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Improving EFL Students' Speaking Skill Via Student-centered Learning:

The Case of First and Third Year LMD Students at University of Mostaganem

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Dedication

I dedicate this work:

To my parents

To my lovely sister and

My brother.

To my roommates and friends

To every teacher who encouraged me.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The current study aims at investigating the role of the student-centered learning (SCL) in improving the EFL students' speaking skill. The main problematic of this work is that students are unable touse the target language in communication; it implies that there are many causes behind this problematic. For examples, the traditional way of teaching that is followed by teachers to teach speaking skill.However, the hypothesis adopted in this research is that teaching oral skills based on the student-centered learning principleswill enhance the students' oralproficiency and will reduce their speaking difficulties. For this reason, this work investigates the relationship between the student-centered learning and teaching the speaking skill by focusing on the student-centered discussion inside the classroom. The focus of this paper is to demonstrate that student-centered discussion which is one major technique of classroom interaction can be an effective teaching-learning method to develop the learners' speaking skill. The required data was gathered by the classroom observation which is administrated to the first and third year LMD students of English at Mostaganem University during the academic year 2016-2017 and the teachers' questionnaire which is addressed tooral expression teachers at Mostaganem University. There were sufficient findings about the implementation of the student-centered learning in the oral expression classes.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

ELT: English Language Teaching

LMD: License– Master- Doctorate

SCL: Student-Centered Learning

L2: Second language

%:Percentage

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General Introduction

In the field of education, one of the main problems that are related to the learning of a foreign language is to prepare learners that are able to use the target language proficiently. In this sense, there are many issues that are raised in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. However, students should have certain grammar and vocabulary that helps them to interact in the classroom.

Student-centered learning and its principles can help students to improve their oral production since its main focus is the students' needs, interests, abilities, and learning styles. Thus teachers should adopt this approach and change their roles from language providers to facilitators in order to give students the opportunity and involve in the classroom discussions. Then, they will find themselves interacting, debating, and making discussions in a collaborative manner.

Students of English at Mostaganem often face problems in making good conversations in classroom, and sometimes they do not have the chance to express their ideas in oral expression courses. So, they need the chance to learn and to improve their speaking skill using interaction as pedagogical teaching-learning method to promote the learner-centered learning.

It is said that student-centered learning is an approach that offers the opportunities for students to improve their learning skills, because the main principle of that approach is to develop the students' own knowledge by communication, critical thinking, and problem solving. Thus, this piece of work is done for achieving the following objectives:

- Enhance the students' oral production.
- Make teachers create a safe learning atmosphere.
- Suggest some pedagogical recommendations for both teachers and students.

In order to know the role of student-centered learning in improving the students' speaking skill, it is necessary to ask the following questions:

- How can teachers make their students involved in the classroom interaction?
- What is the role of the student-centered discussion in improving EFL students' speaking skill?
- To what extent can teachers help their learners to construct their own knowledge in oral expression courses?

According to the research questions, it suggested as answers:

- The implementation (the use) of the student-centered leaning in oralexpression courses may enhance and improve the students' oral proficiency.

- The use of cooperative tasks can help students to face their speaking difficulties.
- The selection of the topics may help students to express their ideas and involve them in the oral expression tasks.

To investigate the role of the student-centered learning in improving EFL students' speaking skill, it is selected two tools for the data collection which are the classroom observation and the teachers' questionnaire

In order to know to what extent the hypothesis is true, the choice of the population was selected randomly, which included both EFL teachers and students of Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University. The classroom observation intended to get the real data about the situation inside the EFL classes during the oral expression courses, and the questionnaire intended to know the teachers' opinions and views about the student-centered learning and its implementation in EFL classes to develop the students' speaking skill.

The present dissertation consists of three chapters; the first chapter is concerned with the literature review about the student-centered learning with its implementation including the interaction. Then, it deals with the speaking skill, its importance, the difficulties that face learners in speaking, and the assessment of speaking skill. In other words, the first chapter was as an attempt to connect the student-centered learning with the speaking skill. However, the second chapter deals with the data collection and the description of the tools that are used in order to obtain the results. Finally, the third chapter is devoted for the analysis of the classroom observation and the teachers' questionnaire, it concludes with some suggestions and recommendation for both EFL teachers and students.

Chapter One:

Student-centered Learning and Speaking Skill

Introduction:

Students need to be able to speak with confidence and success, it is their prior aim as the teacher's one. This chapter will start by an overview about the speaking skill and its importance moving to the methods of teaching, then,a list some of problems that face students while speaking, effective activities that can help teachers to improve their students speaking and how can teachers assess the speaking skill**.**

1.1.   Speaking Skill
1.1.1. Definition:

English as a foreign language (EFL) requires students to learn the four skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking. This later, which aims at developing learners' abilities in producing oral discourses, has different meanings according to each teacher's or author's point of view.

According to Bygate (1987, p.5), the term oral expression involves making the correct choices when using language forms, following the right order, sounding in a way that is similar to that of native speakers, and producing the right meanings that can be understood by the listener. For him, speaking is a skill that all people use when they are interacting among each other; therefore, speaking is regarded as the most important skill that learners require in order to be able to speak fluently in the classroom situation

In addition to the previous definitions, Hedge (2000, p. 261) considers speaking as, "*a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed.*" It means that speaking is important skill in learning a foreign language because it reflects peoples' thought and opinions.

1.1.2. The Importance of Speaking:

Hughes (2002) in his book "*Teaching and Researching Speaking"* claimed that the status of speech in the language teaching process has changed in the beginning and the end of the nineteenth century because of the emergence of some methods that deal with language.

1.1.3. Methods of Teaching:

1.1.3.1. Grammar Translation Method:

Grammar translation method is an old method to teach dead languages which explains why it focuses mainly on the written form at the expensive of the oral form. Brown (2007, p. 22) pointed that the grammar translation method was neglectedspeaking skill in many classrooms, it aimed at simplifying the language learning process by focusing on isolated sentences. There was no place for real communication.

1.1.3.2. Direct Method:

The direct method, that is called also "natural method", came as a reaction to the "grammar translation method". The reformers of this method (direct method) give much importance to the spoken form of language by focusing not only on the interactions between the students and their teacher in the classroom, but also on the problems arising in the learning process. Since this method dealt with the learner-teacher interaction, it led to "total physical response"; this means that, in the classroom situation, the student responds to the activities that are given by the teacher in the target language through actions. (Brown, 2007).

1.1.3.3. Situational and Audio-Lingual Methods:

According to Hughes (2002), situational and audio-lingual methods have been developed in the twentieth century, their emphasis is on teaching and learning a language through a medium of speech, that is to say, the actual forms of speech that are used in these two methods are far from the natural speech or the natural spoken communication since the structures used in these methods are highly controlled. In the situational and audio-lingual methods, the spoken form gains a more important status in the language teaching through the first half of the twentieth century; which means that the speech here is considered as the primary medium of instruction.

1.1.3.4. Communicative Method:

Communicative method has a wide and deep influence on the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) since it is related to Krashen's work in the USA on second language acquisition and Widdowson in the UK. In this approach, speaking was given more importance because oral communication involves speech where learners are exposed to interact with other classmates. Therefore, the aim of this method is to develop the learner's communicative competence since the learner is regarded as the central part of the learning process. (Hughes, 2002).

1.1.4. Integration between Speaking and Listening:

Different researchers claimed that there is a great relationship between reading and writing in general and speaking with listening in particular because speaking is related more to the listening skill. In this sense, A. Anderson and T. Lynch (2000) state:

> for L2 to be a proficient partner in conversation, he needs to be skilled as both speaker and listener. However, this interdependence has not always been appreciated by language teachers and course writers, who have often separated off "listening" and "speaking" as discrete parts of language competence, learners need to have opportunities to practice both sets of skills and to integrate them in conversation. (p.15).

1.1.5. Speaking Difficulties in Foreign Language Learning:

Since speaking skill is regarded as a very complex process, the majority of foreign language students face various problems with classroom speaking activities because of their language problems such as: anxiety, inhibition, and poor listening practice.

1.1.5.1. Learners'Speaking Anxiety:

According to Arnold and Brown, this type of difficulty is related to negative feelings such as: uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt that prevent learning achievement (1999, p. 8-9). In this sense, some learners express their anxiety feelings in terms of other's misunderstanding of their speech, for example when the learner says: "I am shy to speak in public because the others may not understand what I am saying" or "I will wait till someone else to express what I wanted to say. (Coleman, 1996, p. 158).

Moreover, Brown (2007) argued that anxiety is something difficult to define since it affects the process of successful second language learning. For him, anxiety plays an important role in second or foreign language acquisition and he suggested two types of anxiety: debilitative anxiety and facilitative anxiety, these two types are also called "harmful" and "helpful" anxiety. The former which is debilitative or harmful anxiety is concerned with negative feelings such as: uneasiness, self-doubt and so on, the learners here should avoid this kind of anxiety because it affects the learning process negatively.

However, the second type(facilitative or helpful anxiety) is considered as one of the keys that lead to success since it affects the learning process positively, this may motivate studentsto work harder in order to get a good mark.

