

## **An Experimental Study on Improving Students' Self-Confidence Speaking in TPO Class, First-Year LMD Students at the University of Tlemcen, Algeria as Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to bridge the gap between the teaching activities and the students' self-development by looking into approaches to improve the students' self-confidence in speaking classes in general and TPO courses in particular, at the English department at the University of Tlemcen. Due to this, a study was undertaken with first-year LMD students at the Abou Bakr Belkaid Tlemcen Faculty of English Foreign Languages in a quasi-experimental method. To meet this end, data will be collected through (30) learners' questionnaires along with specially designed speaking confidence-tests are meant to gauge the students' perceptions and potential abilities. The findings highlight an important factor that might inhibit learners' self-confidence when it comes to speaking in the classroom. The psychological obstacles were coined to describe the most common psychological challenges that prevent students from communicating during oral sessions. Shyness, anxiety, a lack of self-confidence, a fear of making mistakes, a lack of interest in the subject, and a lack of motivation are all examples of students' interviews.*

**Keywords:** Self-confidence, Techniques of Oral Production, Speaking, EFL Algerian Learners.

### **Introduction**

English is widely used as a worldwide language in this era of globalization, which is significant. Currently, it is thought that developing the four primary language skills of listening, writing, reading, and speaking through a variety of communicative activities and strategies is essentially required for the mastery of that language as a continuous learning process in ESL/EFL classroom settings. The capacity to grasp speaking confidently is a challenging issue that both teachers and learners must deal with in foreign language teaching and learning. Most of the time, this challenge prompts teachers to consider the ideal classroom activities that students could require to boost their confidence and, as a result, advance their language skills. Now, it is believed that the mastery of that language as an ongoing learning process in ESL/EFL classroom settings requires the development of the four principal language skills, namely listening, writing, reading and speaking, by resorting to a wide range of communicative activities and strategies (Belmekki, 2018).

### **Context of the Study**

In foreign language teaching and learning, the ability to master a speaking skill is a difficult task that both teachers and learners have to face. Most of the time, this difficulty leads teachers to think about the appropriate classroom activities which students may need to increase their self-confidence and, consequently improve their language proficiency. Hence, the use of a variety of communicative activities like discussing issues or classroom debates may help EFL students to gradually enhance their oral ability, and become effective communicators in that target language with a high degree of self-esteem (ibid).in this respect, Brown (2001, p.268) argues that speaking has many different components, including two main areas: accuracy and fluency, from a communicative standpoint. Accuracy refers to the correct use of language, grammar, and pronunciation, whereas fluency refers to the capacity to continue speaking spontaneously.

The students' input in the speaking class is extremely crucial. The teacher's role is merely to facilitate the teaching process. As a result, of participation in English-speaking class, individuals have to develop their self-confidence. According to Goleman in Mieke (2006, p. 45), self-confidence is the belief in oneself and one's talents. It may refer to how people perceive themselves and their abilities; each person has a distinct level of confidence. Experience and living circumstances both have a role in the growth of someone's self-confidence. It is tied to each individual's psychological experience. Shyness, communication difficulties, social anxiety, and a lack of assertiveness can all be symptoms of low confidence.

When compared to students with low self-confidence, students with high self-confidence have more drive and intention. More confident students may be more active in class and more excited about learning. It will promote the teaching and learning process. In this vein, individuals who have a high level of confidence may speak calmly and clearly with simple language years (1988, p.358). The findings of research conducted at the University of Tennessee by Louise Katz (2000) Public speaking anxiety is quite widespread among students, and the general public, Martin's Public Speaking Anxiety. In the same vein as the findings of this study, 20 to 85 percent of people suffer nervousness when speaking in public. These student concerns may lead to students avoiding certain subjects or even majors that demand oral presentations, never speaking in class, or embarking on a vocation that requires occasional speaking in front of a group. Students who are afraid to speak in public shun social activities as well. Andrianto and Dewi (2006) conducted a study on public speaking anxiety at

