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Varying Methods to Improve the Outcomes of the English Speaking Skills in Algeria:

A Comparison between First and Third Year Middle School and Third Year High School and the British Council Pre-intermediate class

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Abstract

Language, be it body or sign, written or spoken, is the main means of communication among human beings. People use it to express their needs and their feelings, to share their ideas and thoughts, and to do various activities. In order for two individuals (or more) to communicate, they need to "speak" the same language; that is the main reason that led a huge number of people from all over the world to learn foreign languages. Languages are taught and learned differently -using a number of methods, different materials, and various activities- depending on the types of learners and on the motivation of both learners and teachers. English is considered as a foreign language (EFL) in Algeria. It is implemented in the Algerian school as a compulsory subject starting from the first year of middle school to the third year of high school. In spite of studying it for many years, students still cannot use English to communicate. This latter have let the researcher questioning: (1) what are the reasons behind students' failure to use English in communication? (2) What are the changes that can be brought to have better teaching/learning of the speaking skill? In order to answer these questions, middle school and high school teachers have been interviewed, classes have been observed, and high school students were tested and were asked questions to complete a focus group. Results confirmed that the majority of students fail to speak in English. This, according to the collected data, is due to the lack of practice and their disinterest in the English class.

Keywords: student, learner, teacher, approach, method, technique, speaking, communication, CBA, failure, eclecticism.

Dedication

In the memory of my uncle Lahcene.

This work is dedicated to my cherished mother and to all my loved ones.

Acknowledgement

General Introduction

Languages are quite significant; English is no exception. It is required in many domains: studies (literature, linguistics, sociology, etc.), jobs (translating, teaching, hotel managing, nursing, etc.), even in science, technology and tourism. English has been taught in Algeria as a foreign language (EFL) since many years. However, students, even after years of study, seem to fail using this language in communication. This study aims at identifying the main reasons behind students' failure to speak in English, and bringing some changes to the classroom in order to improve the teaching (and consequently learning) of the speaking skill. In order to complete the research, the following questions have been raised:

- What are the reasons behind students' failure to use English?

- Is the Competency Based Approach (CBA) really used to teach English in Algeria? If yes, why does it not have good quality teaching (and learning) outcomes as it should have?

- What are the techniques and strategies that should be used to improve students' speaking level?

Hypothetical answers are as follows:

- The students' failure to use English can be due to:

1. The long syllabus compared to the short amount of time given.

2. The large number of students in the classroom which makes the job of teaching a more demanding one and requires more time and efforts to manage students and know their levels.

3. The non-varied teaching activities.

4. Teachers' commitment to the book, which leaves no room for teachers' creativity "book-slaves".

- The CBA is claimed to be used but is not used in fact.

- Varying strategies and techniques (using Eclecticism) to meet different types of learners may motivate them to learn and consequently have positive results on their oral use of English.

In order to answer the previously mentioned questions and to verify these hypotheses, first and third year middle school classes and third year secondary classes have been observed, some middle and high school teachers have been interviewed, and third year high school students have been tested to know their level in English and asked questions to complete a focus group. The previously mentioned served as tools to collect data for this research.

This dissertation was divided into three chapters. The first chapter was entitled "Literature Review". It aimed at defining some main concepts and common methods and approaches and shedding light on some elements of the speaking skill. The second chapter was entitled "Situational Analysis and Methodology". As its name denotes, it states the steps taken to complete this research and shows the importance of English in Algeria and where it (English) is taught. The third, and last, chapter was entitled "Discussing Findings". It aimed at stating the collected data and driving results from them and, finally, providing some recommendations to have better teaching/learning of the speaking skill.

CHAPTER ONE:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Language is an essential means of communication among human beings. Yet, language teaching and learning are full of challenges; teachers should be ready in many ways and students should be willing to learn in order to be able to do so. This chapter is going to discuss some teaching variables and will be divided into three sections. The first one will highlight the most common methods and approaches to teaching EFL. The second will be deduced to the speaking skill, where techniques and activities to teaching speaking will be demonstrated. Finally, the third section will encompass the factors that affect students' speaking inside the classroom.

1. Approach, Method and Technique

1.1. Approach

Many scholars agree on the definition of approach as a set of beliefs relating to language and language learning. Harmer (2010); Anthony (1963); Richards and Rodgers (2001). An approach is how language teaching and learning are viewed. British Council (website). "Underlying any language teaching approach is a theoretical view of what language is, and of how it can be learnt." British Council (website). In other words, an approach aims at defining the nature of language and demonstrating the way this latter can be assimilated. It does not only show how language is utilised but also how "its constituent parts interlock." Harmer (2010). Each approach views language distinctively from other approaches. Miliani (2001). "The differences can be extreme in some cases, in others they can be just a question of label." Miliani (2001). In the hierarchy that comprises methods, techniques and approaches, approach is the superordinate element. Anthony (1963). Various methods can be derived from one approach. British Council (website).

1.2. Method

A method represents the practical interpretation of a philosophy (that is an approach). Richards and Rodgers (2001). Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated:

> According to Anthony's model, […] method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented... (p19)

It shows how knowledge should be introduced to learners along with the sequence of this latter's presentation. "An approach gives rise to methods..." British Council (website); the principles of an approach can help generate more than one method which in turn has multiple techniques derived from it. British Council (website); Anthony (1963).

1.3. Technique

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines technique as "a way of doing something by using specific knowledge or skill." In the classroom, technique is one of the activities derived from a method that is compatible with an approach; in other words, a technique follows a method that is based on an approach. Anthony (1963). It is one of the diverse activities done inside the classroom. Brown (2007). "Various methods employ various techniques." Educational Research Techniques (website).

1.4. Overview of Common Approaches and Methods to English Language Teaching

1.4.1. Grammar Translation Method

This method is a traditional one in which the teacher is the centre of the classroom. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). Reading and writing are the dominant skills. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). Target language is rarely used in communication; mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). Grammar is

taught deductively and vocabulary, which should be learned by heart, is given to students in lists. "A typical exercise is to translate sentences from the target language into the mother tongue (or vice versa)." Celce-Muricia; Brinton; Snow (2014: p5). A common activity used in this method is translation. Celce-Muricia; Brinton; Snow (2014).

1.4.2. Audiolingual Method

This method was developed as a consequence of the need for individuals who can learn to speak the target language in a short time. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). It considers language learning as a behaviour that should be reinforced. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). Thus, it considers repetition and drills as important activities through which language can be learnt. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). Listening and speaking are given importance and correct pronunciation is a must. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). Target language must be used as a medium of instruction. Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014). This method encourages students to learn grammar rules inductively (through exposure). Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow (2014).