1.1.5.4. Learner's Speaking Inhibition:

This problem reveals more when learners try to participate inthe classroom but many factors stop them to do so. Littlewood (1999, p. 93) argues that "*it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety*". Such factors refer to the feeling of shyness and fear of making mistakes and these are due to the ill development of communicative skills and the feeling of linguistic inferiority. Students fear to make mistakes especially if they will speak to critical audience.

1.1.5.3. Poor Listening Practice:

Students should focus on the listening skill in the classroom where the only source of spoken language used in most foreign language classes is the teacher (teacher's talk). Therefore, speech is usually related to the listening skill because in most cases, learners speak what they hear from teachers; this means that it is not just the role of the learner to improve his/her listening ability to develop his/her speaking skill, but also the role of the teacher who should provide his learners with some activities where the two skills (speaking and listening) are effectively interrelated. (Lynch, 2009).

1.1.5.4.Lack of vocabulary:

This problem is related to the foreign language learners. For instance, when the learners are unable to think of anything to say in a classroom speaking practice, they simply say: "I do not know", "word order and vocabulary don't always flow into my mind", or "I need a bit of time to translate into English". This problem is mainly due to the lack of motivation to express themselves or the choice of uninteresting topics that they have to discuss which lead students to think about the difficulty of oral tasks in the learning process (Graham, 1997).

1.1.6. Classroom Speaking Activities:

According to Harmer (2001), there are many classroom speaking activities used in oral expression course that focus on the language function rather than grammar and vocabulary only. He introduces some major activities such as communication games whichare designed for the sake of providing communication between students in order to solve a puzzle. The teacher can bring these activities from TV games or radio for example in "describe and draw", one student asked to describe a picture and the other student should draw it. Then, information gap activities are used where two speakers have different parts of information that make a whole image when relating them one part to another. This activity requires the students' ability to fill gaps when there is a missing of information and also the student's vocabulary

and information in order to exchange it with other student because in most foreign language classes, the teacher uses this kind of activities aiming at sharing information between students during a classroom oral course (Harmer, 1998).

Discussion activity can be seen as the most useful and interesting form of oral practice in the classroom since it offers opportunities for students to exchange their opinions, experiences and express their views to develop their communicative ability when using the target languageHarmer (2001). In this sense, Littlewood (1981) states that: "*It(discussion) provides learners with opportunities to express their own personality and experience through the foreign language*" (p.47). This means that "discussion" is regarded as a real language experience where students use their abilities in order to deal with such speaking activity.

1.1.7. Assessment of Speaking Skill:

Assessment refers to the activities that are used either by the teacher in classroom or by the students to assess themselves in order to provide feedback about the teaching and learning activities. In this context,Rost (2002, p. 169) pointed out that "*assessment is an integral part of instruction, in that, it suggests appropriate starting points for instructional design and allows for feedback on learner performance*".

In general, speaking functions as a vehicle that language learners depend on to achieve theirlearning outcomes, many researchers inthe field of applied linguistics haveemphasized on the importance of speaking in learning languages, and asked teachers to directtheir attention to it through permanent assessing and practicing such as engaging learners indifferent speaking activities to improve their speaking production and performance. For that reason, teachers should encourage their students to face their difficulties and make them the center of the class by involving them in groups and cooperative work.

1.2. Student-Centered Learning

The use ofstudent-centered Learning (SCL) in the classroom is very widespread; most of the lecturers have changed their methods of teaching and learning rather than just give lecture to activities in the classroom. In a student-centered classroom, students need to act pro-actively in the learning process and not respond passively to lectures; instead, they need to communicate, appreciate, and learn with their peers to get all the necessary information needed. There are various forms of activities that can be used by the lecturer in class, such as discussion, presentations and group work.

1.2.1. Definition:

Student-centered learning is based on constructivism as a theory of learning, which is built on the idea that learners must construct and reconstruct knowledge in order to learn effectively in the classroom where student need to feel safe in order to take the risk in discovering new knowledge,they must feel secure in facing challenges based on past experiences, and they must be given the opportunity to find information on their own in a way that is relevant to them, the teacher takes on a role of facilitator or guide. According toAttard, Di Iorio, Geven, & Santa (2011), SCL is comprised of many potential benefits tostudents and lecturers including: students can be part of an academic community, increase their motivationto learn, lead student independent and responsibility in learning, and consider their needs in learning.

1.2.2. The Principles of Student-centered Learning:

According to Lynch (2010 as cited in Mohammad Zohrabi, Mohammad Ali Torabi&PrivashBaybourdiani, 2012) Students should develop their own knowledge by communication, critical thinking, and problem solving; they should have the opportunity to learn in relation to their real life situations in order to use the target language.(Huba&Freed, (2000) claimed that the student' assessment is not based on test and getting average, it is considered as a positive tool to promote and diagnose learning assessment.

Peyton, et al. (2010) summarized student-centered approach into: promoting interaction among learners, using the native language when possible and appropriate, connecting instruction with learners' lives, and teaching learning strategies explicitly.

2.1.3. Creating Student-centered Learning:

According to RodolfoP.Arg et al (2001), the interaction between the teacher and the student is considered as the most important locus of learning, they added that there are some of conditions that should exist in student-centered classroom.

1.2.3.1. The Role and Responsibilities of the Teacher:

A student-centered learning environment is one where, the teaching approach moves away from conveying information towards facilitating students' personal discovery through discussion, consultation, and mentoring. Teachers encourage student to come up with answers of their own, they simply avoid covering the course content and provide the tools to help them to uncover the subject matter according to their own aptitudes.

Teachers also take a greater responsibility of ensuring every activity if it is meaningful for every student by taking into consideration students' needs and interests, they do not need to cover the whole-class instruction methods if all the students are alike in their learning styles, abilities, and interests. However, their essential responsibility is to manage class time, and within this time they help students reach desired levels of competence without overloading them with activities and requirements.

1.2.3.2. The Role and the Responsibilities of Students:

In a student-centered learning environment, students accept that their teachers are primarily facilitators of learning and not simply walking encyclopedias. Students take greater responsibility for their own learning and do not rely exclusively on the teacher to provide direction.They recognize the importance of every learning activity in which they engage, and they do not have to be told what to do and when to do it. They are encouraged to be truth-seekers and meaning-makers.Rodolfo P. Arg, et al (2001).

1.2.4. Student-centered Learning Activities:

According toRodolfo P.Arg, et al (2001), in designing the instructional activities and materials, teachers must ask themselves how to facilitate students' active engagement in the learning process. Student-centered activities should be student direct, they promote the student' acceptance of personal responsibility for their actions through the exercise of personal choice and decision-making. Then, they should be relevant to the students' personal and social life, they should connect with student's interest, needs, and personal goals which have a relationship with the subject matter in order to make learning meaningful, because learning occurs when what is being learned is relevant and meaningful to the learner. However, to design such tasks and activities teachers should know their students well, what they are interested in, and what they are capable of. For example: asking students to develop a certain topic according to their experiences in order to make them learn from each other in a collaborative environment where students learn more actively and effectively.

In addition, students learn by doing and involving them in the learning activities which promote theirlearning. For example, students become part of thepresentation and learn from each other when theyrespond to instructor invitation to give examples, applications, and summaries, and they experiencelearning when they take part in problem-solvingsessions. The activities provide opportunities to students and help them inclarifying their understanding and in assimilating thesubject matter in meaningful ways

1.2.5. Student-Centered LearningMethod: Classroom Interaction.

Teaching English as a foreign language encompasses basic elements such as classroom interaction which plays a major role in the whole learning process. So, it is important to define that concept within the EFL classroom, then, presenting itsimportance, types, techniques, and how teachers canmanage classroom interaction for practicing speaking skill.

Hadfilied and Hadfilied (2008) claimed that the word interaction involves more than just putting a message together, it is also responding to other people in order to facilitate communication among them. In this sense Nunan (1991, p. 51) stated that "*learning to speak in a second or a foreign language will be facilitated when learners actively engaged with attempting to communicate*".

1.2.5.1.The Role of Interaction:

According to Hedge (2000), interaction is considered as an important factor for the learners in producing comprehensible output since it allows students to practice their language in the classroom. Also, interaction in the classroom gives the students opportunities to get feedback from the teacher or other students that leads to improve their language system. For her (Hedge), speaking in the classroom makes learners capable to cope with their lack of language knowledge; for example, students speaking slowly, repeating or clarifying their ideas while talking together is regarded as negotiation of meaning (discussion to reach agreement) which aimed at making the output more comprehensible. It means that interaction pushes EFL learners to produce appropriate language when they are working in pairs or groups. Moreover, Lyster (2007) stated that interaction makes the learners able to test their communicative success through exchanging information with the teacher or among the students themselves.

Classroom interaction, then, contributes to the language development by giving opportunities to learners to practice the target language through designing classroom interaction activities.

1.2.5.2. Types of Classroom Interaction:

Classroom interaction is regarded as an important factor in second language learning since it occurs either between the teacher and the students or between the students themselves, individually or collectively according to the communicative situation.

- **Teacher-Learner Interaction:**

According to Harmer (1998), in the learning and teaching process, the way that the teacher uses to interact with his students is considered as an important skill in the classroom where they shared one language. The teacher focuses on the type of the input he should provide his students with because the meaningful and understandable input leads the students to respond to their teacher and interact with him by asking question or asking for clarification. Lynch (1996) illustrated that in the classroom, the learners are involved in negotiating meaning either with their teacher or with each other, and also they are the ones who start asking questions to the teacher. For him, the Teacher-Learner talk is a necessary part of classroom interaction.