the faculty of Universitas 4 Muhammadiyah Purwokerto to investigate the association between mentality and public speaking nervousness (UMP). This study investigates the relationship between mindset and public speaking anxiety, demonstrating that the better a student's mindset, the lower the degree of anxiety experienced, and vice versa, the worse a student's ability to think, the greater the amount of anxiety faced while speaking in public. Moreover, Ratnasari (2009) summarizes the findings of his study, which show that there is a link between self-confidence and interpersonal communication abilities. Individuals with self-confidence can overcome their fears or negative beliefs about themselves and others to interact effectively. In this study, the researcher focuses on the relationship between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability by providing the most powerful techniques to boost students' confidence while speaking. In this regard, Richards (2016) argued that conversations, with all their different aspects, formats and specifications, are reliable to guide learners towards a higher level of mastery of the skill and, consequently; towards higher levels of communicative performance regarding the improvement of students' self-confidence degree. Furthermore, the third edition of the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2001, p.1468) defines Speaking as the act of giving a speech or a discussion. Giving a speech or giving a talk is a way of sharing someone's ideas. They are conveying the speaker's mental message to the listener. A monologue or a conversation can be used in the speech. The speakers in a monologue speech merely want to communicate their ideas, whereas, in a dialogue, both the speaker and the listener must understand what they are talking about in order to have a communicative conversation.

Conversation as a teaching/learning classroom technique is one of the most important activities in the whole process of mastering the language. It is believed that in such settings and while implementing such activities, the exchange of ideas takes place in a systemic and structured way. According to Lakshman *et al*, while involved in a group discussion, the students are often required to speak constantly on a topic with appropriate strategies.

The most crucial aspect of language learning is teaching English conversation (Milova, 2018). Unfortunately, this way of teaching is far more difficult to implement than teaching grammar and writing skills. It takes both teachers' and students' energy to deliver conversation lessons or organize discussion activities that encourage all members of the class to make use of English effectively (*ibid*). Furthermore, there are a significant number of Ukrainian and Western foreign language-teaching methodologists and linguists who concentrate their basic research and papers on language acquisition on the topic of teaching conversation in English language classrooms using conversational strategies. Among them are the following: E. Anthony, S. Ann, E. Anthony, K. Beare, G. Brown, A. Chaney, P. Cole, J. Dobson, G. Gibson, H. Kayi, W.R. Lee, M. Magher, D. Nunan, A. Palmer, L. Regan, P. Sze and others. There are many reasons behind choosing these techniques by the researcher. Besides, Harizaj, *et al* (2015) conducted research on the implementation of group discussion as a way to improve students' writing; they found that through the implementation of group discussion, the students develop social communicative skills which help them to express their ideas. Also, Frydaki (2016) states that the experimental group he used in his research achieved a significant improvement in literature understanding after the implementation of group discussion. Similarly, during discussions, the students are likely to interact, participate, receive and respond to the information shared by the different members of the group, and this is a core component of an active learning environment (McKeachie and Svinichi 2006). The highest and most creative stage of the language learning process is teaching conversation. Likewise, Milova, 2015, p.170 describes the ideas and steps of teaching conversation using

numerous conversational techniques. Teachers are required to use specific conversational tactics such as small group discussions, role-plays, simulations, improvisations, debates, interviews, and others to achieve the goal of developing learners' conversational skills (ibid). Moreover, teachers play a huge role in choosing the right topics for class discussions. Students are likely to show higher levels of attentiveness, engagement and motivation as they relate to the material and topics that are being discussed to their own experience provided they are relevant to their interests and expectations (Bligh, 2000). In this way, Adelab and Matthias (2013) claim that the discussion technique is an appropriate way to involve students in polemical topics, which are conducive to having a better, grasp of the target language. This is simply because such an approach is going to help and encourage them to communicate more easily and efficiently. On the hole, AJ. Hoge (effortless.com) claimed that most learners think that vocabulary and grammar are essential to learning the language. What determines success, however, he states, is not language study per se, but it is rather the psychological aspect involved in this process. The learners' motivation, passion and enthusiasm for English are what create the mastery of, and ultimately success in speaking English. In addition, some aspects hinder students' speaking ability, one of which is the lack of confidence as the students are often embarrassed or laughed at when they make mistakes (Shabrina 2008). However, and contrary to those with a low level of self-confidence, students with a high degree of self-confidence can engage easily and actively during the learning activity (Doquarini, 2013).