1.4.3. Competency Based Approach

Competency Based Approach (CBA) is an approach to language teaching. It focuses on "the outcomes of learning as the driving force of teaching" What is CBLT? (website). According to Richards, in CBA, designing a curriculum and teaching its content should be based on students' needs and outputs. What is CBLT? (website). "Competences are not just skills as opposed to knowledge, but represent a complex articulation of knowledge, attitudes and skills that learners can use whenever they are needed not just in examination." Chelli (2009: p11 – 12). In CBA, language is not regarded as a set of rules that should be learnt but rather a number of competencies (including social, linguistic, problem-solving and communicative skills) that should be developed and used, not only inside the language classroom but also in real-life situations, when needed. Chelli (2009). Curricula are

designed to help students develop life-oriented skills, solve academic problems and overcome real-life challenges. Chelli (2009).

"Competency-based education focuses on outcomes of learning. It addresses what the learners are expected to do rather then [sic] on what they are expected to learn about." Chelli (2009: p12). In other words, content as well as activities included in lessons should be selected thoroughly based on the knowledge and skills students should possess at the end of the course.

"We can simply say that the CBA is an outcome-based instruction which is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and the community." Chelli (2009: p12). CBA is an approach that can be adopted, thanks to its flexibility, in various language classroom situations.

1.4.4. Communicative Language Teaching Approach

The communicative approach to language teaching gives more importance to learners' ability to communicate meaning than grammatical and pronunciation correctness. Cummins (2007). It views communication as a means and as the goal of language teaching. According to this approach, language is learned through individuals' participation in comprehensible conversations. Scrivener (2011: p31-32). It aims at the use of the target language in communication. Celce-Murcia (2014: p15); Larsen-Freeman (2015: p115). In the same course, the Chinese philosopher Xun Kuang in his book "The Teachings of the Ru" said "tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn". This quote illustrates that people are more likely to learn if they are "involved" in the process. Widdowson (1978) and Richards (2001) argued that even though grammatical rules are important, mastering them is not sufficient for intelligible communication. This approach is in favour of using authentic activities where learners can practise the manner of addressing different people in different times and contexts –that is practising communicative competence. Celce-Murcia (2014: p15).

1.4.5. Eclecticism

Present-day classes are composed of mixed-abilities learners who have different learning types. Therefore, the use of a single method might not only be monotonous but also unproductive. "The eclectic approach is the label given to a teacher's use of techniques and activities from a range of language teaching approaches and methodologies." British Council (website). Hence, eclecticism refers to the use of various techniques and activities derived from a range of teaching methods and approaches to meet different students' needs and types of learning. "Reliance upon a single theory of teaching has been criticized because the use of a limited number of techniques can become mechanic. The students, thus, cannot get benefits of learning." Shakir Aziz (2011). Learners have diverse learning preferences; sticking to one technique may discourage students which results in ineffective learning outcomes. "The teacher decides what methodology or approach to use depending on the aims of the lesson and the learners in the group." British Council (website). The choice of the method to be used is not random; it depends on the teacher, the skill to be taught, the learners and some other circumstances. "There is no single acceptable way to go about teaching language today." Larsen-Freeman (1987: p60). Indeed, teachers build their own methodologies based on their personal experience. This is what someone can deduce from the Chinese proverb "a thousand teachers, a thousand methods."

1.4.6. Intercultural Approach

The intercultural approach to language teaching is an approach that is in favour of teaching the language along with the culture associated with it. Hesar, Yavuz Konca, and Zarfsaz (2012). Being familiar with a language's grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation is not enough to know the language as a whole. British Council (website). Hesar, Konca, and Zarfaz (2012) noted that mastering a language does not only mean mastering its structures and forms but also mastering the culture linked to it. Culture is said to be an important part "integrated" with the language, hence, language cannot be taught separately from culture. The

intercultural approach's aim is for students to become culturally aware. British Council (website). In other words, students will be aware of their own culture and tolerant and understanding towards other cultures.

1.4.7. Total Physical Response

Total physical response is a method that is principally used with learners at beginner levels. Mühren (N.D). It aims at teaching learners "to understand and respond to language physically." Mühren (p2). When using this method, teachers employ the imperative form mainly. Palacios Maroto, Sanchez Garrido, Moreno Fuentes (N.D). Its principle is based on children's acquisition of the mother tongue by being exposed to it without having to learn by heart lists of vocabulary. Muller (N.D). This method involves all learners and helps them reduce stress; teachers should not push students to speak in the foreign language until learners feel capable and talk spontaneously. Mühren (N.D). This is why total physical response proved to be successful.

1.4.8. Task Based Language Teaching

The main principle of task based language teaching is that language is taught through the involvement of learners in an activity. Harmer (2001). This method provides opportunities for learners to use the target language in communication. Youtube (Bridge TEFL: Teaching Speaking with Task-Based Learning). "Although the present simple may frequently be used in such an activity, the focus of the lesson is the task." Harmer (2001: p86). In other words, TBLT focuses on the task to be completed or the problem to be solved rather than on the language structure to be used. Mistakes made by learners while performing an activity should be noted and corrected after the task has ended. Harmer (2001); Youtube (Bridge TEFL: Teaching Speaking with Task-Based Learning).

1.4.9. The Silent Way

This method was founded on the belief that language should be discovered by learners themselves; as a consequence, the teacher should speak very little with the learners. Harmer (2001). In the silent way, teachers use Cuisenaire nods ("small blocks of wood of different lengths" Harmer (2001: p141) and different colours.) They are used in activities to represent things or animals upon which a story can be built. Harmer (2001). During activities, the teacher points out the Cuisenaire nod or the phonemic chart and learners imitate. Harmer (2001). The teacher then "has to indicate (silently) if he or she is correct." Harmer (2001: p89).

1.4.10. Suggestopedia

George Lozanov (Bulgarian psychologist) developed suggestopedia in 1770. Sylwia Drymajło (2012). It is a language teaching method that gives importance to the learning environment and the learners' state of mind in order to create the best learning athmosphere. Harmer (2001). Using suggestopedia helps learning a language faster; students learn to read unconsciously while looking at pictures with the names of the objects. Youtube (Deyan Bararev). In order to make learning more comfortable, teachers treat learners as their children. Harmer (2001). Suggestopedia encourages the use of decorations, music and relaxing exercices. Youtube (Deyan Bararev); Harmer (2001).

