportunities to speak while interacting, especially when teachers guide them toward self-correction. This naturally builds confidence and reduces nervousness. Additionally, activities such as storytelling, presentations, and debates help learners use a second language while gaining new vocabulary and structures. Step by step, learners develop fluency and accuracy, highlighting the teacher’s role as the creator of a classroom atmosphere conducive to regular practice.

Moreover, teachers must be patient and capable of preparing learners, strengthening their interest in the subject, and facilitating learning. A lack of concern for these aspects creates hesitant learners fearful of practicing, which hinders fluency and accuracy. As Chung (2005, p. 58) emphasized: “Effective teachers are enthusiastic, warm, stimulating, and imaginative

## Conclusion

This chapter examined existing research on various aspects related to speaking skill, emphasizing its role as a productive and communicative tool in language learning. It highlighted the internal, external, and pedagogical challenges that hinder learners’ oral performance, ranging from psychological barriers and linguistic limitations to curricular constraints and classroom

conditions. Furthermore, it explored the implementation of communicative activities (CAs), their types, and the competencies through which they can be effectively integrated into EFL classroom. The literature review demonstrated that speaking skill is central to communication and learner interaction, yet it remains marginalized in many educational contexts, particularly within Algerian secondary schools. As a result, EFL teachers are urged to adopt communicative activities not merely as supplementary tasks but as core pedagogical strategies that foster fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence. Accordingly, the following chapter will present the practical research design, detailing the methodological framework, research tools, and procedures for data collection and analysis. This design will follow the proposed competencies and communicative activities to investigate their effectiveness in enhancing speaking skill among secondary school learners.

**Chapter Two**  
**Research design and**  
**Methodology**

## **Introduction**

while the previous chapters reviewed theories concerning the theoretical basis of speaking and communicative activities with their role in fostering EFL learners' speaking skill. The present chapter deals with a practical side of the research, since it presents details on the methodological framework followed; also, it gives an image on content selection and sampling. It also explains the tools used for data collection, specifically, shedding light on classroom observations and whether pre-test and post- test and students and teachers' questionnaires were used to gather insights regarding learners' speaking performance.

### **1. Research Method**

To begin with, the purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of communicative activities in fostering oral expression among EFL learners at Amzil Mhamed secondary school, and all sorts of barriers hindering them when learning speaking, subsequently, a quasi-experimental mixed method approach is adopted, since it grants a detailed examination of the selected aspects of speaking, supported by numerical findings. Furthermore, it enables researchers to present credible and implementable results. In addition to deeper insights regarding the research topic related to EFL classroom context.

The design of this research follows a quasi-experimental approach, as outlined by Creswell (2014) in his work *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, which affirmed that quasi-experimental designs are an important part of quantitative strategies and are highly suitable for educational contexts. Moreover, this framework is widely accepted in applied linguistics and TEFL methodology, making it appropriate for investigating the impact of communicative activities on learners' speaking skills. Our work relies on the case study design as the investigation focuses on final year learners of secondary school.

In didactics, the case study is defined as a scientific research approach that enables the researcher to view the case as a whole from multiple angles. In fact, Yin (2009) defines the case study as an empirical strategy suited precisely to situations where the phenomenon under investigation is inseparable from the context in which it occurs , where drawing a clean boundary between the two would distort rather than clarify the object of inquiry. This inseparability of context and phenomenon is exactly the condition that characterizes classroom-based EFL research. Merriam (1998) emphasizes the holistic and bounded nature of the case study: it produces intensive, contextually embedded analysis of a specific, delimited unit of inquiry whether a

program, an institution, or a social process, generating depth of understanding that survey designs cannot achieve.

### **1.1. The Use of Case Studies**

According to Yin (2009), case studies are a flexible research strategy used to explain, describe, or explore phenomena within their real-life contexts from multiple perspectives. In this study, the case study approach was applied to the context of Amzil Mhamed Secondary School, while a quasi-experimental design was used to measure the effect of communicative activities on the speaking skills of final-year EFL learners. This combination allowed for the collection of measurable evidence of learners' progress.

## **2. Population and sampling technique**

### **2.1. Population**

The study targets a population of 90 Secondary School EFL learners at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School and they are divided into two main Streams: scientific and foreign languages. The choice of the school was for its accessibility and consistency of the research goals.

### **2.2. Sampling technique**

Following the presentation of the overall population, it is necessary to clarify and justify the sampling procedure. This study employs a quota sampling technique, with 15 participants selected from each stream, yielding a total learner sample of 30. Cohen and Manion (2018) confirm that stratified sampling ensures proportional representation of sub-groups, thereby reducing selection bias and enhancing the internal validity of the findings. While a sample of 30 is admittedly modest, it is methodologically appropriate for a bounded case study within a single institution: Yin (2009) explicitly defends small purposive samples in case study research, arguing that analytical generalization transferring findings to theoretical propositions rather than statistical populations does not require large numbers. The 33% sampling fraction (30 out of 90) further strengthens confidence in the representativeness of the data within this specific context, even if wider generalization to Algerian secondary EFL classrooms as a whole must be treated cautiously. It should be noted that an opportunity sample of three practicing EFL teachers at the same institution was also recruited for the qualitative strand. Although three respondents fall below the threshold normally required for statistical inference, this figure is consistent with purposive, information-rich sampling in qualitative inquiry: Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) argue that small purposive samples are entirely defensible when the aim is depth of insight rather than population representative. The teacher questionnaire data are therefore interpreted thematically and treated as

a source of professional corroboration for the quantitative learner findings, not as a basis for generalization. Readers should bear this distinction in mind when evaluating the teacher-related tables and figures throughout Chapter Three. A methodologically significant feature of this study's design concerns the status of the remaining 60 learners who were not selected for the intervention group. These learners, drawn from the same total population of 90 at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School, continued to receive conventional grammar-centered instruction throughout the period of the intervention. They were not administered pre-tests, post-tests, or questionnaires; however, the three participating EFL teachers who taught both the intervention group and the wider student body were in a position to observe and compare oral performance across both groups. Their consistent testimony that the 60 non-participating learners demonstrated no comparable improvement in speaking during the same period constitutes an important source of contextual corroboration. While this group cannot be designated a formal control group in the strict experimental sense, since no formal measurement was applied to them and random assignment was not possible. They nonetheless function as a naturalistic comparison group within the quasi-experimental framework. Cook and Campbell (1979) recognize this type of non-equivalent comparison group as a legitimate design feature in quasi-experimental educational research, noting that practitioner observation of differential outcomes between intervention and non-intervention groups, when documented systematically, provides meaningful evidence against rival explanations such as maturation or historical effects. The inclusion of this comparison dimension therefore strengthens the internal validity of the study's causal claims and partially addresses the limitation that a pre-test/post-test design without a formally designated control group would otherwise present.

### **3. Data collection instruments**

In this research, the data is gathered about the effectiveness of communicative activities in developing speaking skill among EFL learners. To achieve this goal, two research instruments are selected to collect data. Namely, pre-test and post-test, in addition to questionnaires for students of third year and teachers. The choice is made deliberately to utilize them since they are adequate for the collection of valid and reliable data.

#### **3.1. Pre-test and Post-test**

The pre-test–post-test design measures the same construct at two points in time before and after a defined intervention to establish the direction and magnitude of change caused by that intervention (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.). This design serves as an effective data

collection instrument for assessing research outcomes before and after implementing an instructional program, instrument, or treatment. Together, the pre-test and post-test function as methodological tools within experimental and quasi-experimental designs, enabling researchers to evaluate effectiveness, quantify improvement, and provide a real perspective on changes resulting from program interventions. Similarly, Stratton (2019) situates the pre-test–post-test framework within the broader category of quasi-experimental research, noting its particular utility for measuring attitudinal, perceptual, and knowledge-based change in contexts where full experimental randomization is not feasible. In our case, pre-test and post-test were administered to third-year students of Amzil Mhamed Secondary School to measure their speaking performance before and after the implementation of communicative activities.

### **3.1.1. The use of pre-test and post-test**

The pre-test and post-test design, as outlined by the APA Dictionary of Psychology (n.d.) and Stratton (2019), They serve as a reliable instrument within experimental and quasi-experimental frameworks. By establishing a baseline through the pre-test and measuring outcomes through the post-test, this tool enables researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs, quantify improvement, and provide authentic evidence of change. In our study, administering pre- and post-tests to third-year students at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School provided clear insights into their speaking performance before and after the implementation of communicative activities. Therefore, this methodological choice not only strengthened the validity of the findings but also provided, measurable evidence of the intervention’s impact, thereby supporting the overall rigor and credibility of the research design.


### **3.1.2. Pre-test design**

The design of the pre-test is based on Douglas Brown’s model for classifying speaking tasks (Picture-cued task), where learners are asked to describe a picture of a landscape followed by a group discussion about the importance of nature. The main goal is to measure: fluency (continuous speech), accuracy (whether they produce correct structures), and self-confidence, which is the courage to take part in the task. As argued by Bygate (1987), authentic tasks are the most appropriate means of assessing speaking performance.

**minimal pairs**

Picture-cued elicitation of minimal pairs

Test-takers see:




Test-takers hear: [test administrator points to each picture in succession]  
What's this?

- Performance at **both** intensive and extensive level
- Composed of a series that tells a **story or incident**
- Stimulated through a more elaborate picture

**comparative**

Picture-cued elicitation of comparatives (Brown & Sahni, 1994, p. 135)

Test-takers see:



Test-takers hear: Use a comparative form to compare these objects.

*Figure 3 : Picture-clued tasks (Brown & Sahni, 1994, p. 135).*

### 3.1.3. Post-test design

The post-test was constructed to evaluate the cumulative effect of the communicative intervention on the learners' oral proficiency. To maintain thematic continuity and control for topical vocabulary variance, the post-test retained the same thematic focus as the pre-test ("World Arbor Day" / March 21st). To assess contextualized linguistic application, it utilized an integrated, multi-tiered task combining a role-play, a group discussion, and a structured debate. Specifically, learners participated in a simulated television talk show centered on environmental ethics. The cohort was divided into two competing teams: one advocating for environmental preservation and the other defending industrial and urban expansion. This interactive format allowed the researcher to systematically measure identical oral performance parameters—namely fluency, structural accuracy, and conversational confidence—under naturalistic interactional pressure. The aim was to assess the effect of the communicative intervention on learners' oral performance across these three criteria.

## 4. Student's questionnaire

A questionnaire is a structured data collection instrument composed of a set of written questions designed to obtain specific information from respondents. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) recommend the questionnaire as a data collection instrument valued for its capacity to gather structured information from multiple respondents simultaneously, its independence from

researcher presence during administration, and the relative transparency of its analytical procedures. In the context of EFL research, questionnaires are particularly valuable because they allow researchers to gather large amounts of data from multiple participants in a time-efficient manner, capture subjective perceptions and attitudes that cannot be directly observed, and provide a clear picture that facilitates comparison across respondents. In this study, two separate questionnaires were designed: one targeting learners and one targeting practising teachers, each structured to address the research questions from complementary perspectives.

#### **4.1. Aims of the Questionnaire**

The learners' questionnaire was designed to explore the perceptions of EFL learners and teachers regarding the speaking skill and to examine the extent to which communicative activities contribute to the improvement of oral performance. Such an instrument facilitates the collection of a considerable range of data within a limited time frame. It prioritizes learners' voices in the case study, captures their classroom experiences and attitudes towards speaking, and provides evidence not only of self-assessment skills, but also of their areas of difficulty and weakness

This focus is consistent with the quasi-experimental approach adopted in this research. It aims to gather learners' viewpoints and relate them to the broader objectives of both theory and practice by evaluating the impact of communicative activities in the secondary school context, thereby contributing to deeper understanding of effectiveness of communicative language strategies in secondary school context.