## **Methodology**

### **a- Subjects**

The study focuses on first-year students at Algeria's Tlemcen University. There were 30 learners selected at random. This comprised people between the ages of 18 and 21, Baccalaureate graduates from a variety of fields (such as the humanities, life sciences, and foreign languages), and those who had been studying the English language for a total of seven years before returning to school. In total, our students studied English for four years in middle school and three years in secondary school. They all essentially share the characteristics and outcomes of having studied in the same educational system because they all attended government schools. The learners' first foreign language is French, and their second is English. Arabic is the national and official language of the Peoples' Democratic and the Republic of Algeria, making it their native tongue. Students in their first year of college are exposed to the basics of the English language through courses that are designed to build on what they learned in high school. These modules include grammar, oral expression, written production, linguistics, human social sciences, study skills, research methods, reading comprehension, and information and communication technologies. They are also focused on the acquisition of fundamental linguistic qualities. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the participants had already learned some fundamental concepts about honing their speaking abilities through classes on oral expression or ICT.

### **b- Procedures and Selected Materials**

One of the most difficult problems any researcher can encounter when doing a study of this kind is selecting the right sample. According to Dornyei (2007, p.96), "the population is the group of people that the study is about, and the sample is the set of participants that the researcher analyzes in an empirical investigation". Thirty 30) EFL students from the University of Tlemcen make up the sample for the current study. The type of tools a

researcher chooses will depend on the nature of the research, and this is because the data gathering stage of the research is crucial since it will determine the findings and conclusions that the study will produce. This is why each researcher must choose carefully what kind of data they intend to collect and use for their project. Research or measurement instruments or tools are the techniques researchers use to gather data. As a result, and following the multimethod approach required by the nature of the research, which calls for multiple sources of data collection, the researcher has chosen a wide range of instruments to both to vary the sources and enable the collection of the broadest range of information samples. They are essential for research because they make data collecting dependable so that it may be examined afterward (Aina, 2004). This includes the use of questionnaires for our EFL learners in the control and experimental groups at the start of the study. One of the most popular methods for gathering information from study participants is the use of questionnaires. In general, they look for the opinions of people in a sample or a population on matters directly connected to the research study's aims (Aina, 2004, p. 348). Since the purpose of the questions in these questionnaires is to collect information from the participants, they must be valid and trustworthy for the information gathered to support the research's findings.

This study's objectives include learning more about the fundamental causes of first-year students' poor oral expression abilities as well as ways to improve students' speaking abilities. Another key objective is to determine whether teachers incorporate communicative activities into their lesson plans. This study's objectives include learning more about the fundamental causes of first-year students' poor oral expression abilities with low self-confidence as well as ways to improve students' speaking performance.

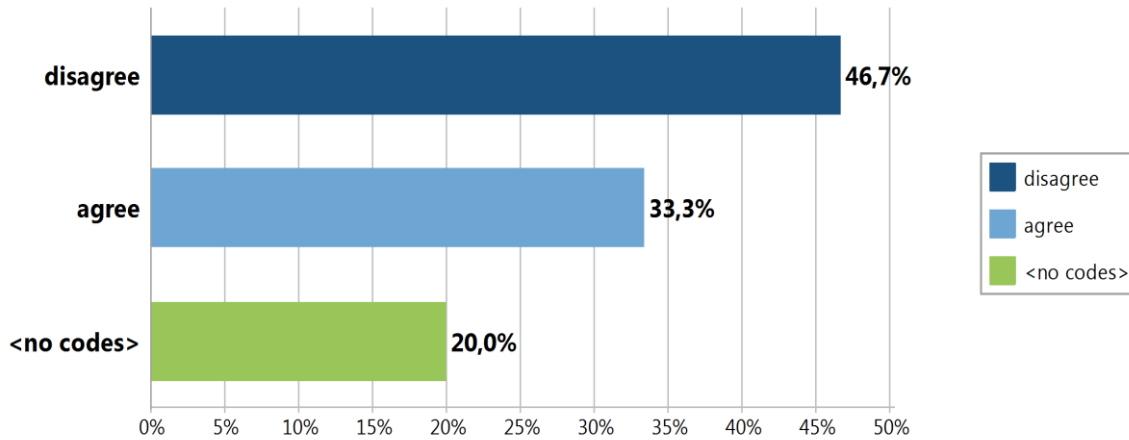
## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Do you feel embarrassed when you speak English in class?**