2. Teaching Speaking

2.1. What Is Speaking?

Oxford online dictionary defines speaking as "the action of conveying information or expressing one's feelings in speech." Oxford living dictionaries (2017). "According to Brown (1994) and Burns & Joyce (1997) speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning

that involves producing *and* receiving and processing information." Cunningham Florez (1999). Chris Anderson defines speaking as the ability to transform ideas into meaningful utterances. Youtube (TED). To sum up, speaking refers to the use of verbal words to express thoughts.

2.2. Techniques to Organize Speaking Groups

Techniques and activities should be adapted according to the group of learners; age and level are important for the selection of the activity type. Klippel (2011). Below are some common techniques to organise students for a speaking lesson, taken from the book "Keep Talking" by Klippel (2011):

2.2.1. Buzz Groups

"The class is divided into groups." Klippel (2011). Students in groups take a few minutes to discuss a problem. After that, they share their thoughts and solutions with the class. Klippel (2011).

2.2.2. Hearing

Teacher explains to student a situation in which there is a problem to solve. Students listen to videos/audios linked to what the teacher has already explained. Then, they are asked to make a decision about the solution that suits better to the problem proposed. Klippel (2011).

2.2.3. Network

"The class is divided into groups." Klippel (2011). Each group has a ball of string and a topic to discuss. The student who speaks has the ball of string. When he/she finishes speaking, he/she passes "the ball of string to the next speaker but holds on to the string." Klippel (2011). At the end, "a web of string
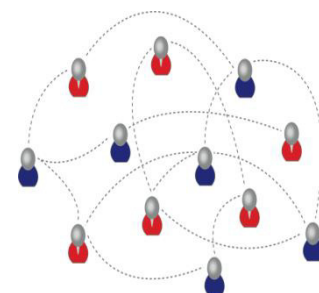
develops, showing who talked the most and who the least." Klippel (2011).

2.2.4. Onion

"The class is divided into two equal groups." Klippel (2011: p94). Students sit in circles; "one inside the other, facing each other." Klippel (2011: p94). Each student from the outer circle speaks with the student facing him/her in the inner circle. After a few minutes, students from the outer circle change their seats moving one chair so that they would be facing another student; else than the one they were discussing with, and continue the discussion. Klippel (2011).
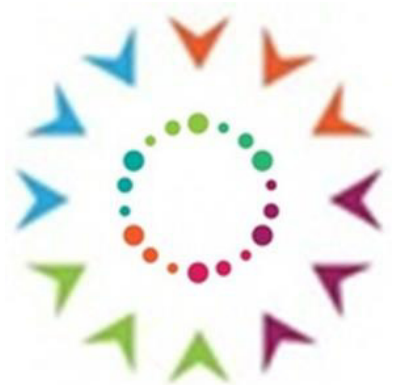
2.2.5. Market

Students are given a topic to discuss. They are permitted to circulate around the classroom and talk to each other about the selected topic. Klippel (2011). Teacher should make sure that students are not using their mother tongue.

2.3. Activities to Teach Speaking

The selection of an activity is based on the students' level, the aim of the activity, and/ or the way the teacher wants to organise students (whole class, groups, or pairs). Klippel (2011). Below are some common activities to teach speaking:

2.3.1. Spending Money (intermediate)

"This activity can be done individually or in groups." Elements and the Periodic Table (N.D). Students are asked to write down what they "would spend a sum of money on."

Klippel (2011: p93). After that, they should tell each other what they decided to buy and why. Klippel (2011).

2.3.2. Values continuum (intermediate)

Students are given handouts (see "values continuum handout" in the appendix section) and are asked to mark how much they agree with each of the statements. Students then discuss their different viewpoints –each giving their reasons. Klippel (2011).

2.3.3. Miracle Workers (intermediate)

Students are given handouts (see "miracle workers handout" in the appendix section) containing names and descriptions of fifteen miracle workers. They are then asked to classify them into three categories: ((1) most stimulating miracle workers; (2) "next most interesting ones"; (3) least appealing ones.) students then tell and compare each other's choices. After that, students individually talk about a miracle worker from the given list; they tell the class which category they put the miracle worker in and why. Klippel (2011: idea adapted from Simon et al 1972.)

2.3.4. Unfinished Sentences (intermediate)

Students are given pieces of paper containing parts of sentences. They are then seated in two circles, "one inside the other, facing each other." Klippel (2011: p94). Each two students discuss the halves of sentences given to them. Every few minutes, students from one circle (the same every time) move one seat to the left/right (same direction every time) to face a new student and carry on the conversation with him/her. Students continue moving on until all students of the outer circle have talked to all of the students from the inner circle. Sentences can be used to review the previously done grammar lesson. Klippel (2011).

2.3.5. Back to Back (beginner)

The teacher puts music on and students walk around in the classroom and notice each other's clothes/ appearance. When the teacher stops the music, students have to pair up and stand back to back. Each pair of students describe each other taking turns. When the teacher restarts the music, students have to restart walking around and noticing. Klippel (2011).

2.3.6. Similar and Different (intermediate)

Students are divided into pairs. Each student thinks about three things that he/she has in common with his / her partner and three other things different from his/her partner, and writes them down. Pairs then discuss the sentences they wrote and decide whether the things they have mentioned are correct. Klippel (2011).

2.3.7. Most Names (intermediate)

Teacher writes names of famous people on nametags and sticks them to students' backs without letting them see. Students walk around in the classroom and ask each other yes/no questions until they know who they are (the name on the nametag) Klippel (2011).

2.3.8. Lie Detector (intermediate)

"The class is divided into groups." Klippel (2011). One student of each group has to leave the room. The rest of students think up a number of questions to ask the absent students. The students who left the room are called in to join their groups. From the questions given to them, they should pick three to answer. Two answers should be correct and one should be wrong. The students then have to decide which are the wrong and which are the correct answers, justifying their choices. The student who answered tells them whether they were correct. Klippel (2011).

3. Factors Affecting Students' Speaking

3.1. Personality Type: Introvert/ Extrovert

People often speak about individuality and different personalities. Personality, as defined in Merriam-Webster dictionary, is "a set of distinctive traits and characteristics." (2017). It is what makes an individual different from others. Quora (website). The most distinguished types of personality are introverts and extroverts. Myres (2017). Introverts are often calm people who get their energy from being alone and by thinking and reflecting. Myres (2017). Extroverts, as opposed to introverts, like to be able to express ideas out loud and to be part of big events; they get their energy from being around people. Myres (2017). The aforementioned two types of people, when they speak, are affected by their personality types.