#### **4.2. Students' Questionnaire**

The design of learners' questionnaire is for the purpose of understanding students' perspectives, feelings regarding the challenges they encounter in the speaking classes. It includes (Three) sections and each section contains questions related to a targeted element. First, In the first section, students were kindly asked to answer personal questions, such as: age, gender and stream of study. As for the second, it is dedicated to their views regarding communicative activities. Whereas, the third was specifically designed for the challenges they face at the level of oral expression.

#### **4.3. Teachers' Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire was administered to three practicing EFL teachers at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School. Although this number is small, it reflects the actual size of the EFL teaching staff available at the institution during the research period, and purposive access to this specific professional group was the determining criterion. All three teachers provided complete

responses, yielding a 100% return rate. The questionnaire consists of three sections: the first collects demographic and professional information (gender, years of experience, stream taught); the second probes teachers' perceptions of the main obstacles learners face in oral production; and the third examines the communicative strategies teachers deploy and the challenges they encounter in implementation. Because the sample is  $n = 3$ , all frequency percentages in the associated tables (Tables 18–26) represent single respondents as 33.3% and two respondents as 66.7%. These figures are reported for structural consistency with the quantitative learner data but must be read as illustrative of individual professional perspectives rather than as statistically representative distributions. The analytical value of this strand lies in its capacity to triangulate and contextualize the learner findings, not to produce generalized claims about EFL teachers in Algeria.

### 5. Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected in this study were analyzed using two complementary analytical frameworks. For quantitative data, IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26) was employed to compute frequency distributions, valid percentages, cumulative percentages, and descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for all closed-ended items in the learners' questionnaire. Pre-test and post-test scores were compiled, tabulated, and compared numerically to measure learners' progress across fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence in both streams. Regarding assessment reliability, both researchers scored each learner independently using the Speaking Skill Development assessment Checklist (Appendix A) during both the pre-test and post-test sessions. Initial agreement was calculated prior to consensual reconciliation: across both sessions, raters agreed exactly on 78% of individual criterion scores, and discrepancies never exceeded one point on the 0–3 scale, indicating acceptable inter-rater consistency for a rubric of this scope (Cohen, 1988). Consensual discussion resolved all discrepancies, and final agreed scores were used in all subsequent analysis. The use of two trained raters applying an explicit behavioral rubric significantly strengthens the validity of the performance data relative to single-rater assessment designs. For qualitative data, thematic analysis was applied to the three teachers' open-ended questionnaire responses following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase procedure: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. All responses were transcribed verbatim, coded inductively, and then organized into recurring thematic categories that were subsequently interpreted in relation to the research questions. To ensure transparency, only themes supported by responses from at least two of the three participants are presented as findings; single-respondent observations are reported as illustrative rather than representative. This two-pronged analytical

approach ensures a balanced examination that covers both the measurable outcomes of the instructional intervention and the professional perceptions of practitioners regarding communicative activities in the Algerian secondary EFL context.

#### Data Collection Timeline

The Foreign Languages group conducted the pre-test on Monday, February 23, followed by the questionnaire on Thursday, February 26, and finally the post-test on Thursday, March 5. Similarly, the Scientific group began with the pre-test on Tuesday, February 24, then completed the questionnaire on Wednesday, February 25, and concluded with the post-test on Wednesday, March 4.

### **6. Scope and Limitations**

At Amzil Mohammed secondary school, the research faced a number of constraints. First limited financial resources led to reducing a variety of tasks that could have been implemented, in addition to time restrictions, which affected the research process. Moreover, certain administrative constraints such as: limited flexibility of some participants posed an extra challenge. In spite of that, the case study conducted within a quasi-experimental design did not prevent it from offering meaningful insights about the effectiveness of communicative activities and developing EFL Learners speaking skill in Algerian secondary school context.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the methodological framework of the study. It introduced the research design, detailed the target population and sampling procedure, described the data collection instruments, explained the analytical approach, and outlined the limitations of the investigation. The following chapter will proceed to present and interpret the empirical findings.

**Chapter Three**  
**Presentation and**  
**Interpretation of**  
**Findings**

## Section one: Presentation and interpretation of findings

### Introduction

Having established the theoretical framework and methodological procedures in the preceding chapters, the present chapter is devoted to the presentation and interpretation of the empirical findings. Results from the pre-test and post-test are analyzed alongside the outcomes of the communicative activity tasks. Questionnaire data are subsequently presented to provide complementary insights into learners' perceptions of speaking challenges and the effectiveness of communicative instruction..

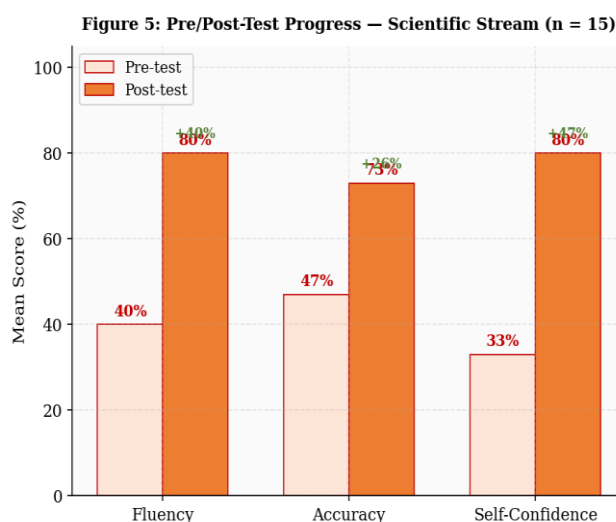
#### 1. Analysis of Pre-test and Post -test

For the purposes of the study, pre-test was designed in a way that they incorporated three types of communicative activities. The sample was asked to describe a spring landscape picture and take notes for the record then discuss them with their classmates in order to design a short role play in TV talk show context to be performed as a debate eventually.

##### 1.1. Foreign Languages Stream

Skill	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (%)	Progress
Fluency	60%	87%	27%
Accuracy	53%	80%	27%
Self-confidence	47%	87%	40%

*Table 1 : Analysis of students' progress in foreign languages stream*



**Figure 4:** Analysis of students' progress in foreign languages stream.

The results presented in the table and figure above indicate that learners in the Foreign Languages stream showed a reasonable baseline in fluency and accuracy, which is consistent with their academic track. Following the intervention, both fluency and accuracy improved by more than 27 percentage points, and self-confidence recorded an increase of more than 40% of the

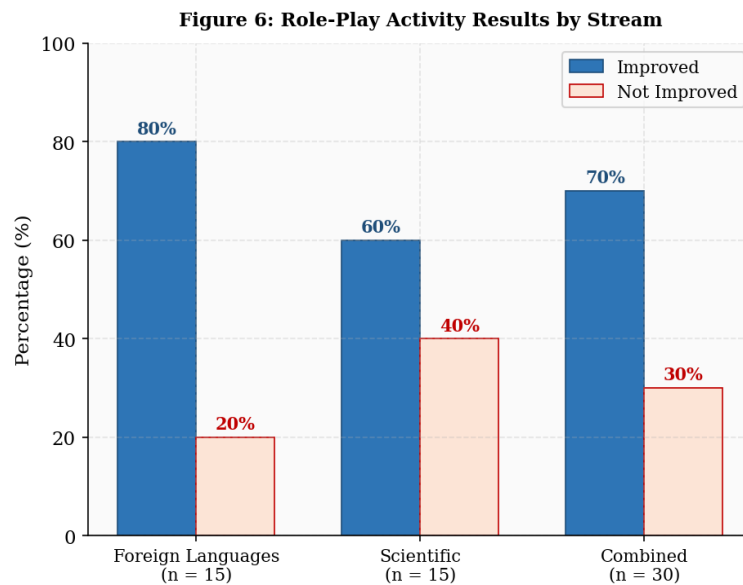
In terms of accuracy and self-confidence to some extent, especially that they are dealing with their discipline.

Even after the implementation of test there was a balanced improvement in fluency and accuracy, since the results demonstrated the growth of more than 27% Rate as well as self-confidence witness the noticeable increase into more than 40% of the sample which refers to the effectiveness of communicative tasks on the emotional Readiness of learners as well as the speaking performance.

### 1.2. Scientific Stream

Skill	Pre -test (%)	Post-test (%)	Progress
<b>Fluency</b>	40%	80%	40%
<b>Accuracy</b>	47%	73%	26%
<b>Self-confidence</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>47%</b>

*Table 2: Analysis of Students' Progress in Speaking — Scientific Stream2*



*Figure 5 : Analysis of students' progress in scientific stream.*

The chart above shows the level of development in speaking skill concerning learners of scientific stream as in the pre-test, learners' fluency and confidence was weak since they focus on a daily basis on mathematics and scientific subjects, additionally English isn't their essential subject, besides they are not having enough exposure to communicative tasks especially in sessions of English.

Though there was a significant improvement after applying the test, as a result showed the progress of more than 40% of students when it comes to fluency with a noticeable development exceeding to more than 26% self-confidence as well recorded the highest percentage with the rate of more than 47%

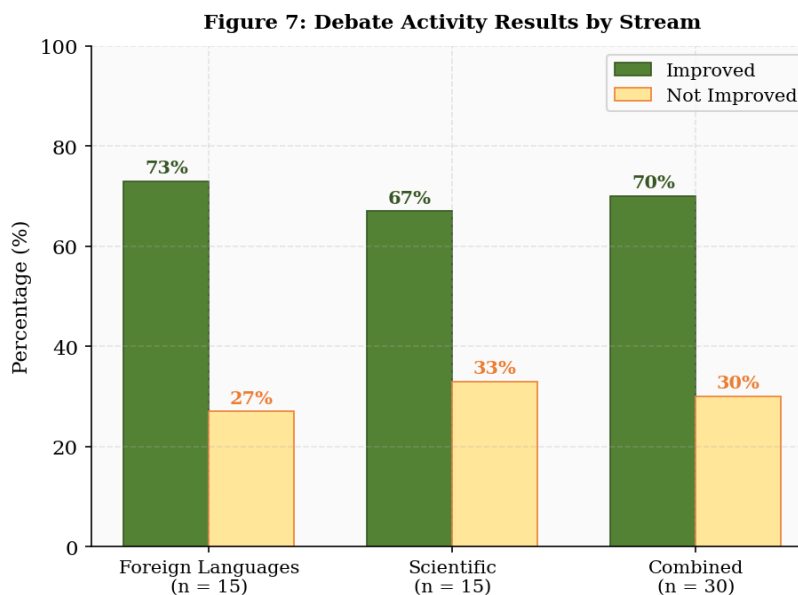
## **2. Evaluating Outcomes through Implemented Communicative Activities:**

### **2.1.Outcomes of the Role Play Task**

Role-play was selected as the first communicative task owing to its motivational value and its capacity to simulate authentic interaction. It was employed to assess learners' self-confidence, readiness to engage, and fluency under realistic communicative conditions. The task required participants to perform a role-play in a restaurant setting, a familiar context chosen for its potential to reduce anxiety and encourage spontaneous oral production.

<b>Stream</b>	<b>Improved</b>	<b>Not Improved</b>	<b>% Improved</b>	<b>% Not Improved</b>
Foreign Languages (n = 15)	12	3	80%	20%
Scientific (n = 15)	9	6	60%	40%
Combined Total (n = 30)	21	9	70%	30%

*Table 3: Results of the Role-Play Task*



*Figure 6: Results of role-play activity*

The table and figure above present the results of the role-play activity, analyzed separately by stream. Among the Foreign Languages stream participants (n = 15), twelve students (80%) demonstrated measurable improvement in their spoken performance, while three (20%) did not show notable progress.