	Frequency	Percentage (valid)
Disagree	14	46,67
Agree	10	33,33
<no codes>	6	20,00
TOTAL (valid)	30	100,00
Missing	0	-
TOTAL	30	-

Table 1 shows that 14 students disagree with the claim that they feel embarrassed when they speak in the class compared to 10 students who feel embarrassed while 6 students did not answer this question. This table is illustrated in the following figure.





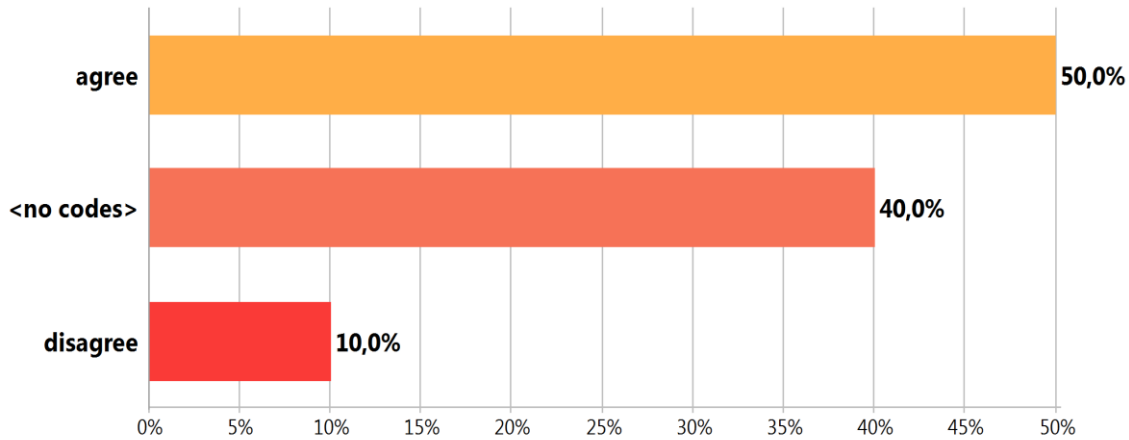
**Figure 1: I feel embarrassed when I speak English in the class**

Figure 1 shows the percentage of the question I feel embarrassed about when I speak English in class. It reports 46, 7% of students do not feel embarrassed while 33, 3% feel embarrassed and 20% did not answer this question. This finding highlights the fact that most students feel at ease when they talk. Those who feel embarrassed show a high percentage and measures should be done in order to help these students overcome this feeling and encourage them to participate in TPO. In this regard, Bennaoui’s results (2012, p.17), students share their viewpoints, thoughts, and even emotions through a variety of practices and methodologies, without sacrificing the use of authentic materials and The primary goal of Oral Expression is to develop students' English skills by engaging them in a variety of practical courses in which they must debate, discuss, and present their ideas to overcome students embarrassing in speaking.

**Table 2 : Do you feel that your classmates speak English better than you do?**

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	15	50,00
Disagree	3	10,00
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	18	60,00
DOCUMENTS without code(s)	12	40,00
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	30	100,00

According to table 2, 15 students think that their classmates speak better than they do while 3 students don’t think so. 12 students didn’t answer this question. Schematically, this table is represented in the following figure.



**Figure 2: Do you feel that your classmates speak English better than you do?**

Figure 2 shows that 50 % of the students feel that their classmates speak English better than they do compare to 10 who feel the opposite. 40% missed answering this question. This finding reflects the high percentage of the students who think that their peers have better speaking skills than they do which can play as an obstacle to learners' speaking confidence and will lead them to limit their participation and motivation to speak There is evidence for this in the ELT literature, which emphasizes the role of student motivation in maximizing the learning process. (e.g. Dornyei, 1994, 2001; Ellis, 2000; Oxford, 1990; Richards and Schmidt, 2002; Gardner 2003, among others). It has then been shown that while numerous factors can lead to the achievement of the learning process's ultimate goals, self-confidence remains the most critical factor in getting learners to be fully engaged in the learning process, as many educators, educational psychologists, and other researchers have shown that self-confidence, along with motivation up to a degree, is the predictor that “correlates higher with language achievement.”Masgoret and Gardner 2003, as well as Dörnyei 1990).