3.2. Self-Confidence

Self-confidence refers to the belief someone has in his/her aptitude and powers. The University of Queensland (website). It is the way we react "to events going on around us." The University of Queensland (website). Self-confidence is affected by previous circumstances that happened in one's life, The University of Queensland (website) and has a considerable influence on people's behaviour. What Is Self-Confidence? (website). Self-confidence is one of the elements that affect one's speech.

3.3. Anxiety

People go through difficult times in their lives, thus, it is harder for some individuals to deal with such situations. Anxiety is said to be the feeling of fear anticipating several events. Rachman (2004). "Anxiety is a normal, emotional, reasonable and expected response to real or potential danger." Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2000) (as paraphrased in Shri, p100). Although "anxiety" and "fear" are used interchangeably, these

two terms are not the same; "fear has a specific focus" Rachman (2004: p3) unlike anxiety which is unperceived. Rachman (2004).

3.4. Motivation

Learners all over the world are different; some can assimilate and use the learned material so fast while others take more time and energy to do so. Chelbi (2010). The aforementioned is due to learners' motivation which plays a significant role in their achievement. Slavin (as cited in Chelbi, 2010) defined motivation as "what gets you going, keeps you going, and determines where you"re going to go." (2003: p329). In other words, motivation is the force that drives people to achieve their objectives. Chelbi (2010); Wang (2011: p13).

Conclusion

Language is vital for communication, nevertheless, it can be complex to teach and learn. This chapter aimed at summarizing the most common/used methods and approaches to language teaching, after defining these terms. It then briefly explained some vital variables affecting students' speaking.

CHAPTER TWO:

Situational Analysis and Methodology

Introduction

After having discussed some common methods and approaches, and discovered some factors that affect the students' speaking, steps of collecting data will be viewed and explained. This chapter is going to be divided into three sections. The first one will highlight the position of English language in Algeria and point out where this latter is taught. The second will be devoted to the methodology, where tools and population are described. The third section will briefly describe the findings.

1. Situational Analysis: English in Algeria

1.1. Position of English in Algeria

There are two native languages in Algeria depending on the region: modern standard Algerian Arabic and Berber. (Art, Language, Learning website: French Language in Algeria: Status of Regions). Algerian Arabic dialects are spoken in most of the Algerian regions, whereas, about five dialects of Berber are spoken in some regions of Algeria (such as Kabilian regions, Awres, Sahara, etc.). Boubakour (N.D); (Djelfa Forums website). Classical Arabic is considered as the first/official language in Algeria. Boubakour (N.D). French is the second language (foreign language) in Algeria. Zaytoni (2013); (Right and Culture website: Foreign Language Learning and Acquisition in Algeria: the Competition between English and French). It is "widely used in the country [...] due to Algeria's colonial history". (wikipedia: Languages of Algeria). English is considered as the second foreign language (EFL) in Algeria. (Forums Algeria website: Languages in use in Algeria). It is now taught, starting from the first year of middle school until the third year of high school, as an obligatory subject. (Right and Culture website: Foreign Language Learning and Acquisition in Algeria: the Competition between English and French).

1.2. Institutions Where English Is Taught in Algeria

English is taught in Algeria, since many years, in many institutions and for various purposes. The most common institutions where English is taught in Algeria are public schools, private schools, the British Council and the American Embassy.

1.2.1. Public Schools

Education in Algerian public schools is free of charge (Wikipedia: Education in Algeria). The Algerian educational system is divided into four phases of education: primary, middle, secondary and higher education. Primary-school education is compulsory in Algeria (Wikipedia: Education in Algeria). All Algerian students enrolled in public schools have to study the subject of English starting from the first year of middle school until the third year of high school.

1.2.2. Private Schools

Unlike public schools, students have to pay to take part in private school classes. There are two types of private schools: private schools teaching the same syllabi as public schools (middle/ high schools) and private schools teaching languages (per level or for specific purposes).

1.2.3. British Council

"The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities." (British Council website: Our Organisation). It provides knowledge, materials, and activities in English for learners and teachers from the UK and other countries. The British Council interconnects British people and institutions with "those around the world." (British Council website: Our Organisation). People from all over the world can have access to information put online on the British Council website.

The British Council teaching centre in Algeria is situated in Algiers. It provides courses, trainings, and qualifications in English to Algerian people. It aims at improving English in Algeria. (British Council website: What we do in Algeria).

2. Data Collection

2.1. Tools

In order to check whether the Competency Based Approach is really used in the Algerian classes and to know the reasons behind students' failure to speak in English, first and third year middle school classes and third year secondary classes have been observed, some middle and high school teachers have been interviewed, and third year high school students have been tested to know their level in English and asked questions to complete a focus group. The previously mentioned tools served to collect data for this research.

A class from the British council centre –situated in Hydra, Algiers- (pre-intermediate level) has been observed to compare the results.

The observations, test, and focus group took place in March, 2017; in OULD KABLIA SALIHA high school, situated in Avenue Mohamed Khemisti, and in TOUAHRIA MOHAMED middle school, situated in Cité la Belle Vue, in Mostaganem, Algeria; and included two classes from middle school (first and third) and two third year classes (scientific and mathematic streams) containing thirty-one, thirty-seven, thirty-two and sixteen students respectively. It was done as to find out whether the CBA is really used in the English language classes in Algeria and to know the reasons behind students' failure to use the aforementioned language in communication.

High school classes were observed for two weeks during the English session. They were tested by being asked questions. The ability to utter intelligible sentences is a criterion that was given more importance when evaluating students' answers than the one of accuracy.

Middle school classes were observed during one session of English each. The observation's aims were to deduce what the method used was and to check how students

behave inside the classroom (students' participation and interaction with the teacher are given considerable importance).

2.1.1. Description of the Tools

2.1.1.1. Observation

English classes were observed in order to check whether teachers used the CBA and to see the way students responded to the teachers' way of teaching.

There were specific matters to observe such as the seating arrangement, the materials used, the language used among students, etc. (checklist will be included in the appendix section). Other observations apart from the listed in the checklist were noted.

2.1.1.2. Interview

Teachers were interviewed to examine their knowledge about the notion of the CBA (Competency Based Approach) and to know the frequency of their teaching of communication skills to students and the materials used for this matter. A copy of the questions asked will be included in the appendix section.