- **Learner-Learner Interaction:**

Student-student interaction occurs among learners within a classroom context. In this form of interaction, the teacher plays the role of a monitor and learners are the main participants. Student-student interaction which occurs in groups is called student-student interaction, whereas, interaction in pairs is called peer interaction. (Tuan &Nhu, 2010). Students interaction therefore, occurs when learners share information with their peers, and receive feedback (sharp &Huett, 2005). Based on this view, studies on interaction indicate that in student-student interactions, learners receive comprehensible input, opportunities to negotiate for meaning and receive other's feedback, and opportunities to produce modified output. (Mackey, 2007).

Moreover, Johnson (1995) in her book about "*Understanding Communication in Second Language Classrooms*" claimed that:

> Student-student interaction in foreign language classrooms can create opportunities for students to participate in less structured and more spontaneous language use, negotiate meaning, self-select when to participate, control the topic of discussion, and, most importantly, it draws on their own prior knowledge and interactional competencies to actively communicate with others. (p.189).

1.2.5.3. Interaction Techniques:

EFL teachers often use a variety of activities to make their students interact more when foreign language classes take place. The most common interaction activities are: pair-work, group- work, simulation, and role plays.

- **Pair Work:**

Pair work activity, is one of the effective strategies for classroom interaction, where two students (i.e. pair) practice a language together, for example: fill in the blanks of information gap activities, and write script of play or dialogues. This activity increases the amount of talking time of students. So, they can have more chance to share their knowledge with others.

- **Group Work:**

Group work is a teaching strategy that promotes academic achievementwhere students learn to inquire, share ideas, clarify differences and construct new understandings using the target language. In group work, learners perform a learning task through small-group interaction it is seen as an activity that increases the amount of learner's talk as it was mentioned by Ur(2000) in his book "*A course in language teaching*" said that: "*Group work increases the sheer amount of learner talk going in a limited period of time and also lowers the inhibitions of learners who are unwilling to speak in front of the full class* "(p.121).

- **Discussion:**

 Discussion is based mainly on a particular chosen topic to be discussed by students, it can be considered as "whole class interaction" where all students participate and interact with each other and with their teacher as well. But, sometimes students feel inhibited to give an opinion in front of the whole class. Harmer (2001) proposed a solution for teachers that allow them to avoid such difficulties which are the buzz group: where students have a chance for quick discussions in small groups before any of them is asked to speak in public. In addition, discussion in foreign language classrooms fosters learners to interact to develop their speaking fluency, and overcome their inhibitions.

- **Simulation and Role Play:**

 Students benefit from simulation and role plays activities since, they simulate real life situation, and they encourage the oral fluency or train students for specific situations. This type of activity creates enjoyable atmosphere, good relationship among students, and it fosters cooperation and collaboration. Teachers therefore, are requested to reduce their talking time

in classroom interactions to give their students more opportunities to interact and make them involved in the learning process.

1.2.6. Student-centered Discussion:

Jack Byrd, Jr (2008, p. 2) claimed that "*in student-centered discussionthe students are the center of the classroom*", they direct the discussion where one student serves as a facilitator, but the discussion follows by another student. The role of the teacher is considered as a monitor for students, he makes notes throughout the discussion in order to assess students' performance, and he gives a feedback about the students' discussion and making suggestions for improvement.

1.2.7. Elements of Student-centered Discussion:

According to Jack Byrd (2008, p. 3), Student-centered discussions can be an effective learning environment if it is developed properly. There are a number of conditions in order to make an effective discussion among students.

1.2.7.1. Facilitator:

In student-centered discussion, the facilitator is a student in a group, he helps his classmates of his group to work through the process, his main role is to keep the discussion student-centered; the role of the teacher in student-centered discussions is very different, and it requires practice according to the situation.

1.2.7.2. Sanctuary:

Sanctuary is referred to the environment where all students are free to speak, there are no winners or losers;the goal of student centered classroom is that student act as a community of learners, the result is that both students and teaches worktogether to construct meaning out of the subject matter.In order to incorporate student-centered discussion in the classroom, a comfortable learning environment needs to be created (Bashman, 2001).

1.2.7.3. Time:

Student-centered discussions take time;studentsneed toconduct for at least 45 minutes each week over theduration of the semester, student must have the opportunities to speak in the classroom since they do not use it outside. Teachers must design their lessons to make participation of the most students; they must limit their speaking to 20% to 30% of the class time. Nunan(1999) indicates that teacher's talk during the lesson did not develop the students' listening comprehension and the communicative skills. So, in student-centered classroom, the student talk time is supposed to around 80% during the lesson. (Nunan, 1991).

1.2.7.4.   Topic of the Discussion:

Teachers should be careful in selecting topics of the discussions, they must have a relation to the content of the course that results a conceptual discussion rather than problem-solving discussion, and they must be related to the students' own life experiences. Topics should address an issue that can lead to an open discussion.

1.2.7.5.   Feedback:

Feedbackis defined as "*the reactive information that learners receive regarding the linguistic and communicative success or failure of their utterances*" has a powerful influence on students' learning. This means that feedback is a way through which students can improve their skills by giving the students opportunities to focus on their comprehension or production of their second or foreign language acquisition. It means that to develop the learner's speaking skill; learners must notice their errors and recognize them forcorrection.Therefore, feedback may occur either from learners as when they are able to correct each other's errors or from theteacher sincetheteacher's feedback is different from the learners' onein the fact that the teacher may use many types of correction strategies (Mackey, 2007, p. 14-15).

1.2.8. Managing Classroom Interaction for Practicing Speaking Skill:

According to Allwright and Bailey (1991) the management of interaction in the classroom is regarded as a sort of "co-production" things that are involved in the classroom. For them, making a successful interaction in the classroom includes managing some factors that are listed in form of five questions which are given in the classroom. The first question is "who gets to speak", this means the participants' turn distribution. The second question, which is "what do they talk about", is related to the topic discussion, then, the third question is linked to the students' task in the classroom like: "what doeseach participant do with the various opportunities to speak". In addition, the fourth question is that "what sort of atmosphere is created?" it is related to the atmosphere that is created by the teacher.Whereas, the last question or the last possibility that leads to an effective classroom interaction is "what accent, dialect or language is used". Here, the teacher has to control the students' speech like, when the students useL1 instead of using L2 for example.

In English language teaching, the teacher has some important functions in the social setting of the classroom because he is considered as the one who provides students with comprehensible input that is suitable to their levels. Hedge (2000, p. 26), in her book "*Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*"identifies the most important roles that the teacher can play in the classroom by mentioning the teacher's ability to change his roles according to the students' needs. They can act ascontrollers of in formation who transmit the knowledge from

themselves to their students, they can also regard as assessors of accuracy by giving feedbacks about the students' performance and correcting their mistakes. Then, they also organize the classroom instructions, this role is related to the tasks that students are going to do in the classroom for instance, the teacher provides his students with information about the way that they are going to do the task in a limited time.

Also, the teacher here should organizehis students when dealing with group work as explaining the ways that students have to follow when they are working in pairs in order to get them engaged and more interested in their participation, because the activity will not be successful if students do not know how to do the task.

The teacher sometimes plays the role prompter of students' work by encouraging his students to think creatively in order to be independent from the teacher, and he can be a resource of students' needs, thisrole involves students'questions about an activity that they are working on. It means that when the teacher plays the role of a resource, students might ask their teacher questions in order to know some information about that activity.

1.2.9. Assessment in Student-centered Learning:

A central concern of learner-centered teaching is learning and evaluation, in student-centered classroom, the assessment is not just the grades but more importantly to promote learning. However, the assessment in student-centered approach is providing students with a constructive feedback in order to make them improving their learning. In this sense, Weimer (2002) claimed that student will be taught to assess their own learning and peers by asking critical questions in a constructive manner.

Conclusion:

This chapter attempted to give deep information about student-centered learning which comes as a reaction to the traditional ways of teaching which itsmain goal is the students' needs. Thus, this chapter tries to describe the implementation of the student-centered learning to develop the students' speaking skill.

Chapter Two :

Methodology Data Collection

Introduction:

First,this chapter provides an overview about the use of student-centered learning and itsimportance in Algerian Education.Then, it describes the research methodology andfollowed by a full description of the data collection (observation and the teachers' questionnaire). They will be used as instruments in this study to analyze the obtaineddata.Finally,it concludes with the discussion and interpretation of the main results.

2.1.   Algerian Education and Student-centered Learning:

Previously, students were considered as passive learners because teachers were giving importance to the content of the courses andhow they should be organized in lessons.They were unsatisfied by the outcomes and they complained because students can not apply what they learned and they have some difficulties to learn on their own, these problems led to major changes in the reforms of education contexts.

There has been a change in emphasis on education; the focus shifted from teacher to student, who began to gain more attention in the learning process. The former approach to teaching is referred to as a traditional or teacher-centered approach, and the latter is referred to as a learner-based learning approach. Several student-centered learning models have been introduced and implemented in the Algerian educational context.

In the Algerian context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teachers raise the query why the majority of the students are unable to speak English confidently and correctly. One among many reasons to take into consideration might be a lack of oral practice and interest, etc. So based on the question of how to increase the speaking confidence and competence,this chapter is designed to analyze the data obtained from both EFL teachers of oral production and first and third year students at Mostaganem University.