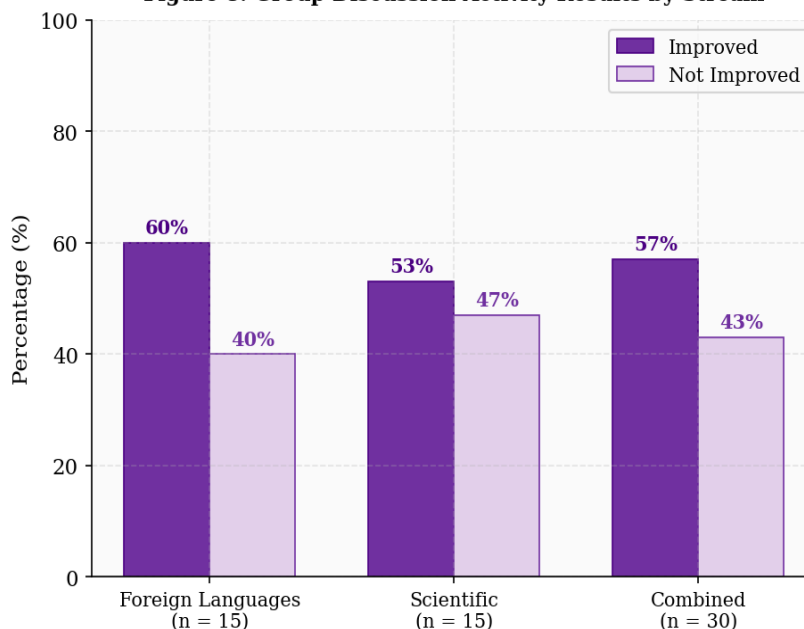
In the Scientific stream, nine out of fifteen learners (60%) demonstrated measurable improvement following the role-play task, while six (40%) showed no notable progress. This outcome suggests that while the activity was effective for the majority, a significant proportion of scientific-track learners continued to encounter difficulties, likely owing to their limited prior exposure to oral communicative tasks.

## 2.2. Debate Activity Results

Stream	Improved	Not Improved	% Improved	% Not Improved
Foreign Languages (n = 15)	11	4	73%	27%
Scientific (n = 15)	10	5	67%	33%
Combined Total (n = 30)	21	9	70%	30%

*Table 4: Results of the Debate Activity*

**Figure 8: Group Discussion Activity Results by Stream**



**Figure 7: Results of Debate activity**

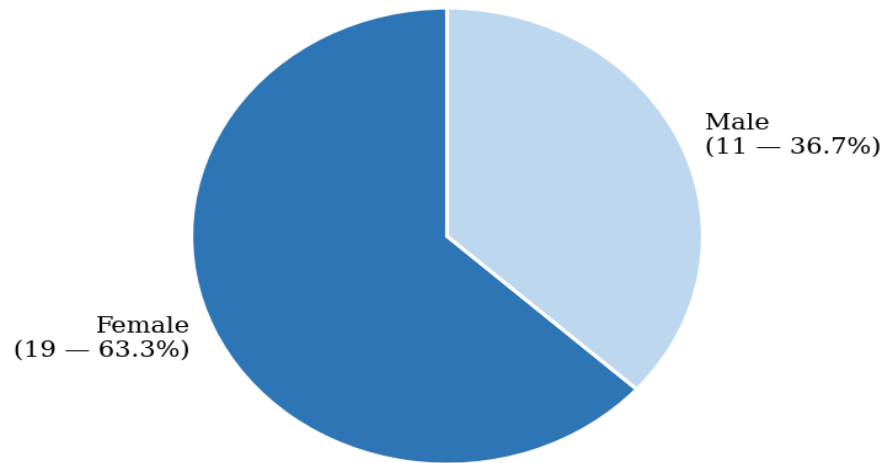
The table and figure above present the results of the debate activity across both streams (total  $n = 30$ ). In the Foreign Languages stream, eleven students (73%) demonstrated improvement in their oral performance, while four (27%) did not. In the Scientific stream, ten students (67%) showed measurable progress, while five (33%) did not. Across both streams combined, twenty-one participants (70%) improved, confirming that the structured debate is a highly effective communicative activity for developing both fluency and lexical accuracy. The marginally lower improvement rate in the Scientific stream is consistent with these learners' reduced weekly exposure to English oral tasks.

### 2.3. Group discussion results

Stream	Improved	Not Improved	% Improved	% Not Improved
Foreign Languages (n = 15)	9	6	60%	40%
Scientific (n = 15)	8	7	53%	47%
Combined Total (n = 30)	17	13	57%	43%

**Table 5: Results of the Group Discussion Task**

**Figure 9: Gender Distribution (Learners, n = 30)**



**Figure 8 : Results of group discussion task**

The table and figure above present the results of the group discussion activity across both streams. In the Foreign Languages stream, nine out of fifteen learners (60%) demonstrated measurable improvement in their speaking performance, while six (40%) showed no notable progress. of 60% of the group40% remained at the same level defining suggests that the group discussion test was very helpful for the majority of the participants.

## **Section Two: Presentation of Questionnaire Data and Interpretation of Findings.**

### **Introduction**

This section is devoted to the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected from the two research instruments: a learners' questionnaire administered to thirty (30) secondary school EFL learners, and a teachers' questionnaire administered to three practicing EFL teachers. The purpose of these instruments is to investigate the multiple barriers facing the teaching-learning process and preventing learners from improving their English speaking skill in the secondary school context.

The data are presented sequentially. For the learners' questionnaire, each item is analyzed individually using SPSS-generated frequency tables followed by a detailed interpretive commentary. For the teachers' questionnaire, responses are presented thematically and discussed qualitatively. The chapter closes with a synthesis that connects the findings to the research questions and hypotheses formulated at the outset of the study.

All numerical data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). Frequencies, valid percentages, and cumulative percentages are reported for each closed item. Where appropriate, cross-tabulations and descriptive statistics are also provided.

## 1. Analysis of the Learners' Questionnaire

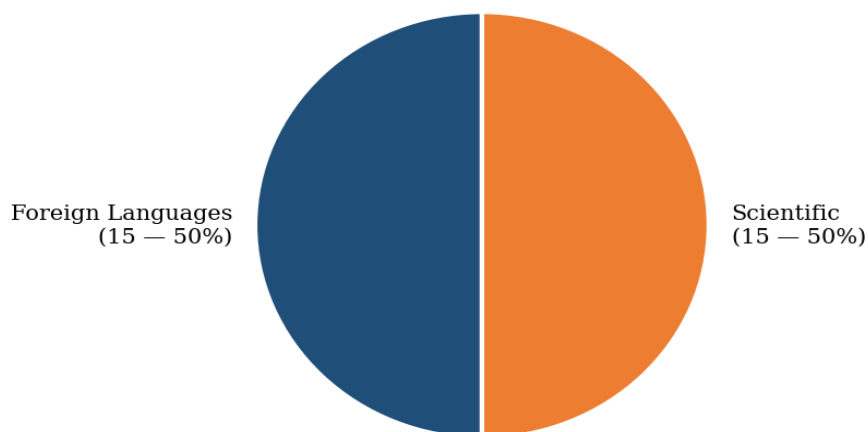
The learners' questionnaire was distributed to a random sample of thirty (30) secondary school EFL learners. The questionnaire comprises four parts: personal information, challenges in speaking, communicative activities, and evaluation of oral performance. The following subsections present the SPSS frequency analysis for each item.

### Part I – Personal Information

#### Q 01 – Gender Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Male	11	36.7%	36.7%	36.7%
Female	19	63.3%	63.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 10: Stream of Study – Proportional Stratified Sample (n = 30)**



**Figure 9: Gender Distribution (Learners)**

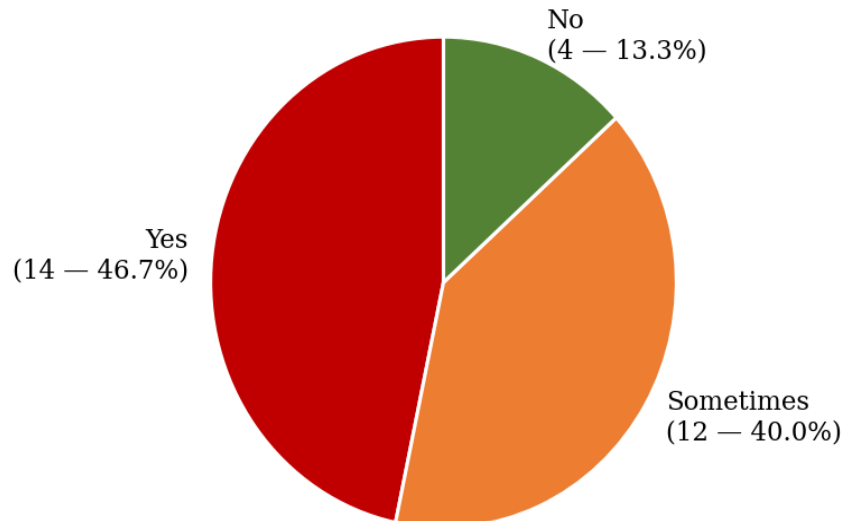
Table 01 reveals that the sample comprises 19 female learners (63.3%) and 11 male learners (36.7%). Female learners thus constitute the majority of the sample. This distribution reflects the general tendency observed in secondary school language classes in Algeria, where female students tend to be more numerous and more actively engaged in language-related subjects. This gender imbalance may bear some influence on the results pertaining to anxiety and willingness to communicate, as previous research suggests that female learners may exhibit stronger integrative motivation in EFL contexts (Dörnyei, 2001).

#### Q 02 – Stream of Study

**Table 6:** Frequency Distribution by Stream of Study

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Languages	15	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Sciences	15	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	30	100.0%	100.0%	

**Figure 11: Speaking Anxiety When Speaking in Front of Classmates (n = 30)**



**Figure 10:** Stream of Study

As displayed in Table 02, the sample is equally distributed between the two target streams, with fifteen learners from the Foreign Languages stream (50%) and fifteen from the Scientific stream (50%), reflecting the quota sampling technique described in Chapter Two. This balanced distribution ensures the validity and comparability of the findings across both educational tracks.

**Part II – Challenges in Speaking English**

### Q 03 – Difficulties When Speaking English

**Table 7:** Frequency Distribution – Speaking Difficulties

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Lack of vocabulary	22	73.3%	73.3%	73.3%
Fear of making mistakes	21	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%
Weak pronunciation	14	46.7%	46.7%	46.7%
Limited opportunities to speak	11	36.7%	36.7%	36.7%
Other	2	6.7%	6.7%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

*Note:* This item allowed multiple responses; percentages are therefore calculated out of 30 respondents and do not sum to 100%.

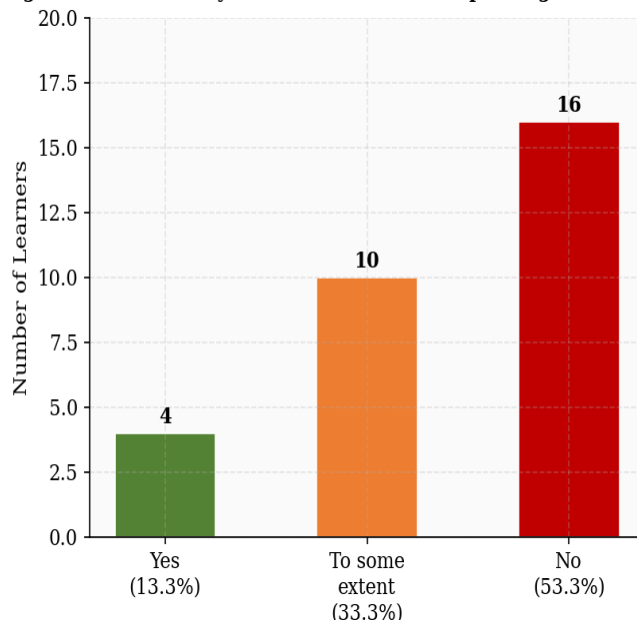
The data in Table 03 indicate that lack of vocabulary is the most frequently cited difficulty (73.3%), closely followed by fear of making mistakes (70.0%). These findings are consistent with research on EFL speaking anxiety, which identifies fear of negative evaluation and lexical deficiency as primary impediments to oral production (Horwitz et al., 1986; Krashen, 1982). Weak pronunciation is mentioned by 46.7% of learners, suggesting that phonological difficulties also constitute a significant barrier. Limited opportunities to practice speaking, reported by 36.7%, highlight an important pedagogical gap that communicative activities may potentially address.