2.1.1.3. Focus group

The focus group was done with high school students only, mainly to know if they were taught communication skills (listening and speaking), the material used for those skills, and whether they did different activities in the classroom. The focus group also aimed at concluding whether students liked the English session. The questions asked in the focus group will be part of the appendix.

2.1.1.4. Test

In order to know the students' level in English, they have been asked different questions. Students' mistakes were noted but not corrected. Fluency mattered more than accuracy.

2.2. Population

In Algeria, students start learning English in middle school. The knowledge they learn is then consolidated in high school. The two phases of education (middle and secondary), specifically urban schools in Mostaganem, have been selected to be the population of this research.

2.3. Participants

The data collected for this research was drawn from sixty-two middle school students and forty-eight high school students, and twenty teachers (ten from middle schools and ten others from high schools) from different institutions in Mostaganem.

Students were from first and third year "TOUAHRIA MOHAMED" middle school and two third year classes (scientific and mathematic streams) from "OULD KABLIA SALIHA" high school.

From one hundred sixteen students, sixty were female, and fifty six were males. Thus, forty nine percent were men, and fifty one percent were women. The ages of the students ranged from sixteen to twenty. Teachers were from seven institutions (four middle schools and three high schools: Touahria Mohamed, Ben Aouda Ben Zarjeb, Ben Slimane Hamou and Wouroud middle schools, andMohamed Khemisti, Ould Kabliya Saliha, and Djebli Mohamed high schools), all situated in Mostaganem. From twenty teachers, there were nineteen female participants and only one male. That's ninety percent female and ten percent male.

From the data collected out of the observations, the interview and the focus group, someone can infer that (1) the majority of high school students cannot express themselves in English and (2) most of the teachers do not use the CBA.

High school students' low level may be due to the absence of practice (in and outside of the classroom), their lack of motivation; mainly caused by the non-varied activities in English, and the teachers' dedicated use of the course book —which makes the English class a monotonous and consequently a boring one.

3. Findings

3.1. Test

This tool was used to know the approximate level of high school students; it served to determine whether the techniques used to teach speaking have satisfying outcomes. Due to the short time, it was only done with high school students who were asked to respond orally to a few questions. Every student's mistakes were noted so that they could be graded individually. From the data collected, students were divided into six different levels —number one as the best level and six as the least good. The graphic below is the representation of students' levels.

Students' Approximate Levels According to the Test

Legend: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
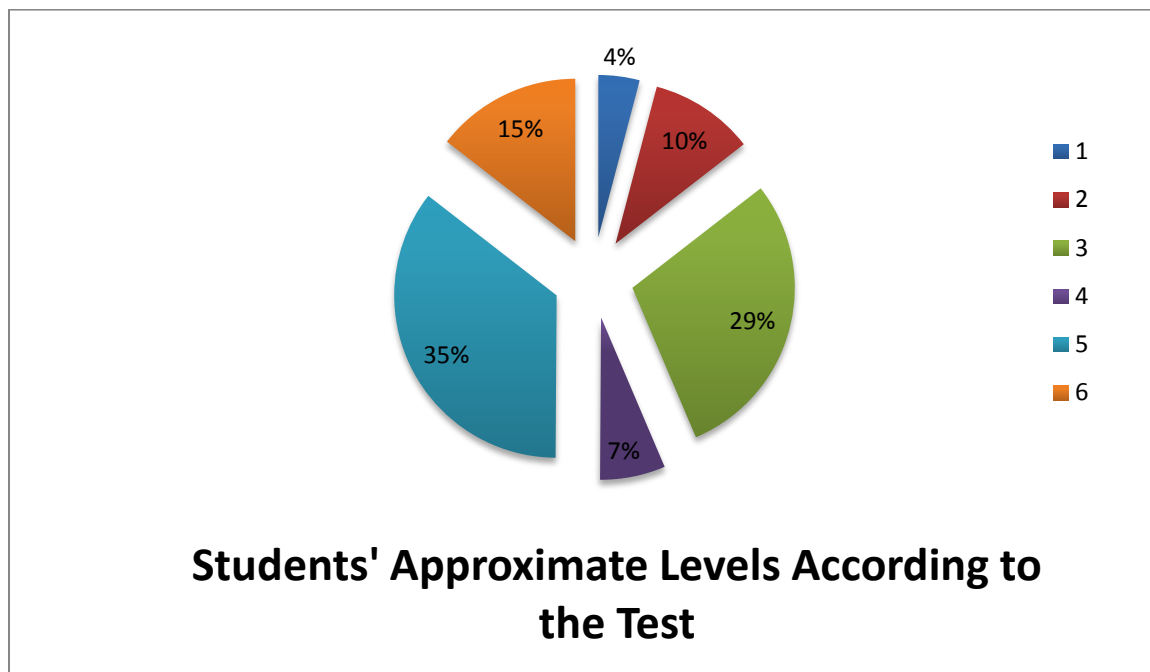
3.2. Observation

In order to check the methods teachers use in English classes and to know whether these positively resulted in students' level of spoken English, classes were observed during their English sessions. Some specific items (see checklist in appendix section) were observed. Other observations were taken as notes.

According to the observations, teachers do not use the CBA (as claimed). All the observed high school teachers followed the book slavishly. Students were seated in rows and were not asked to complete many speaking tasks.

3.3. Interview

There were three significant matters questioned in the teachers' interview: the teachers' motivation, their methodology of teaching and the teaching of speaking. Teachers' experience ranged from three to thirty-one years. Their answers for what motivated them were mainly because they "liked" English. Most of the teachers had little knowledge about what the CBA

is and most of them admitted that they taught little or no speaking to students because they thought it is not as needed as writing.

3.4. Focus group

Due to the time limit, only high school students answered the focus group which was mainly done to have a more reliable data and to be compared with the teachers' interview. Students were mainly asked about the skills they were taught (communication skills specifically) and the activities they did in the classroom. Students said that they had little opportunity to talk in class (only to answer teacher's questions or to present a project once in a term). They also asserted not using any other material except the book and only doing activity from the book.

Conclusion

This chapter was divided into three parts. It first had a view on the position of English language in Algeria and where it is taught. Then, it covered the data collection process. Finally, it briefly discussed the findings.

CHAPTER THREE:

Discussing Findings

Introduction

After shedding light on the importance of English in Algeria and having covered the steps of gathering data, this latter is going to be analysed thoroughly. This chapter will include three parts. It will analyse the data in the first part, discuss the results in the second and, finally, provide suggestions and recommendations to have better teaching/learning outcomes.