However, the main objective behind this investigation is to spot the light on the usefulness of student-centered learning in improving students' oral language proficiency using the classroom interaction as a teaching-learning method that promotes the learner-centered learning. In other words, it will represent the study which investigates not only whether learners at Mostaganem University give importance to the classroom interaction, but also whether teachers apply the student-centered learning as a way to improve the learners' speaking ability or not, therefore, teachers and students should know the importance of that approach.

2.2.Hypothesis:

Based on the problematic, the description of the related theories that are mentioned in the first chapter, it is hypothesized that the implementation of the student-centered learning, the selections of the topics, and the use of cooperative tasks may improve the student's speaking skill.

2.3. Research Methodology:

The choice of the methods has been determined by the nature of the study; it will be a descriptive method because it can give the facts about the actual situation (do teachers apply the student-centered learning in their oral expression courses to enhance their speaking skill?). This study will be a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches because they are regarded as suitable method to give a clear comprehension, and both of them are appropriate within a single investigation.

The case of the present research which involves both EFL teachers and students of Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University helps to find more reliable and valid results. So, the data can give a full picture of the implementation of the student-centered learning in Algerian universities.

2.4. Data Collection:

Data collection is considered as an essential component for conducting a research; it is generally regarded as a hard task. O'Leary (2004:150) said that:

> collecting reliable data is a hard task, and it is worth remembering that
> one method is not inherently better than another. This is why whatever
> data collection method to be used would depend upon the research
> goals, advantages, as to the disadvantages of each method.

However, there are different tools to collect the data such as observation, tests, interview and questionnaires. The tools that are used in this study are the observation and the questionnaire. Then, they will be described in details below by highlighting the setting and the participants' profile (the sample/ population).

2.4.1. Setting:

The setting for this research dissertation was the Department of ForeignLanguages (English Section) at Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem. Thisresearch deals with both EFL teachers and students as sample population during the academic year 2016/2017. It aims at drawing the teachers' interest to use the student-centered learning as an

attempt to raise awareness about its great effects and to understand how it can contribute to the teaching of speaking skill.

2.4.2. Participants' Profile (population):

➢ **Teachers:**

The main aim of dealing with EFL teachers is to know their points of viewconcerning the speaking skill, and the student-centeredness in EFL oral production course. The sample consists of teachers who used to give LMD students oral expression courses in the EFL class, at the Department of English, University of Mostaganem. They hold either the degree of 'Decorate'' or 'Magister', some of them have been recently recruited and they were specialized in different fields. So, the selection of the sample was based on the consideration that teachers of oral expression will be beneficial for the current research since they teach students how to develop their oral skills.

➢ **Students:**

The present study takes place in the department of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University. The participants weretwo groups from the first year, and one group from third year LMD students.English students at Mostaganem requireddealing with oral production module in order to develop their oral proficiency in English as a foreign language; since they use English just inside the classroom it is necessary to observe them inside the classroom in order to gather reliable data.

2.5. Instruments:

Dornyei (2011) believed that the backbone of any research is the instruments that are used in gathering the data. Thus, it requires different resources of data collection. The instruments used in this research are the classroom observation and teachers' questionnaire.

2.5.1. Observation:

Observation is an activity of watching the actions and the behaviors of the research participants in the class. However, in the present study the teacher's teaching process, students' learning activities and the learning progress in the speaking class are observed. It takes a form of checklist to gather the data that is necessary for the research.

The observation was carried out during the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017 within first and third year EFL classrooms at Mostaganem University. This

observation involves two groups from the first year and third year LMD students which are chosen randomly from the whole number of groups. The observation of those groups was made by observing them in two different sessions, with different teachers and at different times. Each group session consists of one hour and half to explore whether teachers use the student-centered approach by focusing on the students' interaction in the classroom, the role of teacher, and to discover if students have opportunities to practice the speaking skill inside the classroom during oral expression course.

The interaction of the learners and the actions of the teachers were observed over the two sessions that are devoted for each classroom group reflecting the classroom interaction perspectives: learner-learner interaction, teacher-learner interaction, and the students' collaborative work inside the classroom.

2.5.1.1. The Aim of the Observation:

The first section aims at getting real data about some aspects of classroom environment in which classroom interaction takes place; the second section attempts to know about the role of teachers inside the classroom when implementing the student-centered learning. It seeks to know, for example, whether teachers give the chance to students in order to express their ideas and to improve their oral fluency, and the third section aims to know about the role of the students in the classroom.

2.5.1.2. Description of the Observation:

The observation is presented in a form of checklist including a set of items under three sections; the first section is designed for observing the management of the learning environment, the second section is about the observation of the learners' role inside the classroom, however, the last section is designed for observing the teacher's roles and responsibilities in classroom.

➢ **Section One: General Observation of the Classroom**

This section consists of one item; it attempts to know about the environment whether students interact actively and whether they work collaboratively in the class.

➢ **Section Two: The Role of the Teacher**

Section three consists of eightitems; it attempts to explore the teacher's roles and responsibilities in the classroom. For example, whether the teacher provides his students with a comprehensible input which has a relationship to their real life situations; gives them opportunities and time to interact with him and with their classmates during the classroom oral tasks, asks them to work individually, in pairs, in groups, and role play; uses some speaking activities during classroom interaction in relation to the students' personal experience in order to encourage the students' fluency and make them face their difficulties; uses some expressions as "good", "well done" to motivate students to speak in the classroom, and whether the teacher uses some strategies to correct the learners' mistakes and gives them feedback.

> **Section Three: The Role of the Students in the Classroom**

Section two includes one item. It attempts to know more about the learners' role in the classroom. For instance, whether they give opinions and participate in the classroom, whether they express willingness to speak in classroom or hesitate when expressing themselves, and whether students correct each other mistakes in the classroom.

2.5.1.3. Administration of the Observation:

The classroom observation had been taking place from the third week of February until the second week of March 2017 with three classes:two classes from first year and one class from third year LMD students in two different sessions, for each group at the department of English. It was depending on a checklist and the personal observation, directly without recording. During each session, the observation was based on the side where the researcher (I) can observe without interfering the teaching and the learning activities.

2.5.2. Questionnaire:

Questionnaire is an investigation by asking some questions in the written form, it is a method that is used in gathering information especially in foreign language research. Therefore, Brown (2001:6) reports a definition of the questionnaire:

"Any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers".

The questionnaire is addressed to EFL teachers in the department of English at Mostaganem University, there have been selected ten (10) teachers of oral expression.

2.5.2.1. The Aim of the Questionnaire:

In an attempt to investigate the importance of the student-centered learning in improving EFL student's speaking skill, it is very crucial to gather the teachers' opinions and views about its implementation in EFL classes to develop language learning. Teachers' thoughts are helpful to investigate the way English is taught and how the problems in speaking could be reduced through interactional teaching.

2.5.2.2. The Description of the Questionnaire:

The teachers' questionnaire consists of (15) items, classified into three sections, each section focuses on a specific aspect, the first section is about the background information, the second section contains some specific questions about speaking skill, and the third one is about the student-centered learning. There are different types of questions: "closed" and "open-ended" questions, closed questions require teachers to answer "Yes" or "No" or by ticking one answer from a set of options, whereas; open- ended questions are addressed to teachers to state their point of views and share their prior knowledge about the subject.

➢ **Section One: Background Information (Q1-Q3)**

Questions in section one aim at gathering personal information about the target sample, teachers were asked to specify their gender; in the second question teachers are asked to state how many years they have been teaching English at University and in the third question they are asked to state how long they have been teaching oral expression.

➢ **Section Two: Speaking Skill (Q4-Q8):**

The second section was concerned by the speaking skill and the difficulties that could face students in oral expression. In question (4), teachers were asked to tick one answer from three options about their talk in the classroom. Then, question (5) was addressed to teachers about how often their students participate in oral expression course; they are asked to choose between four given options. Later in question (6), teachers were asked if they encourage their student to speak, it was a closed question by ticking one answer from four options. The question (7) was about the most difficulties that could face students in oral expression, and If these responses, they asked to state others from their own. Finally, the question (8) was about how often teacher assesses their students in oral expression course, and they had to explain why.

➢ **Section Three: Student-centered Learning (Q9-Q15)**

The third section was devoted for the student-centered learning and its implementation in oral expression courses especially the role and the responsibilities of the teachers, in the question (9), teachers were asked about their role in the classroom: a guider, a facilitator, a monitor, or a language provider. In the question (10), they are asked whether they encourage discussions between students, it was a closed question by ticking one answer from three options. Then, the question (11) was about the teaching-learning methods: individual work, pair work, group work, discussion, or role play that is used by teachers in order to promote learner-centered learning.

In the question number (12), teachers were asked whether they give time to students to express their ideas and the question number (13) was asked to know whether teachers encourage the students 'oral fluency and correct their mistakes. The question (14) was addressed to teachers whether they use activities in relation to students' personal experience; the last question (15) was about the material that teachers use in the oral expression course.

2.5.2.3. The Administration of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire had been administered to EFL teachers in the departments of English; it had been administrated on 16th and 17th ofApril, 2017. The target population of the current piece of research consists of 10 teachers of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, university of Mostaganem. The questionnaire was handed out in a friendly environment and all teachers were so cooperative, helpful and full gratitude goes to them. There were some problems because they were busy, some teachers asked me to come back after two or three days to get back the questionnaire.

