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**Speaking Difficulties Encountered by EFL University Students A Case Study of EFL Students at Faculty of Education, Elhasahisa, University of Gezira, Sudan.**

**Key Words: Speaking Difficulties, practicing dialogues, socio cultural Mawaddah Ibrahim Min Alseed**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study aims to investigate the causes of the difficulties that face EFL learners in oral interaction. The study adopted the descriptive and analytical method. A questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. It was distributed to forty nine (49) EFL students at Faculty of Education, Elhasahisa, University of Gezira, Sudan. The collected data were statistically analyzed by the (SPSS) program. The results indicated that: many of EFL students face difficulties in speaking English, practicing dialogue improves EFL learners' speaking abilities, group activities enhance learners' oral interaction. Questioning technique and listening develops students' oral interaction. Moreover, socio cultural factors affect EFL students' oral interaction and correcting students during speaking, harms their oral interaction. Seating arrangement affects students' readiness for interaction. The study recommends: EFL learners should practice dialogues and questioning techniques in the classroom. Pair and group work should be practiced in EFL classrooms. Audio visual aids should be used in EFL teaching and seating should be arranged in a way that allows EFL learners to interact.

**1.1 Introduction**

Speaking seems to be the most important skill of all the four skills because learners who master a language are usually referred to as speakers of that language (Ur, 1996). The major goal of all English language teaching should give learners the ability to use English effectively and accurately in communication (Davies and Pearse, 2000). However, many language learners after many years studying English still lack the ability to communicate accurately. It's worth mentioning that, many of EFL students are not good at English language. Although they can pass exams easily, they find it difficult to speak in English and communicate orally. To help students improve speaking skills, it is necessary to find ways to help them overcome their problems. Moreover, the teachers need to know the factors that affect their students' speaking abilities so that they can deal with these factors to help the students in this respect.

**1.2 Problem of the Study**

There are many factors which cause difficulties in speaking English among EFL learners. Some of these factors are related to the learners themselves, the teaching strategies, the curriculum, and the environment. For example, many learners are in need of vocabulary to get meaning across, and consequently, they

cannot keep the interaction in side classroom. Some students lack inspiration to speak either of their shyness or the lack of confidence.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The study aims:

1. To investigate the causes of oral interaction difficulties in EFL classes.
2. To find out ways of improving EFL students' speaking.

### **1.4 Questions of the Study**

The study is intended to answer the following questions:

1. What are the causes of oral interaction difficulties in EFL classes?
2. What are the ways of improving EFL learners' speaking skills?

### **1.5 Hypotheses of the Study**

The study has the following hypotheses:

1. There are some causes of oral interaction difficulties in EFL classes.
2. There ways of improving EFL learners' speaking skills.

## **2. Literature Review**

Speaking is a complex skill, which should be taught everywhere and it is also a skill that is better learned in groups (Celce-Murica, 2001). One of the most important goals of teachers is to enable learners to use English for communication. Speaking skill can be improved by games, role play, etc. Evidence shows that speaking should incorporate activities in a group work (Davies and Pearse, 2000). Teachers need to use a lot of English speaking activities to motivate learners to study and speak in English. They should also give special attention to classroom environment.

However, (Derakhshan, etal, 2015) claims that, learning to speak needs a lot of practice. Furthermore, learners should use dialogue, questions and answers. The teacher should take into account learners' interests and needs. Learners should take part in oral activities in order to spontaneously exchange their thoughts in second language speaking.

### **2.1 Speaking Difficulties encountered by EFL Learners**

When conversing with a more competent speaker, many learners tend to play a limited role in such interactions. Teacher-student talk, largely consists of students answering questions posed by the teacher. The teacher frequently nominates the topics and generally controls the direction of the conversation, scaffolding participation as a teaching technique. Even in more informal

conversational activities with more proficient speakers, learners tend to provide shorter, more fragmented turns, relying on their interlocutor to keep communication going. In contrast, when working with a language learner peer, learners speak more and produce longer turns (Sato, 2015). They also do more of the work of maintaining the conversation developing topics, introducing new ideas, making suggestions and asking questions. Learners get chances to practice using language in a wider range of ways with learner peers, helping them develop the communication strategies they need to be able to use the target language for communication.