1. Data Analysis

1.1. Observation

The first class observed was a third year high school scientific class containing thirty-two students seated in rows (army seating arrangement). The session lasted for one hour. On the board, a student wrote the date, the unit and the page and number of activity that students were asked to do. Students were noisy and the teacher did not try to stop them until a few minutes have passed. As the teacher checked the students' books (at least one book per table), some students were changing seats without teacher's permission. The teacher sent out students who did not have books (or copybooks). She, then, read the activity's instruction and asked students to complete it. A few minutes later, the teacher told the students that it was time to correct the activity; some students volunteered to answer while others were not involved; they were rather talkative. The teacher interacted with the group of students sitting in the front only. A student who was seated in the back claimed that the teacher does not like him (because he tried to participate but the teacher did not notice him). After that, the teacher explained the rules of the lesson which activity preceded (forming adjectives by adding suffixes) and helped students give examples by acting out adjectives. As soon as the bell rang, students stopped paying attention to the teacher. Some of them left the room.

It was clear that the teacher attempted to use the inductive way of teaching (learner-centred), however, students relied on the teacher.

There were a number of things to notice. The students were making noise so that the teacher sends them out. Their disinterest in the English class was obvious and they were constantly using their mother tongue (Arabic).

The second class observed was a third year high school mathematic class. The first thing to notice in that class is the number of students (sixteen) seated in rows and that students were rather calm. It was an hour long session. On the board, a student wrote the date, the unit and the page and number of the task that students were asked to do (reading). The students took a few minutes to read the text. After that, the teacher asked a few students to read out loud before asking them to answer the questions that followed the text. The answers were written on the board so that students can copy them down. There was a spelling mistake on the board that the teacher did not notice. After the students had finished writing, the teacher asked them to do the activity that followed but the bell rang before it was corrected so the teacher gave it as a home work and said she would check it the following time.

The things to notice in that class were that students were more motivated than the ones of the other class: they were calm, listened carefully to the teacher, and did as they were told.

The third class observed was a first year middle school class containing thirty-one students seated in rows. The English class lasted for one hour. At the beginning, pairs of students took turns to perform a dialogue that they learned at home. Next, the teacher explained the present continuous tense and asked students to give her examples. After the students wrote the present continuous tense's rule, they were given an exercise that they completed and then corrected on the board.

It was observed that the students had good English for their level. They seemed to like and respect their teacher. They tried to participate and were all involved in the lesson.

The fourth class observed was a third year middle school class that contained thirty-seven students seated in rows. The one-hour-lasting lesson was a review of the present perfect tense. The teacher asked the students to remind her of the rule and the uses of the present perfect tense. Then, the students were asked to provide examples with some regular and irregular verbs. While students were completing an activity that the teacher asked them to do, she passed through rows to check and to correct students who had finished. After all the students had finished writing, the teacher, along with students, corrected the exercise orally.

What was particularly noticed in this class is that there were two students who had better English level than the other students. They were the first to give examples, participate and automatically correct their classmates. The teacher tried to restrict these students and involve the others.

The fifth class observed was from the British Council centre. Students are put in classes according to their level (they have to take a level test at the beginning of the course). It was a pre-intermediate class containing twenty students seated in a horse shoe (U) arrangement. At the beginning of the class, students reviewed what they have done during the previous class on a website (kahoot.it). They enjoyed it because it resembled a competition (students had to log in to the website using their phones and answer questions that were displayed on the smart board one after the other. The questions had four answers each and students had to pick the right answer). It was interesting because the fastest student who gives the right answers would win; eventually, the winner is rewarded by the teacher (he gave the winning student chocolate). After the revision, the students watched a video of an ancient treasure hunter and were then asked to write a paragraph about him. Next, the teacher asked the students to take turns and sit with their back to the board, he wrote words on the board and the class had to find a way to explain the word to the student who could not see it. The student with his/her back to the board would make inferences until he/she finds the word. The last activity was done outside the class, where the teacher asked students to juggle a ball and the other students

would count. The following student (to juggle) had to speak for seconds (the number of times the previous student had juggled) before he/she can take the turn to juggle.

The things to notice in this class were the use of information and communication technologies, the varied activities and skills (writing, vocabulary and speaking), the students' interest in learning and the respectful, friendly relationship shared by the teacher and his students.

Apart from the free class observations, there were specific things to observe. These are summarised in the following table:

Class	Third Year Scientific Class	Third Year Mathematic Class	First Year Middle School	Third Year Middle School	British Council pre-intermediate class
Number of Students	Thirty-two	sixteen	Thirty-one	Thirty-seven	Twenty
Seating Arrangement	Army seating arrangement	Army seating arrangement	Army seating arrangement	Army seating arrangement	Horse shoe seating arrangement
Materials Used	Course book; white board.	Course book; white board.	Course book; white board.	Course book; white board.	Book; white board; smart board; ball.
Method Used	The use of the book	The use of the book	Total physical response; grammar translation	Communicative approach; grammar translation method	Eclecticism

			method		
Language Skills Taught	Grammar	Grammar	Speaking, grammar	Grammar	Listening, speaking, grammar
Praising and Rewarding	Verbal praises	Verbal praises	Verbal praises	Verbal praises	Verbal praises; symbolic presents
Correcting Mistakes	Automatically	Automatically	Asking students to repeat themselves	Repeating what students said in a question form/ asking classmates whether the statement is correct	Automatically

1.2.   Interview

Twenty teachers (ten middle school teachers and ten secondary school teachers) from seven institutions (four middle schools and three high schools) were interviewed so that their answers could be part of this research's collected data. The interview contained fourteen questions that differed from the teachers' experience, to their motivation, and to the methods they used. Although the questions were diverse to some extent, the most significant ones were

the ones emphasizing the knowledge about and the use of the CBA and the teaching of the speaking skill, precisely the frequency and the materials used.

Some teachers did not answer all the questions; there were some questions that they skipped for untold reasons.