### Q 04 – Anxiety When Speaking in Front of Classmates

**Table 8:** Frequency Distribution – Speaking Anxiety

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Yes	14	46.7%	46.7%	46.7%
Sometimes	12	40.0%	40.0%	86.7%
No	4	13.3%	13.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 12: Sufficiency of Time Allocated for Speaking Practice (n = 30)**



**Figure 11: Speaking Anxiety**

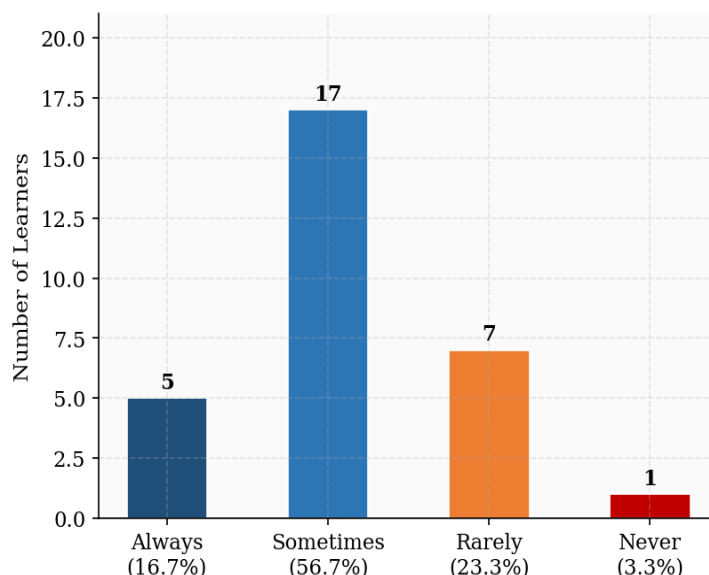
Table 04 shows that 46.7% of learners report feeling anxious or nervous when speaking English in front of their classmates, while an additional 40.0% experience anxiety occasionally. Only 13.3% report no anxiety at all. These results confirm the high prevalence of foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) in the Algerian secondary school context. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) argue that FLSA directly impairs oral fluency and self-monitoring capacity. The predominance of anxious learners (86.7% when combining 'Yes' and 'Sometimes') underscores the importance of creating a low-anxiety communicative environment through well-designed speaking activities.

**Q 05 – Sufficiency of Time Allocated for Speaking Practice**

**Table 9: Frequency Distribution – Time for Speaking Practice**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
Yes	4	13.3%	13.3%	13.3%
To some extent	10	33.3%	33.3%	46.7%
No	16	53.3%	53.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 13: Teacher Use of Communicative Activities (n = 30)**



**Figure 12: Sufficiency of Time for Speaking Practice**

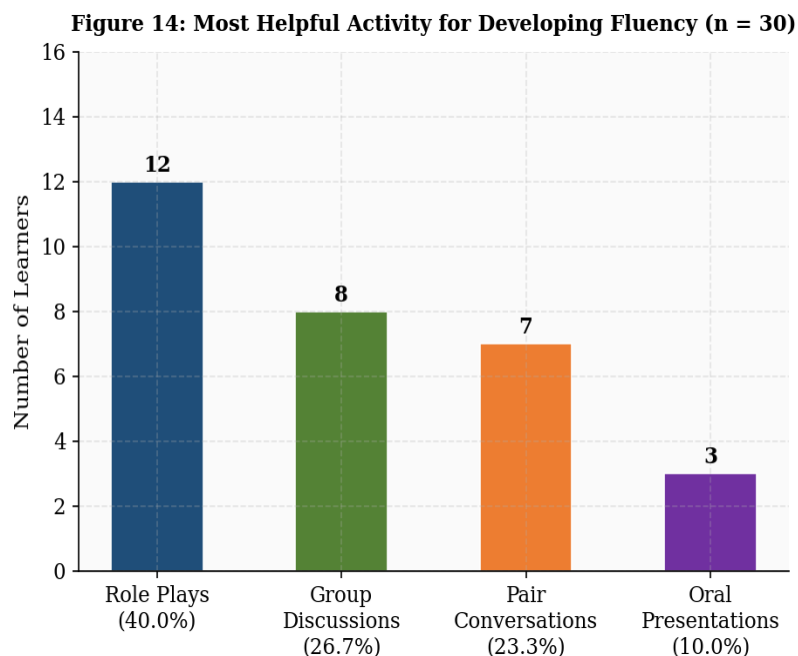
The majority of learners (53.3%) believe that the time allocated to speaking practice is insufficient, while 33.3% consider it partially sufficient. Only 13.3% are fully satisfied with the available practice time. This finding aligns with widely documented concerns regarding the Algerian EFL curriculum, which has tended to emphasise written and structural tasks over communicative oral activities (Benali-Mohamed, 2014). The scarcity of dedicated speaking time creates a structural obstacle to developing oral proficiency, which communicative activities could help mitigate if integrated more systematically into the programme.

### Part III – Communicative Activities

#### Q 06 – Teacher's Use of Communicative Activities

**Table 10: Frequency Distribution – Teacher Use of Communicative Activities**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Always	5	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
Sometimes	17	56.7%	56.7%	73.3%
Rarely	7	23.3%	23.3%	96.7%
Never	1	3.3%	3.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	



**Figure 13: Teacher Use of Communicative Activities**

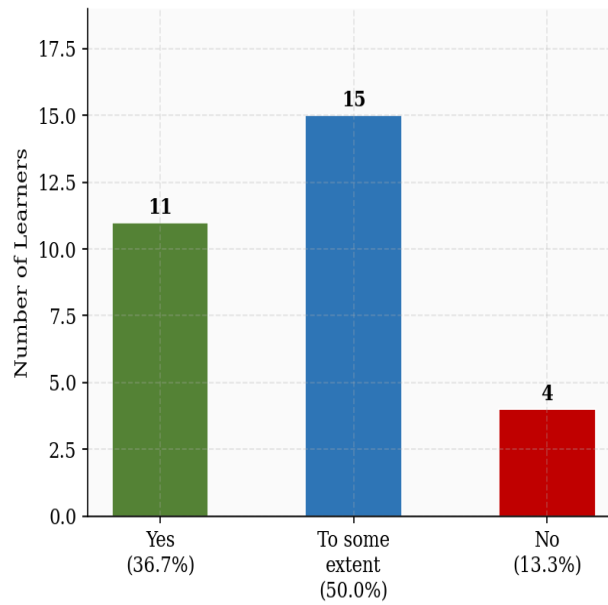
Table 06 reveals that communicative activities (role-plays, group discussions, pair work) are used always by only 16.7% of teachers as perceived by learners, while 56.7% report their occasional use. A notable proportion (23.3%) perceive that such activities are used rarely. These figures suggest that communicative approaches remain inconsistently implemented in Algerian secondary classrooms. The predominance of 'sometimes' reflects a transitional pedagogical landscape where communicative language teaching (CLT) principles are acknowledged but not yet fully embedded in classroom practice. This inconsistency may partly explain the limited oral development reported by learners in the preceding items.

**Q 07 – Type of Activity Most Helpful for Fluency**

**Table 11: Most Helpful Activity Type**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Role plays	12	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Group discussions	8	26.7%	26.7%	66.7%
Pair conversations	7	23.3%	23.3%	90.0%
Oral presentations	3	10.0%	10.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 15: Perceived Improvement After Communicative Activities (n = 30)**



**Figure 14: Most Helpful Activity for Fluency**

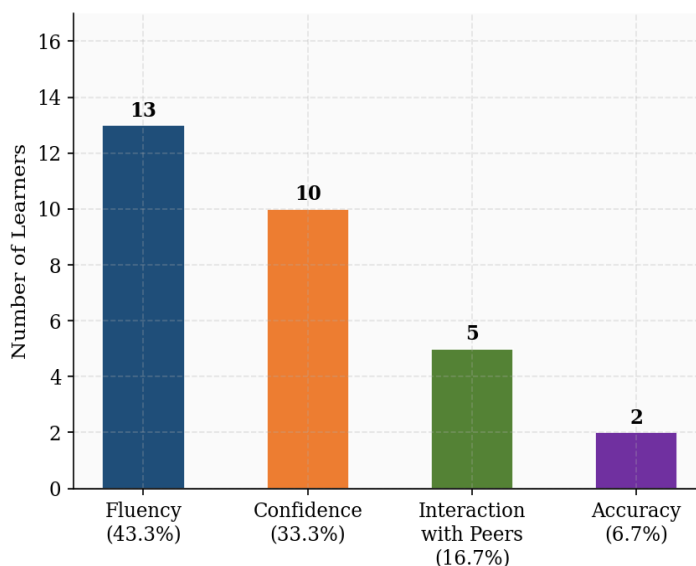
According to Table 07, role plays are perceived as the most beneficial activity for developing fluency (40.0%), followed by group discussions (26.7%) and pair conversations (23.3%). Oral presentations receive the fewest endorsements (10.0%). The primacy of role plays is consistent with the literature, which identifies simulation and role-play activities as particularly effective in reducing inhibition and promoting spontaneous, meaningful communication (Littlewood, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

**Q 08 – Perceived Improvement in Fluency or Confidence**

**Table 12: Perceived Improvement After Activities**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Yes	11	36.7%	36.7%	36.7%
To some extent	15	50.0%	50.0%	86.7%
No	4	13.3%	13.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 16: Aspect of Speaking Most Improved by CAs (n = 30)**



**Figure 15: Perceived Improvement After Activities**

Table 08 indicates that 36.7% of learners report noticeable improvement in fluency or self-confidence following participation in communicative activities, while 50.0% acknowledge partial improvement. Only 13.3% perceive no improvement. Cumulatively, 86.7% of learners report some degree of positive change, which constitutes a strong indicator of the effectiveness of communicative activities.

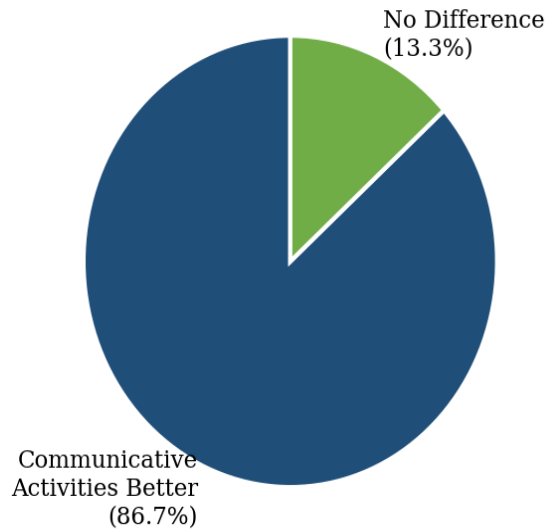
#### Part IV – Evaluation of Oral Performance

##### Q 09 – Aspect of Speaking Most Improved

**Table 13: Frequency Distribution – Aspect Most Improved**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Fluency	13	43.3%	43.3%	43.3%
Confidence	10	33.3%	33.3%	76.7%
Interaction with peers	5	16.7%	16.7%	93.3%
Accuracy	2	6.7%	6.7%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 17: Communicative Activities vs Traditional Methods (n = 30)**



**Figure 16: Aspect of Speaking Most Improved**

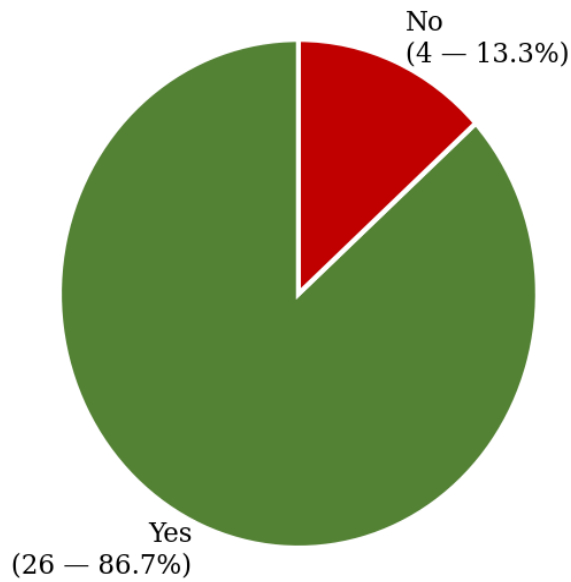
Table 09 reveals that fluency is the aspect most improved through communicative activities (43.3%), followed by confidence (33.3%). Interaction with peers (16.7%) and accuracy (6.7%) are less frequently cited. The prominence of fluency and confidence aligns with the theoretical framework of CLT, which prioritizes meaning-making and communicative efficiency over structural correctness (Canale & Swain, 1980; Nunan, 1991).