## **2.2 Learners' Use of Social Interaction**

Language learning is not simply learning grammar rules and vocabulary. Learners need to come away with an understanding of how to be language users – how to use language appropriately in different settings, how to use language to show others who they are, and how to use language effectively to achieve their interactional goals. Any setting in which people use the language is a social context, with its own rules and expected patterns. Learners need access to social uses of language to build an understanding of how to use language beyond the classroom (Bayley and Schecter, 2003). However, this process occurs when language learners (as novices) enter into social interaction with native speakers. But in much the same way that peer interaction can promote learning of grammar and vocabulary, it is also an important tool in promoting language socialization. In educational settings, through participation in interaction, learners gain access to opportunities for socialization not only to the cultural norms of the target culture but also to the classroom norms and practices for specific activities. While one generally thinks of the teacher as the one who models real-world language practices for students, students can also sample interaction (Adams, 2004).

Interaction between teachers and students tends to be 'vertically' organized, while interactions with peers are more horizontal (He, 2000). Even for adult learners, the difference between their language proficiency and that of their teacher's leads to a level of separation. Social equivalence can be especially beneficial in language learning situations; it gives learners opportunities to communicate without being directed by a teacher. This pushes them to work out how to begin or join a conversation, how and when to contribute and how to change topics - skills that translate to social interactions beyond the classroom. Through participation in communication, learners work out how to be part of a community of language learners (Adams, 2004)

## **3. Material and Method:**

The participants of this study were the EFL students at the Faculty of Education Elhasahisa, University of Gezira, Sudan. A questionnaire was distributed to forty nine (49) of EFL students for collecting the data about improving EFL students' speaking skills. Then it was statistically analyzed by SPSS program. In this section the researcher requests the sample to tick the options that best reflect

their opinions through the questionnaire. The statistical analyses of the questionnaire were shown in the following tables.

**Statement (1) Many of EFL students face difficulties in speaking English.**

Table (1) Speaking difficulties face students . .

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	2	4.1
Neutral	5	10.2
Agree	42	85.7
Total	49	100.0

Table (1) shows that most Of the respondents (%85.7) agree that EFL students find difficulties in speaking English, (10.2 %) are neutral and (4.1%) disagree with the statement. Thus, this statement is justified.

**Statement (2) Dialogues improve EFL learners' speaking abilities**

Table (2) Dialogues improve speaking abilities

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Neutral	4	8.2
Agree	45	91.8
Total	49	100.0

Table (2) reflects that, practicing dialogues improves EFL learners' oral abilities. (91.8%) of the sample agree with the statement, and (8%) are neutral. Accordingly, the statement is proved.

**Statement (3) Group activities enhance learners' oral interaction.**

Table (3) Group activities .

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	3	6.1
Neutral	3	6.1
Agree	43	87.8
Total	49	100.0

According to the statistical analysis of table (3), most respondents (87.8%) agree, (6%) are neutral and (6%) disagree that, group activities enhance learners' oral interaction. Therefore this statement is justified.

**Statement (4) Teaching styles have an influence on learners' oral abilities**

Table (4) Teaching styles.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	2	4.1
Neutral	6	12.2
Agree	41	83.7
Total	49	100.0

Table (4) shows that teaching styles have an influence on learners' oral abilities. However, most respondents (83.7%) agree, (12.2%) are neutral while (4%) disagree with the statement. So, the statement is accepted.

**Statement(5) Questioning technique develops students' interaction.**

Table (5) Questioning technique

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	2	4.1
Neutral	3	6.1
Agree	44	89.8
Total	49	100.0

According to the statistical analysis in table (5), most of the sample (89.8%) agree with the statement, (6%) are neutral and (4%) disagree. This statement is accepted.

**Statement (6) Socio cultural factors affect the students' oral interaction.**

Table (6) Socio cultural factors

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	2	4.1
Neutral	1	2.0
Agree	46	93.9
Total	49	100.0

Table (6) shows that most respondents (93.9%) agree that socio cultural factors affect the students' oral interaction. Only (2%) are neutral and (4%) disagree with the statement. Thus this statement is proved

**Statement (7) Speaking skill is developed through listening skills.**

Table (7) The development of listening skills.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	1	2.0
Neutral	5	10.2
Agree	43	87.8
Total	49	100.0

Table (7) shows that most respondents (87.8%) agree, (10%) are neutral where only (2%) disagree that speaking skill is developed through listening skills. Therefore this statement is accepted.