Conclusion:

The present research is an attempt to explore the importance of student-centered learning at university of Mostaganem; it may provide the current situation of the education. Generally, this research spots the light on some important points that can enhance the students' learning and their mastery of foreign language such as: interaction, discussions in class…, etc.

Chapter Three:

Data Analysis and Recommandations

Introduction:

This chapter represents the data analysis and interpretation, it aims at investigating the effect of student-centered learning on improving the students' English oral proficiency. First, it beginswith the analysis and the findings of the observation. Then, the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire. Finally, this chapter concludes with suggestions and recommendations.

3.1. The Analysis of the Observation:

Level: First year LMD students

Section One:

Item 01: Active and interactive mode/ Collaborative and cooperative work

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	1	1	0	0
Percentage	50%	50%	0%	0%

Table 01: Students' Collaboration in the Class

The first session in this class, I have noticed that the students and the teacher were active and working with each other for the most of the time. However, the second session, they were less interacting with each other and there were just short discussions between them.

Section Two:

Item 01: Teacher stimulates real life situations

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	0	1	1	0
Percentage	0%	50%	50%	0%

Table 02: Teacher's Stimulation

During the first session I have attended, the teacher asked students to think about a topic which was "the youth dreams", students were talkative in expressing their dreams. The second session they were less interactive because the topic was unfamiliar to them.

Item 02: Teacher acts as a facilitator/guider rather than language provider

In the first session, I have observed that the teacher took the role of a facilitator; she helps students to formulate correct sentences. Whereas in the second session, the teacher acts as a

language provider, because the topic that they have dealt with was unfamiliar to students that is why the teacher had been obliged to talk more in the class.

Item 03: Teacher encourages interaction between students.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 03: Teacher's Encouragement in the Classroom

In both sessions, the teacher was encouraging students to talk in the classroom, she was always reminding them that it will help them to develop their speaking skill. She always helped them to express new ideas and asked them to reflect on each other's opinions to raise the interaction between them.

Item 04: Teacher uses individual, pair/group work, or role play.

Rating scales	Individual work	Pair work	Group work	Role play
Sessions (02)	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**

Table04: Teacher's Techniques in the Class

During the observation of this class, the teacher asked students to work individually in the first session, because each one has his own dreams. However, the second session, she grouped them in groups in order to make them exchange their ideas and benefit from each other in the class.

Item 05: Teacher uses relevant materials.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 05: Teacher's Use of the Materials

In both sessions, teacher did not use any material because sometimes they are not available in the department.

Item 06: Teacher gives time to student in order to express their opinions.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 06: Learner's Opportunities to Speak in the Class

During The observation of the students' interaction, I have noticed that in both sessions the teacher gave the chance to students to speak and she was sometimes victimizing students in order to make them speak in the oral expression course.

Item 07: Teacher encourages the oral fluency and correct the students' mistakes.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 07: Teacher's Correction of the Students' Mistakes

Generally speaking, in the both session that I have attended, I have noticed that students made some mistakes and the teachers sometimes did not notice that but she was always telling them that they need to be comfortable to speak with more self-confidence in order to avoid making mistakes. As a result, they can acquire new vocabularies which make practicing the language easily inside or outside the classroom.

Item 08: Teacher selects topics in relation to the students' personal experience.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 08: Teacher's Selection of the Topics

In the first session, the topic had a relationship to the students' dreams which made them active and interactive. Unlike the second session, there was less participation in the class because the topic was depending on the students' reading skill.

Section Three:

Item 01: Studentsreflect, debate, and discuss.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely

Sessions (02)	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 09: The Students' Participation in the Class

When I was observing the students in this class during the first sessions, students were always discussing and giving opinions about the topic. Whereas, the second session students were sometimes sharing their ideas with the teacher and their classmates, the teacher was sometimes suggesting some ideas in order to make all students involved in the classroom oral course.

Section One:

Item 01: Active and interactive mode/ collaborative and cooperative work

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**1**	**1**	**0**	
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 10: Students' Collaboration in the Class

In the first session, students were active and interactive with each other and with their teacher, they were expressing themselves, debating, confirming others' opinions. Then, in the second session, they were quite, listening to the group who was presenting and I noticed that some students were busy by preparing themselves to present in the board.

Section Two:

Item 01: Teacher stimulates real life situations

In both sessions as it is shown in the table below, the teacher tried to match between the topic that they discuss with real life situation, because she noticed that students were demotivated and they had not information about the tow topics. However, she found herself giving them some ideas to make it easy for them.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 11: Teacher's Stimulation of Real life Situations

Item 02: Teacher acts as a facilitator/guider rather than language provider

During the observation of this class the teacher was acting as a language provider in both sessions. I have noticed that they were not interested in the topics that they have dealt with.

Item 03: Teacher encourages interaction between students and ask relevant questions.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 12: Teacher's Encouragement of Interaction

During the two sessions the teacher was providing students with information and she was trying to involve them in short discussion by asking them from time to time simple questions, studentshave got bored from the topics that they were discussing.

Item 04: Teacher uses individual, pair/ group work, or role play.

Rating scales	Individual work	Pair work	Group work	Role play
Sessions (02)	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 13: Teacher's Use of Interaction Techniques

Concerning the techniques that the teacher used, in both sessions she asked students to work in pairs in order to benefit from each other then they would share it with other classmates. I observed that they have been obliged to do that because, after, the teacher would ask them to share their ideas with others.

Item 05: Teacher uses relevant materials.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 14: Teacher's Use of the Materials

The teacher in both sessions did not use any materials such as: video-projector, song pictures…etc. She just relied on the ideas that she prepared before. Since students were

demotivated and felt lost, she listed to them her ideas and asked them to add others from their own if it was possible. After that, they had to present it in pairs.

Item 06: Teacher gives time to student in order to express their opinions.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 15: Learners' Opportunities to Speak

The teacher in both sessions that I have attended gave students opportunities to ask her about the two topics because they were lost about what they were going to do. She tried to attract their attention to some ideas in order to help them think about related ideas.

Item 07: Teacher encourages the oral fluency and corrects the students' mistakes.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 16: Teacher's Correction of the Mistakes

In the two sessions that I have observed, I have noticed that when students speak, they made some mistakes and the teacher correct them, sometimes she corrected and other times she gave them time to correct themselves in order to avoid it. She was always giving them positive feedbacks to make them more comfortable when they expressed their opinions.

Item 08: Teacher selects the topics in relation to the students' personal experience.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**0%**	100%	**0%**

Table 17: Teachers' Selection of the Topics

During the two sessions, I have observed that the topics did not have a relationship with the students' personal experience. As a result, they did not find a lot of information to do the task unless she provided them with some ideas in order to develop them and present it orally.

Section Three:

Item 01: Studentsreflect, debate and discuss.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	0	2	0	0
Percentage	0%	100%	0%	0%

Table 18: Students' Participation in the Class

In the two sessions, at first they were asking the teacher to add more explanation about the topics. Then, each two students were discussing the topics between them and sometimes I observed that each four students checked their understanding about the ideas and make sure that they have got the idea.

Level: Third year LMD students

Section One:

Item 01: Active and interactive mode/ collaborative and cooperative work

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	1	1	0	0
Percentage	50%	50%	0%	0%

Table 19: Students' Actions and Collaboration

In that class, the first session was enjoyable because students were active and interactive in the class whereas the second session, they were less interactive because they have been obliged to read their ideas that they have already prepared.

Section Two:

Item 01: Teacher stimulates real life situations

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	1	1	0	0
Percentage	50%	50%	0%	0%

Table 20: Teacher's Stimulation of Real Life Situations

During the observation of this class, in the first session the teacher was always attracting students' attention to some points that they are familiar with about the topic. She tried to make all the students speak and give their opinion about the "Valentin's day". However, in the

second session was boring, students were listing their ideas about the topic and the teacher were listening to them.

Item 02: Teacher acts as a facilitator/guider rather than language provider

In the first session, students were active and motivated because they were dealing with a topic which made them get involved which was"the valentine's day", the teachers asked them question, in order to make them express their ideas with much details according to their experience; give their opinions about that day and so on, she was a guider and a facilitator. Then, the second session they had to present a topic about British people, the teacher just assessed them and evaluate their speaking. Also, she was giving them feedbacks.

Item 03: Teacher encourages interaction between students.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 21: Teacher's Encouragement of Interaction in Class

During the observation, the teachermotivated students to interact between each other and with her, the conversation pattern was teacher-student-student-teacher in the first session. However, the second session was a presentation, she asked students to reflect on each other's presentation by making discussion with the one who was presenting.

Item 04: Teacher uses individual work, pair/group work, or role play.

Rating scales	Individual work	Pair work	Group work	Role play
Sessions (02)	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**0%**	**50%**	**0%**

Table 22: Teacher's Use of Interaction Techniques in the Class

In the first session, it was as a long discussion each student said his idea and others reflect on it by giving other ideas according to their experiences. Whereas, the second session was a session for the presentations, students made groups. When they came to the class, they presented it after that the teacher and their classmates gave them feedbacks.