**Q 10 – Communicative Activities vs Traditional Methods**

**Table 14: Frequency Distribution – Communicative vs Traditional Methods**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Yes	15	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
To some extent	12	40.0%	40.0%	90.0%
No	3	10.0%	10.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 18: Desire for More Communicative Activities (n = 30)**



**Figure 17: CA vs Traditional Methods**

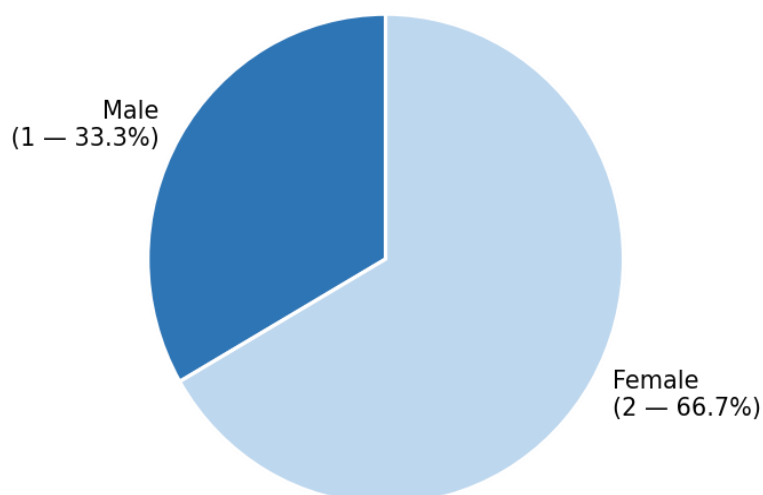
As shown in Table 10, 50.0% of learners fully agree that communicative activities provide better opportunities for speaking practice than traditional methods, while 40.0% partially agree. Only 10.0% disagree. This pronounced preference for communicative methods over grammar-translation or audio-lingual approaches is consistent with the learner-centered turn in language pedagogy.

**Q 11 – Desire for More Communicative Activities**

**Table 15: Frequency Distribution – Desire for More Communicative Activities**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Yes	26	86.7%	86.7%	86.7%
No	4	13.3%	13.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 19: Teachers' Gender Distribution (n = 3)**



**Figure 18: Desire for More Communicative Activities**

The overwhelming majority of learners (86.7%) express a strong desire for more communicative activities in their English classes. This result constitutes one of the most significant findings of the questionnaire, as it signals a clear learner demand for pedagogical reform. The minority who prefer traditional methods (13.3%) may comprise learners who associate language learning with structural correctness or who experience discomfort with the interactive, spontaneous nature of communicative tasks.

### 1.1. Summary: Descriptive Statistics

The following table presents a summary of descriptive statistics derived from SPSS analysis of the closed items in the learners' questionnaire. Responses are coded on a three-point scale where applicable: 1 = Negative / No, 2 = Partial, 3 = Positive / Yes.

**Table 16: Summary of Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Speaking Anxiety (Item 04)	30	1	3	2.33	0.71
Sufficiency of Practice Time (Item 05)	30	1	3	1.60	0.72
Frequency of CA Use (Item 06)	30	1	4	2.13	0.73
Perceived Improvement (Item 08)	30	1	3	2.23	0.63
CA vs Traditional Methods (Item 10)	30	1	3	2.40	0.62

**Note :** CA = Communicative Activities. SD = Standard Deviation. Coding: 1 = No / Rarely / Negative; 2 = To some extent / Sometimes; 3 = Yes / Always / Positive. Item 06 was coded 1–4 (Never to Always).

The descriptive statistics confirm the overall pattern of findings: learners exhibit moderate-to-high levels of speaking anxiety (M = 2.33), perceive practice time as inadequate (M = 1.60), and report that communicative activities provide better opportunities for oral development than traditional methods (M = 2.40).

## 2. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Three secondary school EFL teachers participated in the questionnaire . Responses were analyzed thematically, and recurring ideas were organized into the following themes: (1) learners' speaking difficulties, (2) psychological vs linguistic factors, (3) use of communicative activities, (4) teacher's role in creating a supportive environment, and (5) challenges and recommendations.

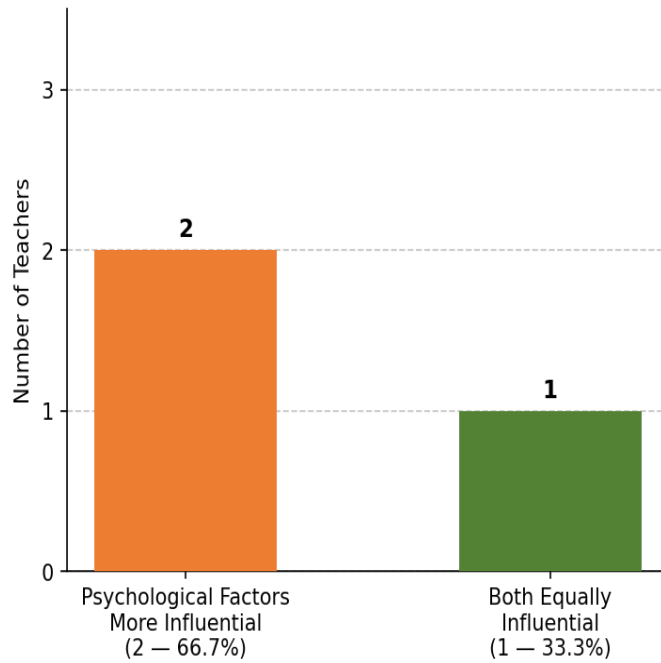
### Part I – Personal Information

#### Q 01 – Gender

**Table 17:** Frequency Distribution – Teachers' Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Male	1	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Female	2	66.7%	66.7%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 20: Psychological vs Linguistic Factors (n = 3)**



**Figure 19: Teachers' Gender Distribution**

The teacher sample consists of two (02) female and one (01) male teacher, yielding a female majority (66.7%). This distribution corresponds broadly to the feminine dominant language teaching professions observed across Algeria’s secondary school system.

**Q 02 – Years of Teaching Experience**

**Table 18: Frequency Distribution – Teaching Experience**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Less than 5 years	1	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
5–10 years	1	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%
More than 10 years	1	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

The sample is evenly distributed across experience categories, with one teacher . This balanced distribution allows for the triangulation of perspectives from novice, intermediate, and experienced practitioners, thereby enriching the qualitative data with diverse pedagogical outlooks.

### Q 03 – Stream Taught

**Table 19:** Frequency Distribution – Stream Taught

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Languages	2	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
Sciences	1	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
Other	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

The majority of the responding teachers work with language-stream classes (66.7%), while one teacher works with the scientific stream. This distribution enables a comparative understanding of communicative activity implementation across different learner profiles.

### Part II – Learners' Difficulties in Speaking

#### Q1: What are the main Reasons Behind Learners' Weakness in Speaking?

When asked about the primary reasons behind learners' weak speaking performance, all three teachers identified a cluster of interrelated factors. The most consistently cited reasons were:

- Insufficient exposure to spoken English both inside and outside the classroom
- An exam-oriented curriculum that prioritizes written language over oral production
- Lack of authentic communicative opportunities in the educational environment
- Interference from the mother tongue (Arabic and/or Tamazight) and French
- Limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge preventing confident self-expression

Teachers T1 and T2 explicitly noted that learners often possess receptive knowledge of English but lack the productive fluency required for spontaneous oral communication. Teacher T3 observed: "The learners know many words when they read, but the moment they have to speak, they freeze. It is as if the speaking channel is disconnected from everything else they know." This observation resonates with the well-documented distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge in SLA research (Anderson, 1983; DeKeyser, 2007).

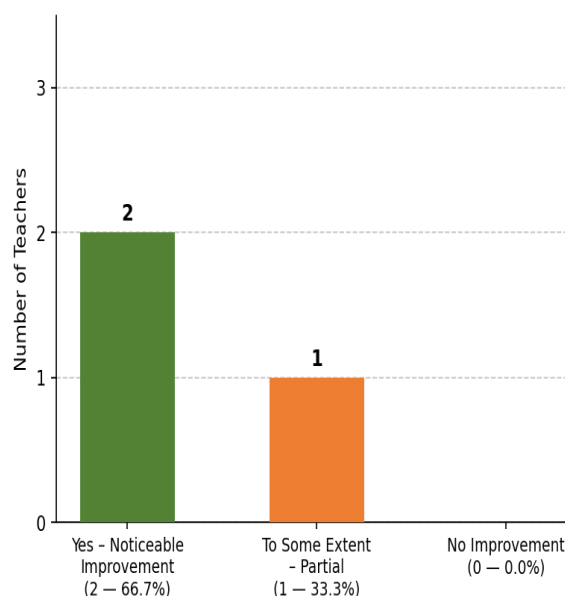
#### Q 2: Psychological vs Linguistic Factors

Teachers were asked whether they consider psychological factors (fear, lack of confidence) to affect learners more than linguistic factors (vocabulary, grammar). Two out of three teachers (66.7%) affirmed the primacy of psychological factors.

**Table 20:** Teacher Perception – Psychological vs Linguistic Factors

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Psychological factors are more influential	2	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
Both are equally influential	1	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 21: Teacher-Observed Change in Oral Performance (n = 3)**



**Figure 20: Psychological vs Linguistic Factors**

Teacher T2 remarked: "Even learners with good grammar refuse to speak because they are terrified of being judged. The psychological block is the first wall we need to break." Teacher T3 adopted a more nuanced stance, arguing that linguistic deficiencies and affective barriers are mutually reinforcing: learners with limited vocabulary become anxious, and anxious learners avoid practice, thereby limiting vocabulary growth. This bidirectional relationship is theorized in Young's (1991) model of foreign language anxiety.

### Part III – Communicative Activities

#### Q 3: Types of Communicative Activities Used

All three teachers reported using communicative activities to varying degrees. The activities mentioned most frequently were:

**Table 21:** Communicative Activities Most Used by Teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Role plays and simulations	3	100.0%	100.0%
Group discussions / debates	2	66.7%	66.7%
Pair conversations	2	66.7%	66.7%
Information-gap tasks	1	33.3%	33.3%
Oral presentations / storytelling	2	66.7%	66.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Note: Multiple responses allowed; percentages calculated out of N=3.*

Role plays were cited by all teachers as a central communicative tool. Teacher T1 explained that role plays are particularly valued because they "put learners in a real-life scenario where they have no choice but to communicate." This perception aligns with Littlewood's (1981) categorization of role-play as 'functional communication activities' that simulate authentic interaction. This was shown explicitly in open ended answers of the questionnaire .