Dornyei (2001, as quoted in Rezig, 2015, p. 34), believes that the relationship between motivation and second/foreign language learning is cyclical, moving up and down, influencing and being influenced by language achievement. Similarly, Ellis (2000) contends that motivation entails the attitude of affective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn in L2 (p. 75). As a result, motivation is linked to the initiation, course, strength, and consistency of actions.

According to the perspectives expressed above, motivation is a significant factor that affects learners' level of commitment and their ability to learn successfully. Speaking motivation is the ability to talk openly without fear of embarrassment.

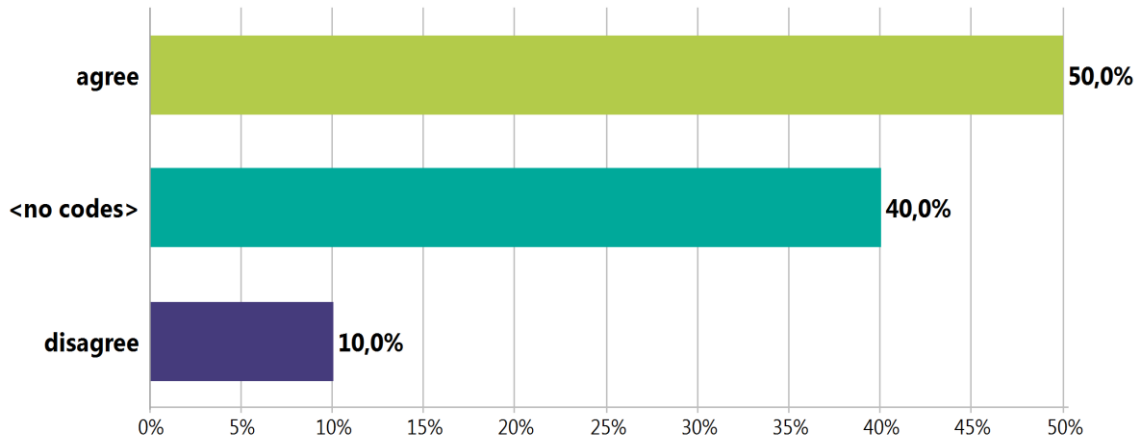
To dig deeper into the learners' feelings when they speak, an analysis of learners' feelings of confusion and nervousity when they speak is shown in the following table.

**Table 3 : I feel nervous and confused when I am speaking in English**

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	15	50,00
Disagree	3	10,00
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	18	60,00

DOCUMENTS without code(s)	12	40,00
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	30	100,00

Table 3 points out that 15 students feel nervous and confused when speaking in English compared to 3 students who don't feel nervous and confused. 12 students did answer this question. Schematically, this table is represented in the following figure.