Item 06: Teacher uses relevant materials.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely

Sessions (02)	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**
Percentage	**0%**	**0%**	**100%**	**0%**

Table23: Teacher's Use of the Materials

In both sessions, teachers and students did not use materials.

Item 07: Teacher gives time to student in order to express their opinions.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 24: Students' Opportunities to Speak in the Class

I have noticed that teacher gave students time to express their opinions, and share it with other in interactive manner in the first session. However, the second session the teacher sometimes did not give the chance to them because of time in order to finish all the groups.

Item 08: Teacher encourages the oral fluency and corrects the students' mistakes.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 25: Teacher's Correction of the Students' Mistakes

In both sessions, the teacher was always correcting the students' mistakes by asking them to take their time in expressing themselves and being aware about what they are going to say without embarrassing them in the class.

Item 09: Teacher selects topics in relation to the students' personal experience.

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 26: Teacher's Selection of the Topics in oral Expression Course

The topic of oral expression course, in first session, was familiar to students, they were motivated and participating with made the session more enjoyable with funny stories the

selected topic. Unlike the second session, the topic was boring to some extent, they were just presenting what they have obtain from the internet. I felt that they work just to get the mark.

Section Three:

Item 01: Students reflect, debate and discuss (participate).

Rating scales	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Sessions (02)	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**50%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 27: Students' Participation in the Class

Students were enjoyed in the first session; they were discussing an interesting topic which made them involved in the class, they were expressing willingness to speak. Then the second session as I mentioned before was boring with no participation from students, they were sometimes reflecting on their classmates' presentation.

3.2. Discussion of the Observation:

The major results that are obtained from the classroom observation were so helpful to prove the hypothesis which was already raised.

The classroom observation confirms that the use of student-centered learning with its principles in the classroom can raise the students' oral fluency. Teachers are different in their way of teaching and when they come to implement the methodology of that approach they get the same results, for instance, during the observation of the three classes when teachers select topics which have a relation to students' real life situation, they participate, give new ideas from their own, reflect on each other's opinions and they suggest solutions for some problems. As a result, they found themselves practicing the language, learning by themselves which can raise their self-confidence and encourage them to learn more, challenge, and face their weaknesses.

When teachers act as language providers, they give the importance to the content rather than to the students' performance, the students will get bored and demotivated in the classroom that can reduce their amount of talk in the class. For example, in one group from the three groups that I had attended, students were just participating for getting their grades

because the selection of the topic did not meet their needs and interests. Therefore, the interaction will be reduced, which will affect the students' speaking skill.

3.3. The Analysis of the Questionnaire:

the present section is devoted to the analysis ofthe data collected from the teachers' questionnaire. In all, ten EFL teachers answered this questionnaire, the questions were explained to them.The questionnaire consisted of fourteen questions and each one will betreated separately as follows.

Section One: Background Information

Q1.Teachers' gender:

From the histogram 01, a clear notice which that there were only one male teachers presented with the percentage 10%, and nine females teachers with percentage of 90%.
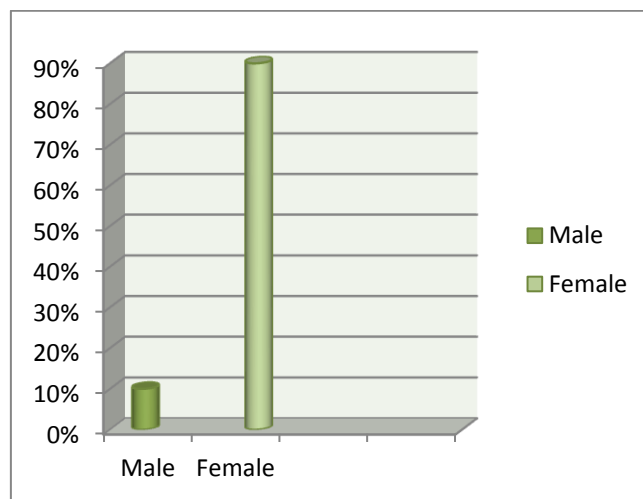
Histogram 01: Teachers' Gender

Q2. How long have you been teaching English at university?

   a- One to five years   b- Five to ten years   c- More than ten

   The aim of this question is to know about the teachers' experience in teaching English at university. It is found that all teachers declared that they were teaching at university from five to ten years.

Q3. How long have you been teaching oral expression?

   The aim of this question is to know the number of years that teachers teach oral expression courses. The figure below shows that six teachers from the whole number of the

population (10) declared that they had been teaching oral expression courses from one to five years. While the rest of teachers said that they had been teaching oral expression for five to ten years.
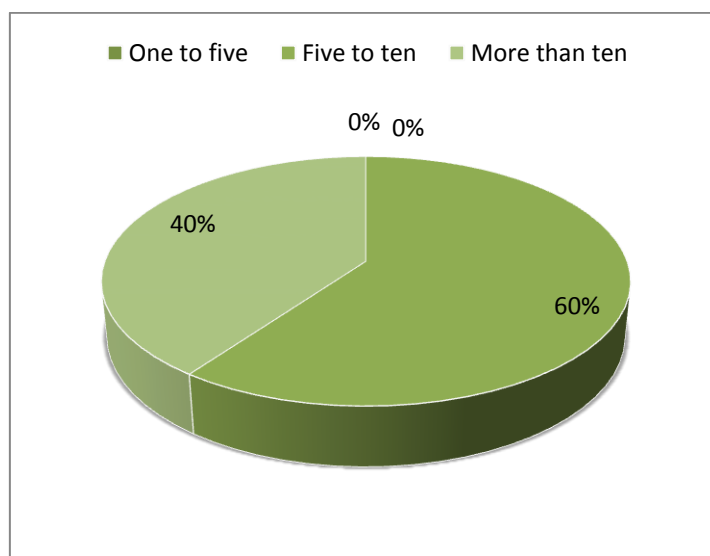
Figure01:Teachers' Experience in Teaching Oral Expression

Section two: Speaking Skill

Q4. In the classroom, you are the one who talks:

   a- Often   **b- Sometimes**   **c- Never**

This question aims to know who is the most talkative in the class the teacher or the students. However, six teachers claimed that they often talk in the class which is represented with the percentage 60% as it is shown in the figure (02) below, 30% of them said that sometimes they talk, and one teacher talks when it is necessary (10%).
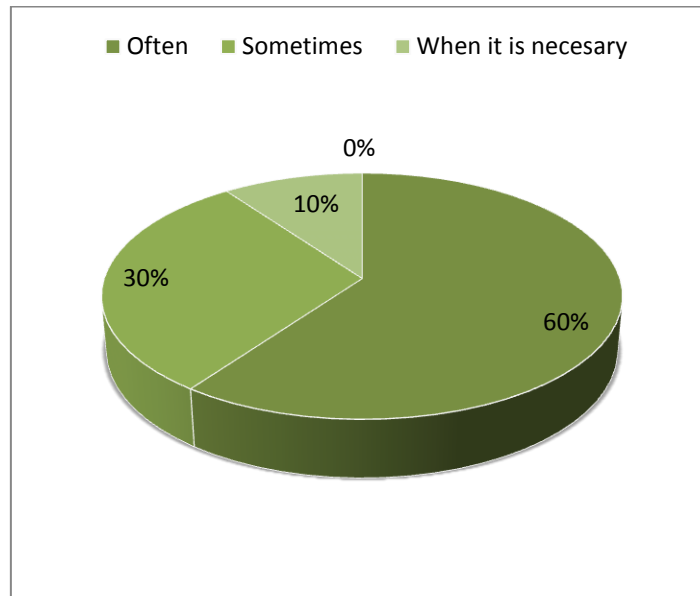
Figure02: Teachers' Talk in the Classroom

Q5. How often do your students participate in oral expression course?

    a- Frequently   b- Sometimes   c- Rarely   d- Never

This question investigates weather students participate in the oral expression courses.Most of teachers said that sometimes students participate in the class which is presented in the histogram (02) below with the percentage 60%. While 40% of teachers said that their students participate frequently in the class. It means that it differs from one class to another.
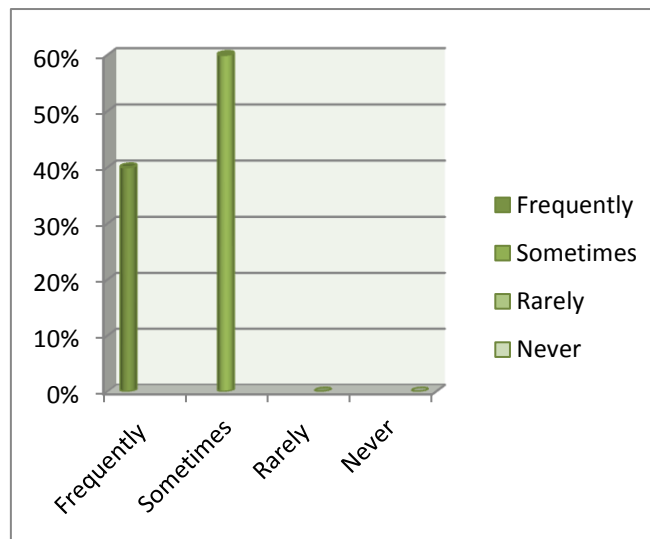
Histogram02: Students' Participation in the Class

Q6. Do you encourage your students to speak?

    a- Always   b- Sometimes   c- Rarely   d- Never

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Number of teachers	**10**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 28: Teachers' Encouragement to Students

The table above shows that all teachers said that they always encourage their students to speak in order to enhance their speaking skill, make the session enjoyable by encouraging them to share interesting opinions, and to make them face their weaknesses in practicing the language.