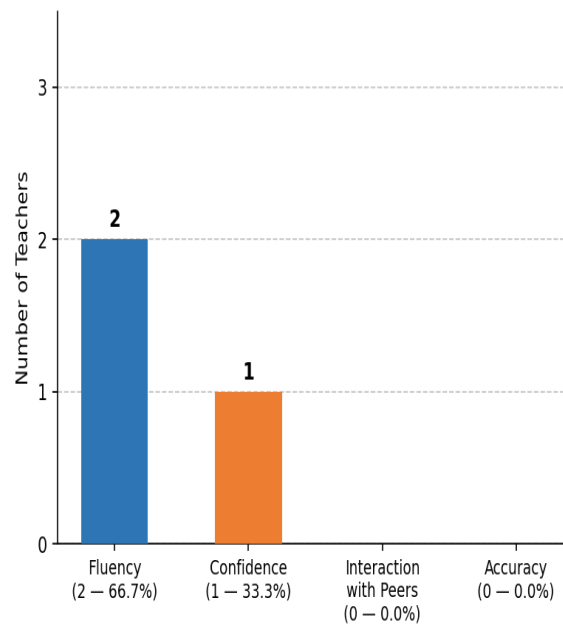
#### **Q 4:** Observed Differences Before and After Communicative Activities

When asked whether they had observed noticeable differences in learners' oral performance after applying communicative activities, two of the three teachers (66.7%) responded affirmatively.

**Table 22:** Teacher Observation – Change in Oral Performance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Yes – noticeable improvement observed	2	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
To some extent – partial improvement	1	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
No improvement observed	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 22: Aspect Most Improved by CAs – Teachers' View (n = 3)**



**Figure 21: Teacher-Observed Change in Oral Performance**

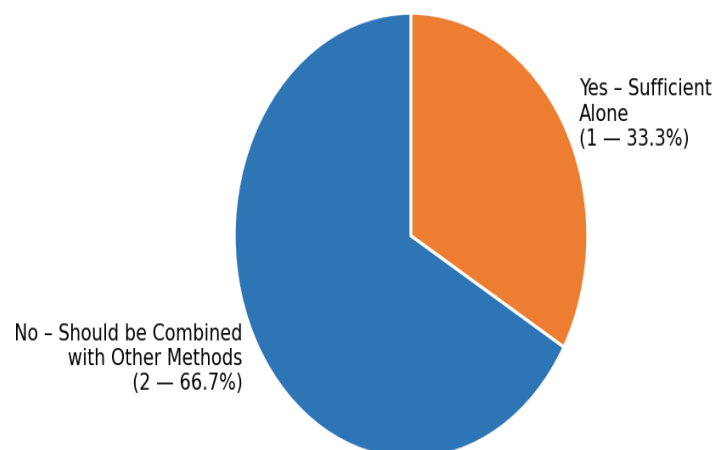
Teacher T1 noted significant gains in spontaneous speech production: "After a semester of regular role plays and group work, learners who previously refused to speak began volunteering answers and even initiating conversations." Teacher T3, who reported partial improvement, cautioned that outcomes are highly dependent on class size and learner motivation. Notably, no teacher reported zero improvement, which constitutes a strong endorsement of communicative activities from the practitioner perspective.

**Q5: Aspect of Speaking Most Influenced**

**Table 23: Teacher Perception – Aspect Most Improved by CAs**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Fluency	2	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
Confidence	1	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
Interaction with peers	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Accuracy	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Figure 23: Are CAs Sufficient Alone? – Teachers' View (n = 3)**



**Figure 22: Aspect Most Improved by CAs (Teachers' View)**

Teachers' perceptions regarding the most improved aspect mirror learners' self-assessments: fluency (66.7%) and confidence (33.3%) are most cited, while accuracy scores zero. This convergence between teacher observation and learner self-report strengthens the validity of the findings.

#### **Part IV – Teacher's Role in Developing the Speaking Skill**

##### **Q 6: Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment**

Teachers were asked how they create a classroom environment that encourages learners to speak freely. Their strategies fell into three main categories:

- Affective strategies: establishing rapport, using humour, praising effort rather than accuracy, and normalizing error-making as part of the learning process
- Structural strategies: using small-group and pair formats that reduce the public performance aspect of speaking tasks
- Motivational strategies: selecting topics relevant to learners' lives, using technology (videos, authentic audio), and connecting activities to real-world communicative needs

Teacher T2 described her approach : "I always start with an icebreaker where there are no wrong answers. Once learners laugh together, the tension drops and they start speaking more naturally." This practice reflects the theoretical principle of affect optimization in language

learning (Arnold, 1999), which holds that reducing anxiety is a precondition for productive language output.

**Q 7: Challenges in Applying Communicative Activities**

**Table 24: Challenges Faced When Implementing Communicative Activities**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Large class size	3	100.0%	100.0%
Time constraints	2	66.7%	66.7%
Mixed proficiency levels	1	33.3%	33.3%
Learner resistance / shyness	1	33.3%	33.3%
Lack of appropriate materials	1	33.3%	33.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

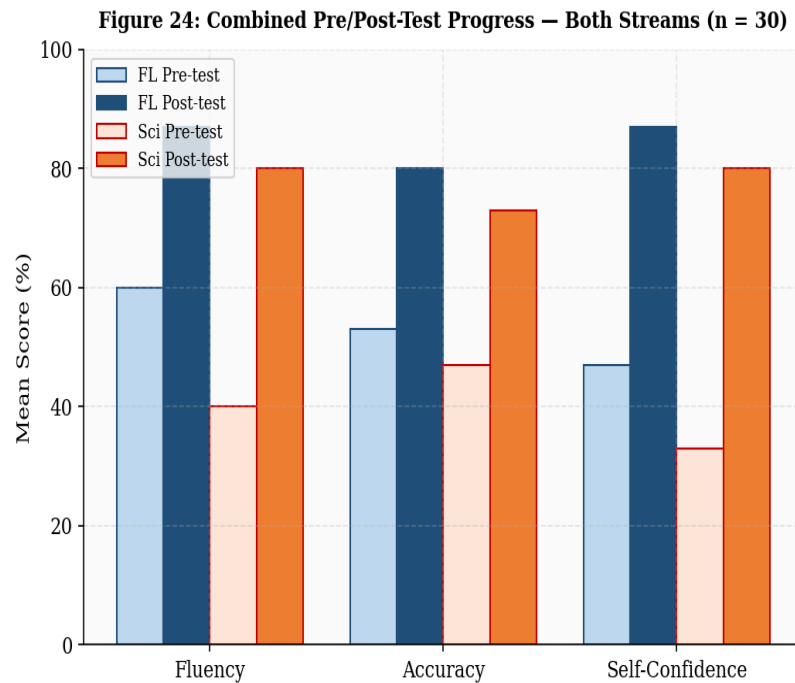
*Note: Multiple responses allowed.*

Large class size (cited by all three teachers) and time constraints (66.7%) emerge as the dominant implementation obstacles. When classes contain 35–40 learners, managing communicative activities meaningfully becomes logistically challenging. Teacher T2 explained: "In a class of 38, I cannot give every learner adequate speaking time in a single session. Role plays often devolve into passive observation for most of the class." Mixed proficiency levels and learner shyness (both 33.3%) compound these structural challenges.

**Q8: Are Communicative Activities Sufficient Alone?**

**Table 25: Teacher Opinion – Sufficiency of Communicative Activities Alone**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
No – should be combined with other methods	2	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
Yes – communicative activities are sufficient	1	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	



**Figure 23: Are CAs Sufficient Alone?**

Two of the three teachers (66.7%) argue that communicative activities, while essential, must be combined with other methodological approaches to be fully effective. Teacher T2 stated: "Communicative activities build fluency and confidence, but without some explicit attention to grammar and vocabulary, learners may correct their errors." This position reflects the post-communicative synthesis in EFL pedagogy, which advocates for a balanced approach integrating both fluency-focused and accuracy-focused tasks (Harmer, 2007; Thornbury, 2005).

### 2.1. Discussion of the Results

The present section synthesizes and interprets all findings from the study, covering both the quantitative results of the pre-test and post-test and the data collected through the learners' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire, in light of the research questions and hypotheses formulated at the outset.

#### Interpretation of Pre-test and Post-test Results

The pre-test and post-test results constitute the most direct evidence of the effectiveness of communicative activities in this study. In the Foreign Languages stream, all three assessed dimensions improved notably after the instructional intervention. Fluency rose from 60% in the pre-test to 87% in the post-test, a gain of 27 percentage points. Accuracy similarly increased from 53% to 80%, recording an identical gain of 27%. Most significantly, self-confidence registered the sharpest increase, climbing from 47% to 87% which means an improvement of 40 percentage

points. These results indicate that learners in the Foreign Languages stream, despite entering the intervention with a comparatively stronger linguistic baseline, benefited considerably from the communicative tasks, particularly in terms of their affective readiness and willingness to engage in spontaneous oral interaction.

The Scientific stream results are equally significant. Pre-test scores were markedly lower for this group: fluency at 40%, accuracy at 47%, and self-confidence at only 33%. These figures reflect the limited exposure of science-track learners to oral English activities, as their curriculum prioritizes scientific subjects. Following the intervention, however, the improvements were remarkable: fluency reached 80% (+40%), accuracy 73% (+26%), and self-confidence 80%, a gain of 47 percentage points. The scale of improvement in the Scientific stream is particularly telling. It demonstrates that learners who were most disadvantaged at the outset responded most powerfully to the communicative intervention, confirming that structured task-based oral practice can substantially bridge gaps created by years of limited speaking exposure. Regarding the individual communicative activities, the role-play task yielded the strongest overall improvement rate (70% combined), followed by the debate activity (70% combined), and the group discussion task (57% combined). The marginally lower improvement rate recorded for group discussions likely reflects the less structured nature of the task and the higher degree of autonomous production required, which poses a greater challenge to learners at an early stage of communicative development. Together, these results strongly validate the effectiveness of communicative activities across activity types and academic streams.

#### Interpretation of Questionnaire Findings and Research Questions

**Research Question One:** What Are the Main Speaking Difficulties Faced by Secondary School EFL Learners?

The data collected from both instruments converge on a set of interrelated difficulties. Lexical deficiency (73.3% of learners) and fear of making mistakes (70.0%) dominate the learner-reported challenges, while all three teachers identify psychological barriers and limited oral exposure as the primary causal factors. These findings are consistent with the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), which posits that high anxiety and low self-confidence raise the affective filter and inhibit comprehensible input processing, thereby restricting output production. The fact that 86.7% of learners report speaking anxiety (combining ‘yes’ and ‘sometimes’ responses) confirms that affective obstacles represent the most immediate barrier to oral development in this context. It is significant that anxiety ranks above lexical deficiency in

frequency, because this ordering inverts the expectation that linguistic incompetence causes psychological reticence: the data suggest, rather, that psychological reticence precedes and amplifies linguistic difficulty. This distinction has direct pedagogical consequences — it implies that affective intervention (creating low-threat environments, correcting error) must logically precede, or at minimum accompany, linguistic skills instruction, not follow it as a secondary concern. The present study provides contextually specific evidence from an Algerian secondary school that corroborates Horwitz et al.'s (1986) foundational claim about foreign language classroom anxiety, while also extending it to an under-researched Maghrebian EFL context where Belit Brahim and Ait Bouchouche Fadhila (2021) have documented similar structural conditions.

Linguistically, the difficulties reported (weak pronunciation, limited vocabulary, grammatical insecurity) align with Canale and Swain's (1980) four-component model of communicative competence — grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence — and reveal a specific pattern of underdevelopment. The learners in this study appear to have accumulated passive grammatical knowledge through years of form-focused instruction without acquiring the strategic competence required to deploy that knowledge in real-time spoken interaction. This gap between declarative and procedural knowledge is precisely what CLT-based approaches are designed to bridge (Anderson, 1983, as cited in Richards, 2006), yet the current balance between form-focused and communicative instruction may not fully support the development of oral procedural knowledge. The data suggest that alongside grammar content, learners benefit from structured opportunities to activate their existing knowledge in real communicative contexts.