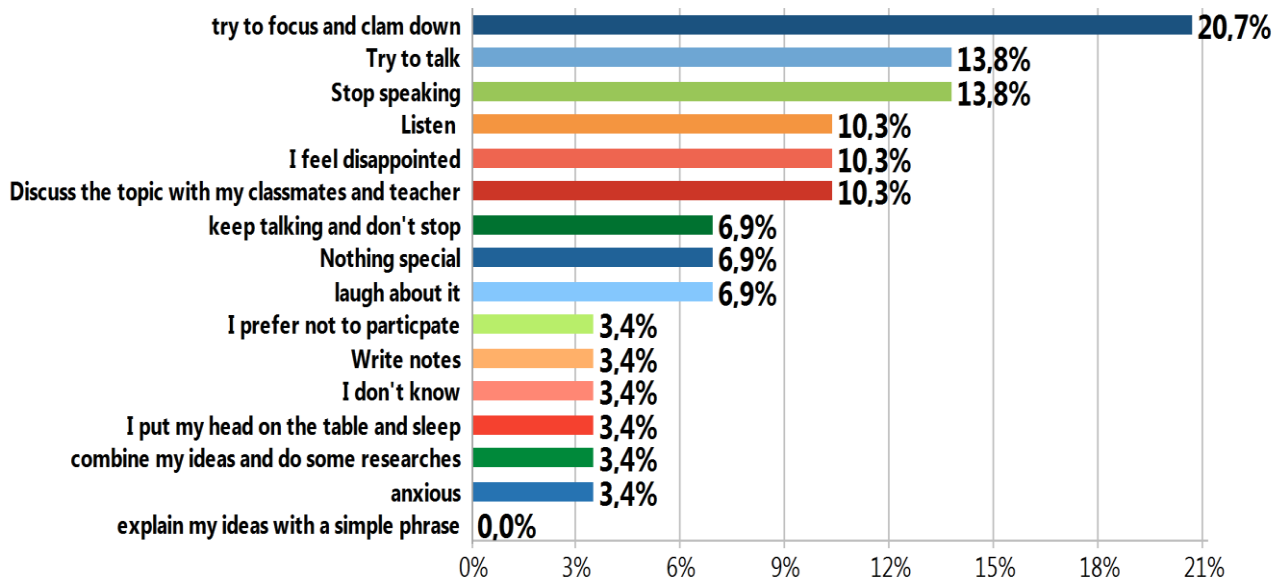
**Figure 3/ I feel nervous and confused when I am speaking in English**

Figure 3 shows that 50% of the learners agree with the fact that they feel nervous and confused when they speak English in the classroom, while 10% don't feel nervous and confused and 40% did not give their answers. This finding highlights an important factor that might inhibit learners' self-confidence when it comes to speaking in the classroom. The "psychological obstacles" was coined to describe the most common psychological challenges that prevent students from communicating during oral sessions. Shyness, anxiety, a lack of self-confidence, a fear of making mistakes, a lack of interest in the subject, and a lack of motivation are all examples. Similarly, according to Juhan (2012, p.101), shyness is an emotional issue that many students experience when required to talk in EFL classrooms (as cited in Bourezzane, 2015, p.43). Shyness, like the other psychological causes, inhibits students' oral involvement. Students prefer to stop speaking because they are self-conscious while speaking in front of their peers. That is to say shyness, anxiety and feeling afraid to speak lead to a lack of self-confidence.

Teachers should find ways to make students at ease and comfortable to help them to overcome confusion and nervousity when they speak. Another factor that was analysed concerned learners' fear that their classmates will laugh at them when they speak.

The results are shown below. This table is schematically represented in figure 4.7.





**Figure 4: When discussing a topic and you feel that you are less confident, what do you do?**

Figure 4 shows that the percentage of references in which learners adopt the reaction of “I try to focus and calm down” which is equal to 20,7% followed by “I try to talk” with 13,8%, “stop speaking”, “listen” and “I feel disappointed” with 10,3%. The lowest percentages refer to “keep talking and don’t stop”, “nothing special” and “laugh about it” with 6,9% and “I prefer not to participate”, “write notes”, “I don’t know”, “I put my head on the table and sleep”, “combine my ideas and do some researches”, “anxious” and “explain my ideas with a simple phrase” with a 3,4% each. This figure is illustrated in the following word cloud.



Figure 4 shows that the utterance “I try to focus and calm down” is the most highlighted one, followed by “stop speaking” and “I feel disappointed”. These results show that learners’ lack of confidence is an important factor that prevents them from talking and speaking English in class. This might explain why many students try to avoid talking and participating in the class because they lack confidence and they fear to lose their face in front