The teachers' experiences ranged from three to thirty-one years of teaching. Their motives were not as varied as their experiences; even though some did not want to teach English in the first place and some others were forced by parents, most of them taught English because they "liked it". Most of the teachers (eighteen) said they used the course book to design their lessons. In addition to the course book, they used the internet, other content and grammar books and other teachers' help to plan their lessons. The great majority of teachers (nineteen) used the course book as a material inside the classroom. There were other materials used such as pictures and videos, and the overhead projector. Nine teachers did not reveal the method they used in teaching. One teacher said she/he used the book content as a method while the other ten teachers used the communicative approach, the grammar translation method and eclecticism. Sixteen teachers gave approximate definitions of what the CBA is while four others did not answer. When the teachers were asked if they had a training to know how to use the CBA, eleven answered no and only seven answered yes, while two did not answer. There were three categories of students' levels according to teachers: nine said that students' level was "bad", eight "average", and three stated that it was "catastrophic". The teachers were asked whether they thought the CBA could be used taking into account the actual level of students. Four of them did not answer, twelve answered no, and only four answered yes. According to teachers' answers, they emphasized more on the writing and reading skills "because students are not tested on the other skills" as a few teachers claimed. Teachers were asked whether or not and how often they taught listening and speaking. Three teachers confessed not teaching those skills and replacing them with writing and reading. The other teachers' answers varied from once in a unit, to once in a sequence, to one time every week,

etc. Thirteen teachers said they used the course book to teach listening and speaking, four teachers said materials to teach listening were not available, whereas some other teachers responded that they used audios, videos, pictures and the overhead projector. Teachers were asked how they motivated their students to talk in a speaking class, their replies differed from involving students in interesting activities, to providing a safe environment for them to speak, to telling them not to care about making mistakes, etc. There were mainly three ways teachers praised and rewarded their students, according to their answers: praising them verbally, adding marks to their scores, and giving them symbolic gifts. Teachers corrected their students' spoken mistakes differently: stopping them and correcting them, correcting them automatically (without stopping them), letting them finish then correcting them, and repeating their mistakes as a question and giving them a chance to correct themselves.

1.3.   Test

High school students from two classes (scientific and mathematic streams) were asked questions to test their level of spoken English. Each student's mistakes were noted separately to know each one's approximate level.

According to the students' answers; they were put in six categories: category "One" contains the students whose level was estimated the best and category "Six" the least good.

1.4.   Focus group

Forty-eight high school students from two classes (scientific and mathematic streams) from OULD KABLIYA SALIHA School were asked questions to complete a focus group which helped verify the data collected from the teachers' interview.

Most of the students could not understand the questions, that is why they were reformulated in Arabic so that all the students could give their answers. What has been noticed is that there was no remarkable difference between the two classes' answers.

The students were asked about the materials that their teachers use inside the classroom. They replied that they used mainly the book and sometimes the overhead projector. When they were asked about the activities they did, they said they did all of the activities from the course book. The dominant language skills they studied were grammar and reading. Answering the students' questions and presenting a project ones per term was considered as "studying the speaking skill" in their view. Their teachers praise them verbally as to motivate them in the class. While they spoke, which according to them rarely happens, their teachers corrected them differently; they either ask them whether they are "sure" or ask other friends to correct them.

Most of the students of the scientific stream class showed their bad impression toward English. They manifested their dislike of the "same" activities and blamed their teacher for their bad level and for not being able to understand most of what she explained in class. They also said that their teachers embarrassed them by correcting their mistakes in front of the class; which resulted in classmates laughing at them and eventually they stopped speaking in class.

2. Results

2.1. The CBA is not used in Algerian schools

According to the interviews and to what have been observed, the CBA is not used to teach English in the Algerian schools. The CBA is defined as a learner-centred approach that focuses on teaching language by developing life-oriented competencies (more details in chapter one p3). Yet, the Algerian students' level of English (according to the data collected) does not allow teachers to use such an approach. Moreover, "life-oriented competencies" might be difficult to teach in one's own language, let alone teaching them in a foreign language.

2.2. Teachers follow the course book slavishly (its effect on the students' speaking skill)

The course books used to teach English in Algerian schools provide skill-related lessons; including texts for reading, topics for discussion and grammar rules and activities. These are topic-focused. Most teachers (as the interviews and observations revealed) depend on books as the ultimate source for planning lessons and the most used material in class. Therefore, the teachers' use of the book became mechanic and, eventually, the English class became a boring, monotonous one.

2.3. Teachers do not teach listening and speaking

The teachers who answered "yes" to teaching listening and speaking said that they did that through reading transcripts to students (listening) and asking students questions to enhance them to speak. Effective listening and speaking, however, should be done dissimilarly to this. Listening is a skill that is taught so that students could understand (to some extent) native speakers' accents. Reading transcripts might not be as effective as listening to audios or videos where native speakers talk. The speaking skill teaches students how to be able to make oneself understood in specific situations. Students should rather be given authentic topics to discuss.

2.4. Students cannot communicate using English

Third year high school students were tested orally to check how well they can use English. The test has shown that even after six years of studying this language, most students fail to

use English to communicate. This could be due to many reasons but mainly because they rarely have the opportunity to speak in English inside the classroom and elsewhere.

2.5. "Practice makes perfect"

Some students might learn the rules that they study in class and employ them correctly in their assessments. Teachers then assume that they succeeded in transmitting the knowledge. However, the absence of practicing grammar lessons in other skill-related activities hampers the effective learning: it has been observed that some students fail to use many verb tenses correctly when they speak even though they are familiar with these formers and can use them (correctly) in a grammar exercise. This could be due to the absence of practice.

2.6. Students "learning" English lessons

Students are graded with marks. These determine whether they pass to the next grade or fail (and repeat) the same grade. It has been noticed that many students (not only in English but in all the subjects taught) learn lessons not because they enjoy learning or like the subject but rather because they will be graded and given a score on what they have learned.

2.7. Students are not motivated to learn

Teachers praise and reward students in different ways. This should be a source of motivation for students. Yet, according to what have been observed, students lack motivation. Most students showed that they did not enjoy the English class and many teachers asserted that most students did not pay attention while teachers present lessons. This proves that students' internal motivation is absent.

2.8. The way of correcting students' mistakes affect them

When students were tested orally, many of them refused to utter anything in English. When asked why, some of them replied that they were afraid of making mistakes. The "fear" of making mistakes can be due to the way their previous mistakes were corrected. Many teachers said they corrected students' mistakes automatically, asked them to find their mistakes, or asked their classmates to correct them. This, however, could have a negative effect on some students. Teachers should adapt a "less harmful" way of correcting students' mistakes.

Recommendations

1. If someone wants to be a teacher, he/she should do it dedicatedly. Teaching is a noble job but a demanding one as well. That is why teachers should not occupy it just to get paid. They should be motivated. They should be willing to sacrifice much of their time and efforts.