### **Research Question Two: To What Extent Do Communicative Activities Improve Learners' Speaking Skills?**

The combined evidence from both instruments indicates that communicative activities exert a positive effect on speaking development. Eighty-six point seven percent of learners report some degree of improvement in fluency or confidence after participating in communicative activities (Item 08), and two of the three teachers (66.7%) confirm having observed comparable gains in their learners (Table 23). The aspects most commonly improved are fluency and self-confidence, which are precisely the dimensions most constrained by the anxiety and inhibition factors identified in Research Question One. These findings converge with those of Hidalgo et al. (2021) and Al-Garni and Almuhammadi (2019), who documented parallel gains in secondary and tertiary EFL contexts, and lend the present study's conclusions a degree of cross-contextual credibility. The internal validity of these findings is further supported by the differential outcomes observed

between the intervention group and the remaining 60 learners at the same institution who continued to receive conventional grammar-centered instruction throughout the intervention period. The three participating teachers, who were in contact with both groups simultaneously, consistently reported that the non-participating learners demonstrated no comparable improvement in oral performance during the same time-frame. While these 60 learners do not constitute a formal control group in the strict experimental sense — no standardized measurement instrument was applied to them — their status as a naturalistic comparison group within the same institutional context provides meaningful contextual corroboration. Cook and Campbell (1979) acknowledge that in quasi-experimental educational research, differential practitioner observation between intervention and non-intervention groups, when documented consistently, constitutes evidence against rival explanations such as maturation or seasonal effects. The convergence of three independent teacher reports on the absence of comparable oral gains in the non-participating group therefore substantially strengthens the causal claim that the improvements recorded in the intervention group are attributable to the communicative intervention rather than to incidental or multinational factors. One methodological caveat must nonetheless be stated explicitly: the learner questionnaire data on improvement are self-report measures that capture what learners believe has changed, not what has measurably changed. A validated instrument such as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS; Horwitz et al., 1986) or MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994) Situation-Specific Anxiety Scale would have provided a more rigorous basis for the confidence claims. The pre-test and post-test scores remain the primary evidence for effectiveness; questionnaire data serve as a perceptual supplement. Future studies should pair performance assessment with a validated psychometric instrument and apply measurement to both the intervention group and a formally designated control group to further isolate the contribution of the communicative intervention.

However, a critical reading of the data tempers an overly optimistic conclusion. Teachers use communicative activities only sometimes according to 56.7% of learners, and the majority of learners (53.3%) report insufficient practice time. This structural inconsistency means that the potential of communicative activities is not fully realized. The relationship between exposure frequency and speaking improvement is likely dose-dependent: occasional communicative tasks produce modest gains, while systematic, regular implementation would be expected to yield more substantial and durable progress.

Role plays emerge as the preferred and most impactful activity type (40.0% of learners; endorsed by all three teachers). Their effectiveness is consistent with the broader CLT literature:

Littlewood (1981) and Nunan (1991) both argue that role play provides language use, meaning negotiation, and the international pressure of real-world communication within a psychologically safer fictional frame. However, the present data also call for a more differentiated reading of activity effectiveness. While role play dominates learner preferences, group discussion and structured debate generate different and arguably more demanding communicative conditions: they require learners to defend positions, manage turn-taking, and produce extended discourse without a script. Demir and Aydin (2022) found that debate produced stronger accuracy gains than role play in a Turkish secondary EFL context, a nuance not fully captured by simple preference rankings. The present study did not measure which activity produced the greatest gains on each criterion independently; this remains a gap that limits the precision of activity-specific recommendations

### Research Question Three: What Role Do Teachers Play in Implementing Communicative Activities to Enhance Learners' Oral Performance?

The data consistently highlight the teacher as a decisive mediating variable in the effectiveness of communicative activities. Far from functioning merely as activity facilitators, teachers shape the affective and pedagogical conditions that either enable or inhibit learner oral participation. The findings reveal that communicative activities do not operate in a vacuum: their impact on speaking performance is directly contingent on how deliberately and skillfully teachers orchestrate the classroom environment. Teacher reports identify learner resistance and shyness as the most prevalent obstacle to productive communicative engagement (33.3%, Table 25). It is worth pausing to evaluate this finding critically: while shyness and resistance are framed as learner characteristics, a more structural reading would ask why learners remain reluctant despite repeated exposure to communicative tasks. The answer may lie less in individual personality than in the broader educational context, in which assessment systems that emphasize written accuracy may inadvertently reduce learners' motivation to take communicative risks orally. This observation, consistent with Saadi's (2021) findings on Algerian secondary teachers' attitudes, suggests that teacher-level strategies are most effective when supported by complementary curriculum and assessment considerations.

Three principal strategies emerge from the teacher questionnaire data as conditions for productive communicative engagement. First, the deliberate use of low-threat warm-up activities such as icebreakers reduces the affective barrier before communicative tasks begin, enabling inhibited learners to participate without fear. Second, explicit error normalization, framing mistakes as an expected and valuable part of the learning process — shifts the evaluative focus

from accuracy to communicative success and encourages learners to take the linguistic risks that accelerate acquisition (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). Third, the adoption of peer work formats redistributes interactional pressure away from teacher-directed exchanges, reducing the public exposure that triggers anxiety in many learners. These three strategies are well-supported by the broader SLA literature, but they must be evaluated critically rather than simply endorsed. The data show that all three participating teachers report awareness of these approaches; yet learner data simultaneously reveal that 56.7% experience communicative activities only sometimes. This discrepancy between teachers' reported practices and learner-perceived frequency is significant: it suggests either that the strategies are inconsistently applied or that learners do not recognize them as communicative activity. Either interpretation points to a gap between pedagogical intention and classroom reality that professional development alone cannot close without also addressing the structural conditions, time pressure, assessment culture, and class size, that constrain even the most skilled and committed practitioners. The cumulative impact of teacher-led strategies is confirmed by the learner data: self-confidence registers the sharpest gains across both streams, and 33.3% of learners identify it as the dimension most developed through communicative participation. This confirms that teacher orchestration of the affective environment is at least as important as the communicative activities themselves, a finding that reframes the debate from "which activities are most effective" to "under what teacher-managed conditions does any activity become effective.", framing mistakes as an expected and valuable part of the learning process

### **3.1. Recommendations**

There are some recommendations that may help in creating better outcomes in teaching and developing the speaking skill. They are as follows:

- Speaking lessons are most effective when they engage learners in real communicative interaction, rather than merely focusing on grammar rules and written exercises. Therefore, educators must design activities that compel learners to actively participate in speaking during their English classes.
- Effective speaking instruction requires careful preparation, which involves selecting appropriate communicative activities such as role-play, debate, and group discussion that match learners' proficiency level and gradually build their confidence.
- Improvements are needed in pedagogical program regarding the place of the speaking skill in the Algerian secondary school curriculum.

- EFL teachers need to be provided with special training and materials to help them implement communicative activities more effectively in their classrooms.
- The speaking skill must be given more attention by both teachers and learners, as it is the primary means through which language proficiency is demonstrated in real life.
- There is a strong need for supportive classroom environments where learners feel safe to speak freely, make mistakes, and take communicative risks without fear of judgment.
- Using technology such as audio-visual materials, language learning applications, and online communication platforms is no longer an option but a necessity, given its proven benefits in developing oral fluency and motivation.
- Researchers should investigate the psychological dimensions of EFL learners more deeply, particularly the role of anxiety and self-confidence in shaping their willingness to communicate.

### **3.2. Suggestions for Further Research**

After discussing and analyzing the results of both learners' and teachers' questionnaires, we recommend some important points for further research:

- It is worth noting that teachers should integrate technology more systematically in their classes, as its role has become crucial in fostering learners' motivation and engagement in speaking practice.
- Further research should be directed towards examining the long-term effects of communicative activities on speaking proficiency across a full academic year and with larger samples.
- Future studies should explore the relationship between learner anxiety and oral performance more deeply, as the present research identified self-confidence as the most responsive dimension to communicative intervention.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter reveals learners' and teachers' perceptions on the speaking challenges faced by EFL learners and the factors contributing to them. It addresses the interpretation of the results obtained from the pre-test, post-test, and both learners' and teachers' questionnaires. The results of this research confirm our hypotheses as learners demonstrated measurable improvement at the level of fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence following the communicative intervention. Moreover, it was found that psychological factors such as anxiety, shyness, and lack of self-confidence are the most significant barriers hindering learners' oral performance. Last but not least, the findings also reveal that role play, structured debate, and group discussion are highly effective communicative activities that enhance learners' speaking skill and foster genuine oral development.

## General Conclusion

Among the four language skills, speaking occupies a privileged yet paradoxical position: it is widely acknowledged as the cornerstone of communicative competence, and yet it remains one of the most challenging skills to cultivate in formal instruction, often receiving less dedicated practice time than other language skills. Within the Algerian secondary school context, classrooms tend to emphasize grammatical accuracy and written performance, which can leave learners with limited practice in authentic oral expression. This imbalance is further compounded by psychological obstacles such as anxiety and low self-esteem, as well as structural constraints including overcrowded classrooms and a predominantly teacher-centered pedagogy. Thus, the aim of undertaking the present research is to investigate the effectiveness of communicative activities in developing the speaking skill among EFL learners at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School, with particular attention to the dimensions of fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence. To find answers to the above-mentioned problem, the following research questions were put forward:

- To what extent do communicative activities improve EFL learners' speaking skill?
- How do communicative activities affect learners' fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence?
- What role do teachers play in implementing communicative activities to enhance learners' oral performance?

Besides, we put forth the following hypotheses:

- The use of communicative activities significantly improves EFL learners' speaking skill.
- Communicative activities have a positive effect on EFL learners' speaking fluency, grammatical/lexical accuracy, and self-confidence.
- Teachers' use of communicative activities helps learners improve their oral performance in speaking.

The rationale behind this study is to add a contextually grounded contribution to the existing body of scholarship examining communicative approaches in EFL settings, with a deliberate focus on the Algerian secondary school context where such empirical evidence remains scarce. It seeks to generate practical pedagogical insights capable of informing classroom practice, and to serve as a reference point for future reform efforts that re-conceptualize oral communication as an indispensable dimension of genuine linguistic competence.

This research is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a comprehensive theoretical background about the speaking skill and communicative activities, covering the

definition of speaking as both a productive and social communication skill, its key aspects , fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence its basic types, its importance in EFL/ESL contexts, and the internal and external challenges that hinder its development. Additionally, it explores the various types of communicative activities and situates the study within established pedagogical frameworks such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Competency-Based Approach (CBA).

The second chapter describes the research methodology, design, and procedures. It presents the quasi-experimental, mixed-methods approach adopted for the study, identifies the population and the stratified sample of 30 final-year learners drawn from both the foreign languages and scientific streams at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School, and discusses the data collection instruments employed, namely pre-test, post-test, and questionnaires administered to both learners and teachers. The chapter also addresses the scope and limitations of the study.

The third chapter is concerned with the practical aspect of the research; it presents and interprets the results obtained from all data collection instruments. It analyzes learners' progress across the three assessed criteria from pre-test to post-test in both academic streams, evaluates the outcomes of the three communicative activity types implemented during the intervention — role play, structured debate, and group discussion — and discusses the findings of both the learner and teacher questionnaires. The chapter ends with hypothesis verification and a set of pedagogical recommendations for both teachers and curriculum designers.