**Statement (8) EFL learners should not be corrected during speaking activities.**

Table (8) Correcting during speaking activities.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	4	8.2
Neutral	2	4.1
Agree	43	87.8
Total	49	100.0

Table (8) shows that most of respondents (87.8%) agree, (4%) are neutral and (8%) of the sample disagree that EFL learners should not be corrected during speaking activities. Therefore this statement is accepted.

**Statement (9) Classroom management helps teachers to create class time talking.**

Table (9) Creating class time talking

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	2	4.1
Neutral	3	6.1
Agree	44	89.8
Total	49	100.0

Table (9) shows that (89.8%) of respondents agree, (6%) are neutral and (4%) disagree that, classroom management helps teachers to create class time talking. So, this statement is accepted.

**Statement( 10) Seating arrangement affects students' readiness for interaction.**

Table (10) Seating arrangement .

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Disagree	3	6.1
Neutral	5	10.2
Agree	41	83.7
Total	49	100.0

Table (10) shows that most respondents (83.7%) agree and (10%) are neutral and (6%) disagree that seating arrangement affects students' readiness for interaction. Therefore this statement is accepted.

**4.Conclusion:**

There are many speaking difficulties encountered by EFL students at secondary schools. There are many factors which cause these difficulties in speaking English among EFL learners. When conversing with a more competent speaker, many learners tend to play a limited role in interactions. Teacher-student talk, largely consists of students answering questions posed by the teacher. However, the study aims to explore the causes of difficulties that face EFL learners in oral interaction. The study adopts the descriptive analytical method. A questionnaire was used for data collection. It was distributed to EFL students at the Faculty of Education, Elhasahisa, University of Gezira, Sudan.

**5. Findings:**

The collected data was statistically analyzed with the (SPSS) program. The results indicate that:

- 1.Many of EFL students face difficulties in speaking English.
2. Practicing dialogues improves EFL learners' speaking abilities.
- 3.Group activities enhance learners' oral interaction.
- 4.Questioning technique and listening develops students' speaking skills.
5. Sociocultural factors affect the students' oral interaction while correcting them during speaking, harms their performance.
- 6.Classroom management helps teachers to create class time talking.

7. Seating arrangement affects students' readiness for interaction.

## 6. Recommendations:

The study recommends:

1. EFL learners should practice dialogues and questioning techniques in the classroom.
2. Pair and group work should be practiced in EFL classrooms.
3. Audio visual aids should be used in EFL teaching .
4. Seating should be arranged in a way that allows EFL learners to interact.

### صعوبات في الكلام واجهت طلاب اللغة الانجليزية الجامعيين

دراسة حالة (طلاب اللغة الانجليزية بكلية التربية الحاصحيا-جامعة الجزيرة، السودان)

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### الملخص

تهدف الدراسة إلى تقصي أسباب صعوبات التخاطب الشفهي التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية. اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي ، استخدمت الإستبانة في جمع البيانات من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية الحاصحيا، جامعة الجزيرة، حيث تم توزيع الإستبانة على تسع واربعين (٤٩) طالباً وطالبة. تم جمع البيانات وتحليلها ببرنامج الحزم الإحصائية للعلوم الإجتماعية. تمخض ذلك عن عدة نتائج أهمها: أن الكثير من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية يعانون من صعوبات الكلام الشفهي باللغة الإنجليزية، علماً بأن ممارسة الطلاب للحوار يحسن مهاراتهم في الكلام الشفهي كما أن الأنشطة اللغوية التعاونية تساعد على تحسين مهارة التحدث فضلاً عن أن إستراتيجية الأسئلة والإستماع لها دورها في ذلك، غير أن العوامل الإجتماعية الثقافية تؤثر على مهارات الطلاب الشفهية. أن نظام الإجلس يؤثر على جاهزية الطلاب للمشاركة الشفهية. توصي الدراسة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بممارسة الحوارات واسلوب الأسئلة لتطوير مهارات الكلام في صفوف تدريس اللغة



الإنجليزية، استخدام الوسائل السمعية والبصرية في عملية التدريس و ممارسة الأنشطة التعاونية كما توصي الدراسة بتنظيم الإجلالاس بطريقة تمكن الطلاب من التفاعل الصفي

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