2. Teachers should know that being a teacher does not mean that their learning journey is over. They should never stop learning. They should study whenever they get the opportunity; attend conferences, always be eager to learn and look for new information, etc.

3. Teachers should work in cooperation with their colleagues but still be creative. A common situation in Algerian schools is one in which teachers "borrow" lessons plans from their colleagues and do exactly the same things with their respective classes. It is not wrong to ask for help or to get ideas from one another; however, it is better to have one's original work than to use someone else's.

4. Teachers should be guided by objectives; not by a number of lessons. It is known that in Algerian schools, teachers have a specific amount of time to finish a giver curriculum. They would be punished if they do not finish it in the allowed time frame. This bind, however, should rather be on accomplishing more important tasks and establishing higher teaching/learning objectives.

5. Teachers are strongly recommended to teach using various methods. One can never find a homogeneous class (unless put together intentionally); learners are different in terms of level, intelligence, personality type, and many other criteria. This is why teachers should think about using several methods to meet with the needs of most learners.

6. Teachers should teach all the skills. Many teachers admitted that they did not teach the listening and speaking skills because "students are not assessed on these skills". However, they are important and part of the learning. They are integrated within the language and should not be neglected.

7. Teachers should provide a "safe atmosphere" for learners. Many learners might have ideas that they fail to express because they are afraid of being mocked at. Teachers should establish rules that assert that students should respect each other, and punish those who do not respect the rules.

8. Students should be given opportunities to speak to native speakers. Many students claim that they can understand their teachers' English but not other people's, British Council Website (2003). That may be due to their lack of communication with native speakers. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to talk to native speakers (at least via social media).

9. Students should be motivated to learn. At the beginning of middle school, students are enthusiastic towards the English language and are eager to start it and be able to speak it. After a while, the interest fades away to give up its place to boredom. (personal experience). Students then shift from wanting to study English because it is an interesting language that they like to studying it just for the sake of having a good grade. For this matter, teachers should implement various, interesting techniques and activities to motivate their students so that the teaching/learning process could be a fun, fruitful one.

Conclusion

This chapter was divided into three sections. The first section was devoted to the data analysis. The second was an interpretation of the collected data into results. The third section was dedicated to recommendations to teachers and learners for better outcomes.

General Conclusion

Considering the essential value of languages nowadays, teaching and learning languages are important topics to tackle. English is a widely spoken language. It is considered a foreign language (EFL) in Algeria. Despite the many years students spend learning English, they still fail to use it in communication. Reasons behind this remarkable failure and possible solutions are the main drive of this research. This dissertation included three chapters: it reviewed literature in the first, stated the position of English and the methodology in the second, and presented and analysed the collected data in the last one. Many researches have been made on improving English teaching in Algeria, however, no change has been brought to the real ground. This study will be conducted to help teachers deal with different types of students simultaneously. Moreover, it will boost students to stay motivated to learn English and help and encourage them to use this language in communication.

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APPENDICES

Teachers' Interview

1. Since when have you been teaching English? (experience)

2. Why do you teach English? (What is your motivation?)

3. What resources do you use to design your lesson?

4. What materials do you use to design your lessons?

5. What is the method (or methods) that you use to teach?

6. What do you know about the CBA? What's the definition of CBA according to you?

7. Did you have a training to show you how to teach the CBA?

8. What do you think about the students' level?

9. Do you think the CBA can be used with the actual level of students? (Do you think that the students' level allows teachers to use the CBA?)

10. Which skill do you emphasize?

11. Do you teach listening and speaking?

    - How often?

    - What are the materials that you use to teach these skills?

12. How do you motivate your students to talk in a speaking class?

13. Do you praise and reward them?

14. Do you correct students' mistakes when they speak?

    - How do you do that?

Students' Focus Group

1. What are the materials that your teacher uses in the classroom? (does he/she uses pictures or videos or books?)

2. Do you do the same activities or does your teacher bring you different activities?

3. What is the language skill that you study often?

4. Do you do listening and speaking?

5. What are the materials that you use when you study listening and speaking?

6. Does your teacher praise and reward you? How?

7. Does your teacher correct your mistakes? How?

Checklist of Classroom Observations

Number of students

Seating arrangement

Materials used

Language used

Students' participation

Students' interaction

Students' level

Methods used to teach

Language skills taught

Do teachers motivate students?

Do teachers praise and reward?

Do teachers correct mistakes?

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Values continuum

	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly
Beating children is sometimes necessary.					
People who tell lies steal as well.					
For every problem there is only one correct solution.					
Where there's a will there's a way.					
Think before you act.					
Proverbs are usually true.					
We can learn a lot from the past.					
Modern problems cannot be solved by old methods.					
People can be changed by education.					
Never fight against things you cannot change by yourself.					
It's never too late.					
Everybody is different.					

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Miracle workers

A group of 15 experts are offering their services. Success is guaranteed for their methods.

1 *Claire Voyant*
Everything you want to know about the future will be answered by her and she will train you to become a clairvoyant as well.

2 *Jack Goldrich*
He will help you to become an expert at making money. You will never be poor again.

3 *Dr B. U. Tiful*
She is an expert in cosmetic surgery and will help you to achieve the appearance you have always dreamed of. She can even alter your height and shape.

4. *Prof. I. Q. Clever*
He will help you become very intelligent.

5 *Robinson Crusoe*
He is a specialist in adventures and exciting trips to foreign countries. Your life will be dangerous but never boring.

6 *A. L. L. Wright*
Learn how to be optimistic. Even in the most depressing situation you will always see a good point.

7 *B. Oldcastle*
She is the expert on growing old. You will learn how to accept old age and lead an interesting and fulfilling life after 60.

8 *Alex Fame*
He will help you to become famous. Whatever you do you will be well-known everywhere.

9 *Art Iste*
Develop your artistic abilities. Art Iste will help you become a good painter or sculptor, a photographer or a draughtsman. Your art will be talked about and bought by the world's leading museums.

10 *Pop Ular*
He will make you popular with lots of people. You will always have a lot of friends.

11 *M. O. Ther*
She will help you with your family life. It will be very happy and satisfying.

12 *St Valentine*
He is an expert on love. With his help you will find the right partner.

13 *I. N. Sight*
She will give you self-knowledge and insight into your own personality.

14 *O. K. Work*
He will help you find the job which is right for you.

15 *I. Dear*
She is an expert on originality. She will help you become full of ideas for every situation in your life and your job as well as your hobbies and family life.