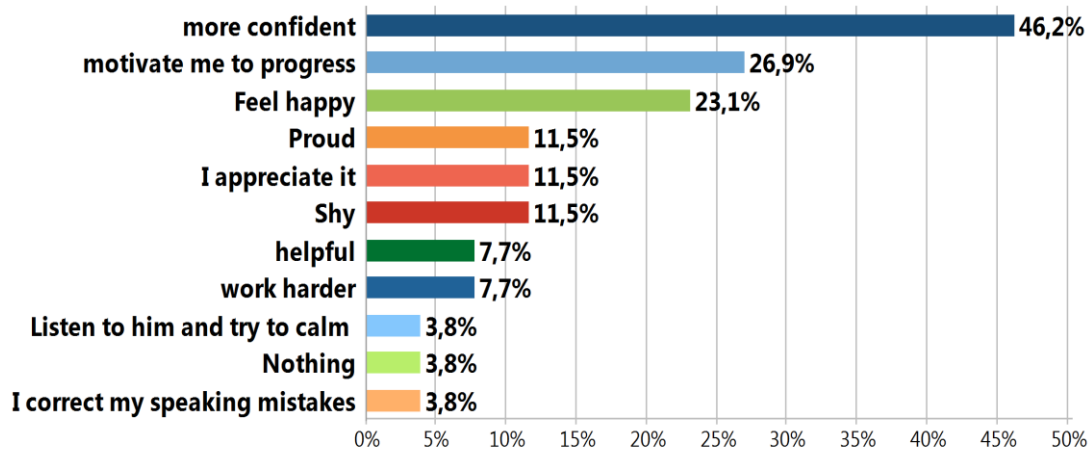
of their classmates. It will be more interesting to involve learners in teamwork, debates and group discussions to be more at ease when talking.

It becomes urgent for teachers to think about ways to increase learners' self-confidence when implementing speaking activities. Among these ways, teachers can use teamwork, debates and discussions which are found to be the most preferred activities in the English classroom as illustrated in table 5.

**Table 5: What do you think when the teacher praises your speaking progress?**

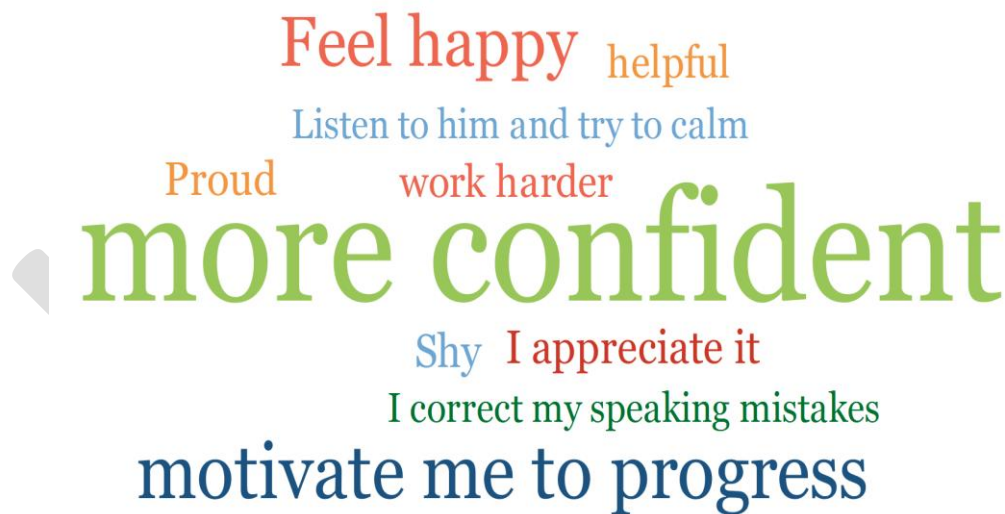
	Documents	Percentage
more confident	12	46,15
motivate me to progress	7	26,92
Feel happy	6	23,08
Proud	3	11,54
I appreciate it	3	11,54
Shy	3	11,54
Helpful	2	7,69
work harder	2	7,69
Listen to him and try to calm	1	3,85
Nothing	1	3,85
I correct my speaking mistakes	1	3,85
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	26	100,00
DOCUMENTS without code(s)	4	-
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	30	-

Table 5 presents learners' reactions when their teacher praises their speaking progress. In fact, feeling more confident has the highest frequency as it has been reported 12 times followed by motivating me to progress 7 times. The third most frequently occurring reaction is feeling happy 6 times. Feeling proud, I appreciate it, and feelings shy have been reported 3 times each. The reactions of helpful and working harder have been mentioned 2 times each, while the lowest occurring reactions are listening to him and trying to calm him, doing nothing and I correct my speaking mistakes with 1 occurrence each. Schematically this table is reproduced in figure 5.