The analysis and discussion of the results revealed that communicative activities do improve secondary EFL learners' oral performance to a meaningful and measurable extent. Both streams recorded gains across all three assessed criteria, with self-confidence emerging as the dimension most immediately and consistently responsive to communicative intervention, followed by fluency, while accuracy improved most gradually. The results also confirmed that scientific stream learners, despite beginning from a lower proficiency baseline, demonstrated a steeper trajectory of improvement, suggesting that communicative tasks may be disproportionately beneficial for learners with the least prior oral exposure. Furthermore, the analysis of the questionnaires revealed that psychological factors ,particularly anxiety and lack of self-confidence ,constitute the most significant barrier to oral participation, reinforcing the theoretical predictions of Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. Thus, this research supplied answers for the raised questions and the results are in the direction of our hypotheses.

Finally, the feedback gathered from teachers highlighted the significance of implementing carefully sequenced communicative activities: role play to lower the affective barrier and build initial confidence; structured debate to develop argumentative precision and accuracy; and group discussion to sustain the collaborative scaffolding that allows learners to take communicative risks. With regard to the third research question, the findings demonstrate that teachers who systematically implemented structured communicative tasks and cultivated low-anxiety classroom environments were directly associated with the most significant gains in learners' oral performance, confirming that teacher agency is the decisive variable in any communicative intervention. The findings further confirm that those who created safe and supportive classroom environments, accepted learners' mistakes as part of the learning process, and consistently used structured communicative tasks produced the most significant gains in learners' oral performance, underscoring that no curriculum reform can substitute for an engaged and well-equipped teacher. Beyond activity-level recommendations, the study recommends that curriculum designers and decision-makers consider reviewing assessment frameworks and allocating additional curriculum time for oral practice, so that the conditions teachers work within better support oral practice alongside written preparation. More suggestions for further research are proposed at the end of this study, inviting future scholars to replicate the design with larger samples, extended intervention periods, and standardized instruments applied across multiple Algerian secondary schools.

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# Appendices

**Appendix A: Speaking Skills Development scoring Checklist**

<b>Student ID</b>	<b>Fluency (0-3)</b>	<b>Accuracy (0-3)</b>	<b>Self-Confidence (0-3)</b>	<b>Total Score (/9)</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
<b>01</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3			
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<b>10</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3			
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**Appendix B: Teachers' Questionnaire**

Dear Teacher, This questionnaire is part of an academic study that investigates the effectiveness of communicative activities in improving English speaking skills among secondary school learners. Your insights will remain confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

**Part I: Personal Information**

- 1. Gender:  Male       Female
- 2. Years of teaching experience:  Less than 5       5–10       More than 10
- 3. Stream taught:  Languages       Sciences       Other (please specify: .....)

**Part II: Learners' Difficulties**

- 4. In your opinion, what are the main reasons behind learners' weakness in speaking English?  
.....  
.....
- 5. Do you think psychological factors (fear, lack of confidence) affect learners more than linguistic factors (vocabulary, grammar)?  
.....  
.....

**Part III: Communicative Activities**

- 6. What types of communicative activities do you usually implement in class, and why?  
.....  
.....
- 7. Have you observed noticeable differences in learners' oral performance before and after applying these activities?  
.....  
.....
- 8. Which aspect of speaking (fluency, accuracy, confidence, interaction) is most influenced by communicative activities?  
.....  
.....

**Part IV: Teacher's Role in developing the speaking skill**

9. How do you create a classroom environment that encourages learners to speak freely?

.....  
.....

10. What challenges do you face when applying communicative activities (e.g., time constraints, class size, learners' level)?

.....  
.....

11. Do you believe communicative activities alone are sufficient to improve speaking skills, or should they be combined with other methods?

.....  
.....

## Appendix C: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students, this questionnaire is distributed for purely academic purposes, within a research study that aims to investigate the effectiveness of communicative activities in developing speaking skills in English as a foreign language at the secondary level. Please note that all information you provide will be used only for research purposes, and your personal data will remain confidential.

### Section One: General Information

Your stream:  Scientific  Foreign Languages

Gender:  Male  Female

### Section Two: Speaking Skill

1. Do you like speaking English in class?

Yes

No

Sometimes

2. Do you feel confident when you speak English?

Yes

No

Sometimes

3. Speaking English is difficult for you:

Agree  Disagree

Not sure

4. What is your main problem in speaking English?

Lack of vocabulary

Grammar mistakes

Pronunciation

Fear of making mistakes

5. What challenges do you see as obstacles to learning to speak

- Lack of vocabulary
- Grammar mistakes (Accuracy)
- Weak fluency (Fluency)
- Pronunciation problems
- Anxiety or low self-confidence
- Fear of making mistakes
- Other

**Section Three: Classroom Activities**

5. Does your teacher encourage you to speak English in class?  Yes  No  Sometimes

6. Do you like speaking activities such as role-play and discussions?  Yes  No  Sometimes

7. Communicative activities help you speak English better.  Agree  Disagree  Not sure

8. Do you prefer speaking in pairs or groups?

- Pairs  Groups

9. Do you feel that speaking English in class helps you improve your overall English skills (reading, writing, listening)?

- Yes  No  Not sur

10. Would you like more activities that let you speak English in class?  Yes  No  Not sure

11. What makes you sometimes feel hesitant or anxious when speaking English in class?

.....

12. In your opinion, what could increase your self-confidence when speaking English?

.....

**Appendix D: Pre-test and Post-test Administration Procedure**

**Overview**

This appendix provides a full, step-by-step account of how the pre-test and post-test were designed, administered, scored, and recorded in this study. It is intended to ensure the transparency and validity of the assessment procedure, and to document the exact conditions under which learners were asked to perform. Both tests were conducted at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School with third-year learners from the Foreign Languages stream (n = 15) and the Scientific stream (n = 15), for a total sample of thirty (30) participants.

## **Part I: Pre-test Administration**

### **Setting and Materials**

Location: Regular English classroom at Amzil Mhamed Secondary School. Duration: One full class session (45 minutes). The materials used were : A printed color image of a spring landscape (picture-cued task, based on Brown and Sahni, 1994), in addition to a printed assessment checklists for each assessor, a timer, and numbered student cards for anonymity. As for the assessors, both researchers were present as joint assessors to ensure inter-rater reliability.

### **Step-by-Step Pre-test Procedure**

Step 1 – Introduction and Instructions (5 minutes): Learners were welcomed and reassured that the session was not a formal exam and that their performance would not affect their academic grades. The purpose of the activity was explained in simple terms: to assess their current speaking ability before a series of classroom activities. Instructions were given in English, with clarification in Arabic or French if needed. Learners were told they would be asked to speak individually and in groups, and that they would be observed and rated on three criteria: fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence.

Step 2 – Picture Presentation (3 minutes): A printed color image depicting a natural spring landscape was distributed to each learner. Learners were given two minutes to examine the image silently and take brief notes on what they observed. No vocabulary support was provided, so as to capture their unassisted speaking ability.

Step 3 – Individual Description Task (15 minutes): Each learner was called upon individually, in a random order, to describe the picture aloud for approximately one minute. The prompt given was: “Please describe what you see in this picture. What is happening? What do you think about it?” The assessors scored and rated each learner in real time using the Speaking Skills Development Observation Checklist (Appendix A), scoring each of the three criteria (fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence) on a scale of 0 to 3. Learners who spoke for less than twenty seconds were scored 0 on all criteria.

Step 4 – Group Discussion Task (15 minutes): Learners were divided into groups of five and asked to discuss the topic “The importance of nature and the environment” based on what they had observed in the picture. Each group was given five minutes to discuss freely among themselves. The assessors circulated between groups, observing and noting oral behaviour without intervening. Groups were timed, and each learner’s participation was assessed individually.

Step 5 – Scoring and Recording (7 minutes): After the session, both assessors compared their individual scores for each learner. In the event of a discrepancy of more than one point on any criterion, the two assessors discussed and reached a consensual score. Final scores were entered into the observation checklist (Appendix A) and transferred to the data recording sheet. The session was concluded by thanking learners for their participation and reminding them that the activities were part of an ongoing classroom programme.

## **Part II: Instructional Intervention (Between Tests)**

Between the pre-test and post-test, a structured instructional intervention was implemented over several classroom sessions. The intervention consisted of three main communicative activity types: role-play (Session 1: group discussion on the topic of nature ), structured debate (Session 2: TV talk show debate setting on 1 topic), and (Session 3: role play task where they performed an imaginary TV talk show “completion”). Each session lasted 45 minutes and was conducted by the researchers, who acted as facilitators rather than instructors. During each session, learners received brief instructions for the activity, participated in a five-minute warm-up, engaged in the communicative task, and received general oral feedback at the end of the session. Individual corrective feedback was kept minimal so as not to inhibit learners’ spontaneous production.

## **Part III: Post-test Administration**

### **Setting and Materials**

Location: Same classroom. Duration: One full session (45 minutes). Theme: Tree Day (21 March). Materials: Task instruction cards for each group, printed observation checklists, a timer. The post-test was deliberately more complex than the pre-test, combining three communicative activities within a single integrated task. The same assessors were present and used the same scoring criteria and rubric.

### **Step-by-Step Post-test Procedure**

**Step 1** – Introduction and Context Setting (5 minutes): Learners were welcomed and reminded that this final assessment was an opportunity to demonstrate everything they had practised in the communicative activity sessions. The theme “Tree Day – 21 March” was introduced and briefly

discussed as a whole class to activate relevant vocabulary. Learners were told they would participate in a simulated television talk show combining role play, debate, and group discussion.

**Step 2 – Role Assignment (5 minutes):** Learners were divided into two teams of approximately equal size within each stream. Team A was assigned the role of environmental activists advocating for the protection of trees and natural spaces. Team B was assigned the role of property developers arguing in favour of using natural land for construction projects. Within each team, roles were further assigned: one learner acted as the talk show host, two as main speakers, and the rest as audience members who could be called upon to contribute at any time.

**Step 3 – Preparation Time (5 minutes):** Each team was given five minutes to prepare their arguments collaboratively. Learners were encouraged to discuss their positions, note down key vocabulary and supporting ideas, and assign speaking turns within the team. The assessors observed but did not provide any guidance during this phase.

**Step 4 – Simulated TV Talk Show (20 minutes):** The talk show was conducted as a structured, moderated debate. The host opened the show and introduced the topic. Each main speaker from Team A and Team B was given two minutes to present their position. This was followed by a five-minute open debate during which all learners could speak, exchange ideas, and respond to opposing arguments. The host was expected to manage turn-taking and transitions. The assessors rated each learner individually throughout the activity using the same observation checklist used in the pre-test.

**Step 5 – Scoring, Recording, and Closing (10 minutes):** Following the activity, the two assessors compared and reconciled their ratings as in the pre-test procedure. Post-test scores were recorded in the observation checklist and compared with pre-test scores to calculate each learner's progress in each dimension. Learners were thanked for their participation and given brief positive feedback on the improvements observed during the study.

#### **Part IV: Scoring Rubric**

Each learner was scored on three criteria: fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence. Each criterion was rated on a 0–3 scale, for a maximum total score of 9 per learner per test and the descriptors for each score level were as follows:

**Fluency** – Score 0: Does not speak or produces only isolated words. Score 1: Speaks with frequent and long pauses; speech is fragmented. Score 2: Speaks with occasional hesitations but maintains a reasonable flow. Score 3: Speaks smoothly and continuously with natural pace and minimal hesitation.

**Accuracy** – Score 0: Produces no comprehensible structures. Score 1: Produces basic sentences with frequent grammatical and lexical errors that impede understanding. Score 2: Produces mostly comprehensible sentences with some errors that do not significantly affect communication. Score 3: Uses grammatically correct structures and appropriate vocabulary with only minor errors.

**Self-Confidence** – Score 0: Refuses to speak or is visibly paralyzed by anxiety. Score 1: Speaks only when directly prompted; exhibits significant hesitation, avoids eye contact, and speaks very quietly. Score 2: Speaks when prompted and occasionally volunteers; shows mild nervousness but maintains communicative engagement. Score 3: Participates voluntarily, speaks clearly and directly, and shows visible ease and readiness to communicate.



Picture Description Task — Pre-Test Image