Q7. Difficulties that can face students in oral expression:

  a- Inhibition   b- Nothing to say   c- Mother tongue use
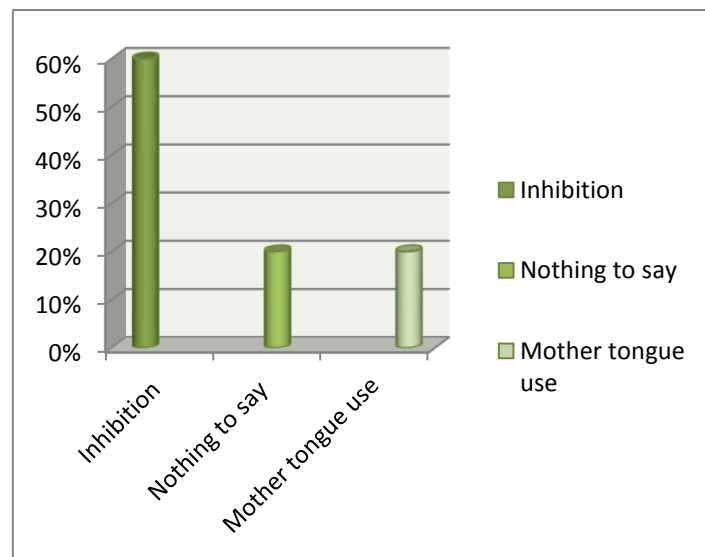
Histogram 03: Students' Difficulties in Oral Expression Course

The question aims to know about the major reasons that face students in speaking a foreign language. Teachers of the conducted population were asked to choose one or two answers from the suggested options about the main reasons that can face students in oral expression course, the histogram (03) above shows their responses which was as follows: 60% were selected the first option which is the students' inhibition because of the shyness, anxiety, and stress. While 20% of them said that students might have nothing to say about the given topic, and 20% said that the mother tongue is considered as the main reason that can make students face difficulties in speaking. They added other problems such as the lack of vocabulary and fear of making mistakes.

Q8. How often do you assess you students' speaking skill?

   a- Often   b- Sometimes   c- Never

The figure (03) below shows that 60% of teachers often assess their students in order to check their weather there is a progress. Consequently, teachers will evaluate their teaching. However, 40% of them said that they sometimes assess their students because they need to be assessed in a continuous way to be fair with them.
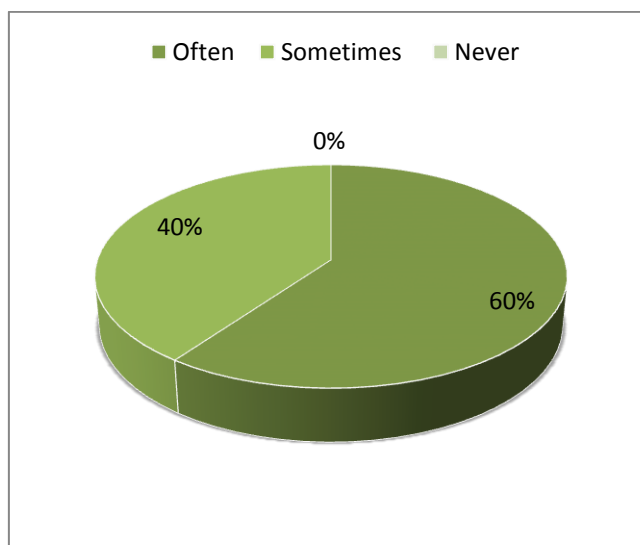
Figure 03: Teacher's Assessment of the Students' Speaking Skill

Section Three: Student-Centered Learning

Q9. In the classroom you act as:

   a- A guider   b- A facilitator   c- A language provider

This question aims to know about the role of the teacher in the oral expression course, teachers' responses were different; they said that they act according to the situation that they are in. For example, they acted as a guide, a facilitator in order to facilitate learning and make their learnerless inhibited, and motivators in order to encourage students.

Q10. Do you encourage discussions between students?

   a- Always   b- Sometimes   c- Never

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Number of teachers	**10**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 29: Teachers' Encouragement of the Discussions in the Class

According to the results in the table above, teachers always encourage the discussions between students because it is important to do so in order to raise the interaction among them.

Q11. You prefer to ask students to work:

a- Individually   b- In pairs   c- Group work   d- Discussions   e- Role play
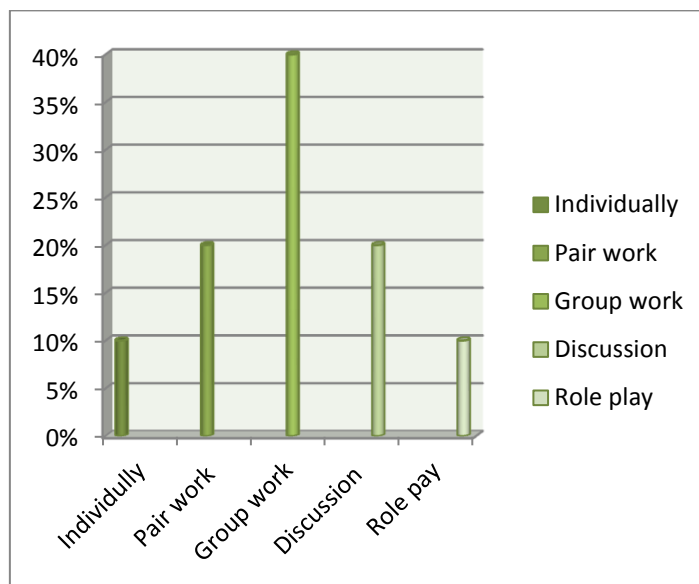
Histogram 04: Techniques of Interaction

The histogram (04) above show the most common technique which is used by teachers is the group work; it is represented with 40%. Then, some teachers (20%)said that they sometimes ask students to work in pair, 20% of them claimed that they prefer to use discussion as a techniques to raise the interaction in the class, and 10% from the whole number of teacher said that they use role play especially in the exams of oral expression course.

Q12. Do you give more time to students to express their opinion?

	Yes	No
Number of teachers	**10**	**0**
Percentage	**100%**	**0%**

Table 30: Students' Opportunities to Speak in the Class

The aim of this question is to know whether teachers give time to students to speak in the class, the table (30) above shows that all teachers give time to students to express their ideas.

Q13. How often do you correct your students' oral mistakes?

a- Always   b- Sometimes   c- Never

The aim of this question is to know whether teachers interrupt their students to correct their mistakes.The figure (04) below explains that most of the teachers (60%) correct their students' oral mistakes in order to avoid them after, 40% of them claimed that they sometimes correct them because it can make students feel uncomfortable as a result they would quit participating.
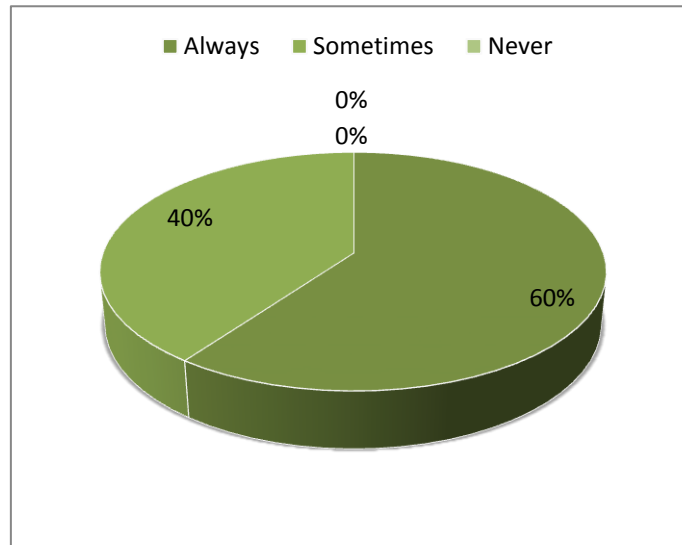
Figure 04: Teachers Interruption for Correcting Student's Mistakes

Q14. Do you give topics which have a relationship with the students' personal experience?

        a- Often   b- Sometimes   c- Never

This question investigates whether teachers invite students to participate by giving them topics which have a relationship to their personal experience. The histogram (05) below shows that teachers sometimes give their students topics which are familiar to students because teachers to make their student enjoy the session by giving them interested topics which are living it.
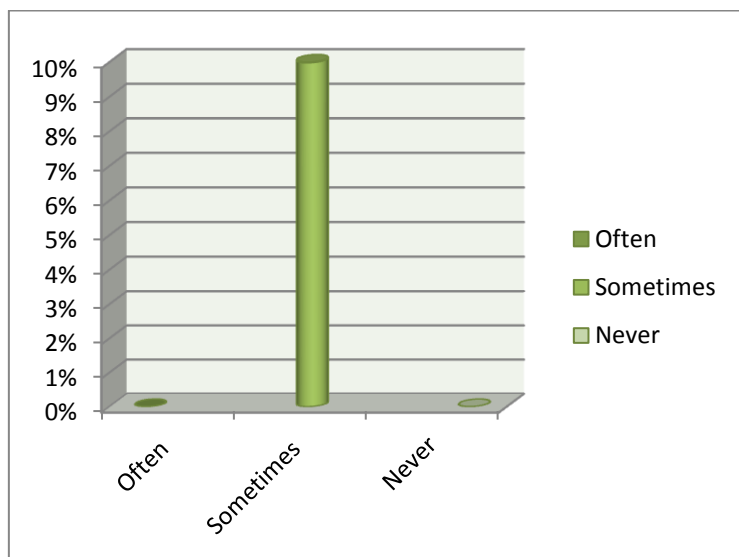
Histogram 05: Teachers 'selection of the topics

Q15. Do you use materials in your oral expression course?