**Figure 5: What do you think when the teacher praises your speaking progress?**

Figure 5 shows that feeling more confident has reached 46,2% followed by motivating me to progress with 26,6%. The third most frequently occurring reaction is feeling happy with 23, 1%. Feeling proud, appreciative and feeling shy have reached 11, 5% each, while helpful and working harder accounted for 7,7% each. The lowest percentages concern listening to him and trying to calm him, doing nothing and I correct my speaking mistakes with 3, 8% each. This figure is illustrated in the following word cloud.



**What do you think when the teacher praises your speaking progress?**

As shown in figure 5, feeling more confident is the most frequently occurring learners’ reaction when their teacher praises their speaking progress. Motivate me to progress comes the second reaction and feeling happy comes third. Such a finding points out the importance of praise and positive teachers’ reactions to the student’s self-confidence and speaking performance. The teachers must praise their students in order to help them gain self-confidence which appears to be one of the success factors to achieve high speaking competence. In this review, Caring is the act of bringing out the best in students by affirming and encouraging them (stronge, 2007, p.23). Successful teachers care for their students and caring has a significant impact on students’ self-esteem. As a result, teachers should

demonstrate to students that they care about their learning and development (ibid). Stronge (2007) said in the same way that successful teachers practice focused and sympathetic listening to show students that they are concerned about students' lives in general, not just what happens in the classroom (p.23). Stronge (2007, p.24) also added recognizing the issues and questions, as well as knowing students formally and informally. Caring is important in increasing learners' trust and success in learning tasks. As a result, it is important to care for the students and praise them by even calling their names, which seems to be a simple thing by the teacher but this plays a huge role in the psychology of the learner because this care will aid in the development of their self-confidence. Caring encourages students to be more confident and successful as the first-year LMD students at the University of Tlemcen responded in this research work. In this line, praise in the classroom is a very effective way to keep pupils motivated and confident in their talents. Any pleasant and complimentary statements addressed to the kids to encourage them, such as "good," "excellent," and so on, are examples of praise. "Good," "good job," and "thanks" are all instances of unlabeled praises that teachers may deliver to pupils, according to Knight and Lee (2008, p.38). Praise motivates learners to work harder because they know their efforts are valued. "As a result, you can employ behaviors," Lee and Knight (2008) wrote in response to this remark (ibid). When a teacher utilizes praise during a student's presentation, it will support them and boost their self-confidence.

In countries where English is taught as a foreign language, whatever learners' profiles are drawn, whatever objectives are set and whatever techniques and tasks are resorted to having to answer the particular needs and expectations of the learners in that setting (see the second chapter). Education specialists, including teachers, have to make up for whatever discrepancies there might be as far as the practice and communicative aspects of their teaching processes are concerned. Because the learners have very few opportunities to use the language outside the classroom, they need to be taught how to deal with the awkward or difficult situations they might find themselves in when they travel abroad and have to use the target language (English in this case) for real-life tasks. This type of pressure is absent when the teaching of the language takes place in countries or in settings where the learner is constantly immersed in the language daily. To wrap up, the first-year LMD students at the University of Tlemcen prefer teachers' encouragement and caring, because these praises make them more confident, and motivate them to progress and feel happy and proud of themselves.

### **Conclusion**

The current study is an investigation conducted by first-year students at ABU BEKR BELKAID UNIVERSITY. It looks into how to make the students feel at ease so that they can speak more effectively and with greater confidence. Engaging in communicative circumstances while learning to speak will help the learner activate their methods and develop their communicative abilities. Students must actively utilize language that is correct in its grammar and pronunciation to build their speaking skills. They can foster an environment where students can connect and talk freely without feeling any constraint or shyness, making them the ideal choice for that purpose. Students who are learning English as a second language (EFL) should be given situations that encourage speaking. They might be able to help kids understand their worries and develop coping mechanisms for them. They can help kids retain positive self-perceptions and avoid pessimistic notions. When conducting oral exercises, they should create a relaxed and entertaining environment and provide interesting tasks that give all students more time and opportunity. In light of this, several suggestions and

recommendations have been made in an effort to allay learners' concerns and give teachers the tools they need to teach speaking skills confidently and effectively.

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