	Yes	No
Number of the teachers	**0**	**10**
Percentage	**0%**	**100%**

Table 31: Teachers' Use of the Materials in the Oral Expression Course

The aim of this question is to know whether teachers use relevant material to support their teaching in oral expression course. The table above shows that teachers did not use any material, they claimed sometimes they are not available in the classes.

3.4. Discussion of the Results:

Based on the data gathered and analyzed from the teachers' questionnaire above;I found that:

➢ Teachers encourage their learners to speak by using the collaborative learning techniques, where students work in groups, share knowledge, exchange information…, etc. They rarely ask them to work individually, encourage discussions among students, and they use,sometimes, role plays in exams.

➢ Teachers claimed that sometimes when students do not speak in class, they face some speaking problems such as inhibition because of shyness, anxiety, and stress, and mentioned other problems such as lack of vocabulary, and fear of making mistakes.

➢ Teachers correct the students' mistakes and encourage their' oral fluency in order to make them convey their messages to their classmates in the oral expression course.

➢ Speaking assessment is an important part in improving the students' speaking skill; it helps teachers to check the student's progress and to identify their needs and weaknesses.

➢ In the classroom interaction, teachers claimed that they talk most of the time because sometimes students feel bored, they are not interested by the topic dealing with, or they are shy to speak in the class. However, teachers encourage discussions among students and give them time to express their ideas to make them face their difficulties and sometimes match the topic that they are dealing with in real life situations to increase the students' oral production.

➢ However, teachers assert that the selection of topics must be taken into consideration; students learn better when they feel safe, in other words, when students found themselves discussing topics they are familiar with, there will be a an enjoyable atmosphere which makes students participate in the class.

➢ The results of the teachers' questionnaire show that most of teachers at the university are applying some principles of the student-centered learning in their classes. They act according to the situation in order to help and facilitate their students' learning and make them less inhibited in the oral class.

Conclusion:

In short, the collected data from the classroom observation and the teachers' questionnaire show that the student-centered learning is an effective method to improve the students' speaking skill. The analysis of both of the instruments that is used in this research revealed that the student-centered learning has a positive impact on the students' oral production. It encourages the students' participation, promotes confidence, and prepares students for real life communication. Moreover, it gives opportunities to students to use the target language.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

Based on the finding of the present research, it is advisable to suggest these recommendations to EFL teachers and students who are learning English as a foreign language:

➢ First of all, the academic environments should be a safe place of experimentation and self-discovery.

➢ Students should be involved in the classroom tasks and activities in order to enhance their learning. Teacher can use different techniques to enhance their speaking skill.

➢ Cooperative activities should be organized.

➢ Teachers should vary their activities and teaching methods, they should encourage interaction among students by asking relevant questions. However, they should choose interested topics to engage the students' learning process and motivate them to speak.

➢ Teachers should play two important roles: a facilitator and a motivator to help students face their difficulties in practicing the target language in oral expression tasks.

➢ Teachers should give time to their students to express their ideas inside the classroom and share it with others to make them feel comfortable in the classroom tasks; it means that they should be the center of the class.

➢ Teachers should give positive feedbacks to make students aware.

➢ Students need to interact with their teachers and classmate to overcome their speaking difficulties.

➢ Student- centered learning based on the curiosity of students for lifelong learning, not on passive learners, they should base their learning on questions in order to become aware of their own learning. It is said that students do not learn much effectively what they are told about something until they discover it for themselves.

➢ Teachers must ask students to solve problems rather than handing solutions to them, they must transform them from passive learners to active ones in the oral expression tasks.

➢ Use relevant materials to brig life to what they are learning in the class.

General Conclusion

The current research is concerned with the importance of the student-centered learning in improving the EFL students' oral production. The main purpose of this investigation was: first, to examine how students perform in the oral expression courses in order to face their difficulties,and to prove the hypotheses which are: the implementation of the student-centered learning principles, the use of cooperative tasks, and the selections of the discussions' topics in EFL classes during the oral expression courses may create opportunities for learners to practice the target language. As a result, they will improve their speaking skill.

The implementation of the student-centered learning creates situations to promote the students' oral communication, where learners work in pairs, groups, and making discussions rather with their teachers or with their peers inside the classroom. Hence, the results obtained confirm that there is relationship between the student-centered learning and the language development skills in general.

The dissertation consisted of three chapters; the first chapter was a theoretical background about the student-centered learning and the speaking skill. Then, the second chapter dealt with the methodology and the data collection, it gave a description of the tools that are used for collecting the information. After that, the last chapter was about the analysis of the data collection with the discussion of both the classroom observation and the teachers' questionnaire. In addition, there was suggestions and recommendations for both EFL teachers and students.

The findings show that EFL students need their teachers to be motivators as well as correctors in order to encourage them to speak. Then, teachers need to vary their teaching method by using the cooperative techniques where learners interact in pair and groups, and they need to provide their students with the opportunities to express their ideas.

In short this research in not conducted only for student to improve their speaking skill, but it helps teachers as well to understand the importance of the student-centered learning and its implementations.

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Appendices

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

   I would be very grateful if you accept answering the following questionnaire, your answers will help me in a study about using student-centered learning in order to improve the student speaking skill. Please, put a tick (√) in the corresponding box and make full statements whenever necessary.

Section one: Background information

Q1.Sex:

   a- Male ………………………………………………………….☐

   b- Female………………………………………………………..☐

Q2.How long have you been teaching English at university?

   a- One to five years…………………………………………...….☐

   b- Five to ten years………………………………..……………..☐

   c- More than ten……………………………………..…………....☐

Q3. How long have you been teaching Oral Expression?

   a- One to five years…………………………………………….....☐

   b- Five to ten years……………………………………..………....☐

   c- More than ten………………………………..…………….…....☐

Section two: speaking skill

Q4. In the classroom, you are the one who talks:

   a- Often…………………………….;;……………………….....☐

   b- Sometimes……………………………………………………..☐

   c- When it is necessary……………………………………..…....☐

Q5. How often do your students participate in Oral Expression?

   a- Frequently ……………………………………..…………....☐

   b- Sometimes……………………………………………………..☐

   c- Rarely…………………………………………….……….…....☐

   d- Never…………………………………………………….…....☐

Q6. Do you encourage your student to speak?

   a- Always……………………………………………………....☐

b- Sometimes……………………………………………………....

c- Rarely………………………………………………………..

d- Never……………………………………………………..

Q7. Sometimes students do not speak in the classroom because of some speaking problems.

According to you which of these difficulties that face students in Oral Expression?

a- Inhibition because of shyness, anxiety and stress……………….....…

b- Nothing to say about the chosen topic……………...……………....…

c- Mother tongue use……………………………….........................…

Others ………………………………………………………………….

Q8. How often do you assess your student's speaking skill?

a- Always…………………………………………...…

b- Sometimes……………………………….......…

c- Never ……………………………………….....…

Why?..

....

Section three: Student-centered Learning

Q9. In the classroom, do you act as:

a- A guider………………………………………….

b- A facilitator……………………………………….

c- A monitor……………………………………….

d- A language provider ……………………………..

Q10. Do you encourage discussions between students?

a- Always…………………………………...…

b- Sometime…………………………………...…

c- Never…………………………………….....…

Q11. Do you ask student to work:

a- Individually………………………………..

b- In Pairs……………………………..…………

c- Group work………………………..……………

d- Discussions…………………………......………

e- Role play……………………….....………

Why……………………………………………………………………..

Q12. Do you give more time to students in order to express their opinions?

a- Yes…………………………………...……

b- No.…………………………………………………..............….. ☐

Q13. Do you encourage the students' oral fluency and correct their mistakes?

    a- Always.……………………………………………...... ☐

    b- Sometimes.…………………………………….....……….. ☐

    c- Never.…………………………………………....…… ☐

Why.………………………………………………………....…..

Q14. Do give topics which have a relationship to the students' personal experience?

    a- Yes.…………………………………………...............… ☐

    b- No.……………………………………………… ☐

Why?………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………

Q15. Do you use materials in your oral expression course?

    a- Yes.……………………………………..…....… ☐

    b- No.…………………………………………..… ☐

Why? (give examples)

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

Thank You

Checklist observation

Active and interactive mode /Collaborative work	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rarely
Teacher stimulates real life situations				
Teacher acts as a facilitator/ guider rather than language provider				
Teacher encourages interaction between students				
Teacher uses individual, pair work, and role play				
Use relevant materials				
Teacher gives time to students to express their ideas				
Teacher encourages the oral fluency and correct the students' mistakes				
Teacher gives activities in relation to their personal experience				
Students reflect, debate, and discuss				