



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages

MASTER THESIS

Letters and Foreign Languages
English Language
Science of the Language

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**Investigating the Role of Socratic Seminar Technique in Developing
English as a Foreign Language Learners' Speaking Skill.**

**The Case of First Year LMD Students of English at Biskra
University.**

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Sciences of Language

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2019-2020

Dedication

I dedicate this work to

The memory of my Father, Abdelhafid, who appreciated knowledge and urged me to gain it and who was the reason behind my choice of the English language.

My lovely Mother who has been my source of my inspiration and strength, and who continually provide me with moral, spiritual and emotional support.

To the memory of my grandparent, Amar, who left us a long time ago and who would be proud to see my work. .

To my bestie, my dear sister for her endless love, encouragement and support throughout my life.

To my dear brother who has never left my hand during the time of research and for his unconditional support.

To my dear friend, Zineb, who shared her words of advice and encouragement all along the path.

Acknowledgment

I would like first to thank Allah the Almighty for having given me strength and enlightenment to accomplish this work.

I would like to express a sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mrs. Bencharef Sakina for her priceless support, constant guidance, and patience.

I would like to express my profound thanks to the board of examiners members Dr. Bashar Ahmed and Mrs. Bekhouche Rime for their precious effort in evaluating this work.

A special gratitude would go to Mrs. Amri Chenini Boutheina for her time and contribution in our study; without her, this research work would not have been possible.

This research would not have been completed without the help and the contribution of first year learners at MKU of Biskra; precisely “Group 04”. Their efforts are highly appreciated. I thank them for having been a part of this research work.

I would like to extend my thankfulness to Miss Messalti Siham and Mr. Douida Brahim for providing me and sharing with me some valuable sources that helped in the accomplishment of this research work.

I would like to express my profound thanks to my friend Miss Guerraiche Selma for her endless support and encouragement. It was a pleasure sharing with her this journey.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends and colleagues wherever they are for the help they offered.

Abstract

Speaking skill is of great importance in learning and mastering a foreign language. However, many learners face numerous obstacles and difficulties which are mainly resulted from the lack of practice and this, consequently, affect their oral development. This issue is assumed to be due to the fact that the teaching strategies and techniques adopted by oral teachers focus more on providing inputs about the language rather than practicing and interacting using the target language. Accordingly, this research work aims at investigating the role of Socratic Seminar Technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. Hence, this study hypothesizes that if teachers use the Socratic Seminar Technique in oral sessions, their learners' speaking skill would be developed. To achieve the intended aims and to validate the research hypothesis, a qualitative research approach was adopted using a case study. To gather data, two collection methods were used. A semi-structured questionnaire was distributed online. It was designed for one group of first year LMD learners (Group n°4) of English at MKU of Biskra chosen purposefully because they experienced the technique. In addition, a classroom observation with the same group took place within the use of Socratic Seminar Technique for four sessions and one for the traditional method of teaching speaking. The aim was to investigate how this technique is implemented with first year LMD learners and its impact on enhancing learners' oral skill in a realistic context. The aim was also to compare learners' participation and performance in Socratic circles with their performance in other oral activities to observe the improvement in their speaking skill. The findings obtained after analyzing and interpreting the data revealed that the Socratic Seminar Technique is very helpful and effective in improving EFL learners' speaking skill. In addition, the majority of participants showed positive reactions and attitudes towards the use of Socratic Seminar technique in oral expression sessions to teach speaking. Thus, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis previously stated was confirmed. Therefore, it is highly recommended for oral expression teachers to adopt the Socratic Seminar Technique in their oral classes to teach the speaking skill and to help their learners develop their oral performance.

Keywords: EFL learners, Speaking skill, Socratic Seminar Technique.

List of Abbreviations

Au: Audio

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

et al.: et alia (Plural) / et alii (Masculine) / et aliae (Feminine) (And others)

FL: The Foreign Language

i.e.: id est (In other words)

L1: The First Language

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate

MKU: Mohammed Kheider University

p.: Page

S/he: She or He

TL: The Target Language

&: and

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General Introduction

Introduction

In the recent years, teaching and learning the English language have become prominent due to the international status of English as Lingua Franca. This latter has become an initial means in various domains including social science, politics, scientific research, and communication. Therefore, a great number of people showed interest to learn the English language because they will definitely use it when they leave the university and enter working circles. For that, it is important to ensure that they can perform well in English.

Although teaching and learning the English language are based on mastering the four skills, namely reading, listening, writing and speaking, it is commonly known that the main purpose of learning a foreign language is communication; hence, more attention has been given to teaching the speaking skill. On the other hand, learning to speak is considered a complex and complicated task because during an attempt to learn this skill, the majority of learners may face many problems and difficulties such as fear of making mistakes, anxiety, lack of vocabulary etc. All these can hamper their oral performance development.

Therefore, many researchers proposed different techniques to help learners be competent language communicators. One of these is the Socratic Seminar Technique. Consequently, this research work tries to shed the light on the role of Socratic Seminar technique in developing English as a foreign language learners' speaking skill.

1. Statement of the Problem

Usually, the aim of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate using that target language with others. Therefore, there is a whole module named 'oral expression' in which teachers try to help their learners develop their speaking skill. Nevertheless, we observed as former first year students that learners' performance in these classes is unsatisfactory and the majority of learners are silent, passive, and reluctant to participate. This fact indicates that learners' speaking skill is not improving because mastering the speaking skill requires practicing, interacting, and communicating in the classroom using the target language. Besides, even if they are invited to speak, students show no enthusiasm to participate. This issue can be due to the fact that the teaching techniques and practices adopted by the oral teachers that are insufficient because they generally focus on the theoretical part of the language and ignore its real practice. As a result,

major difficulties rise among learners such as fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and lack of confidence and so on. These obstacles hamper their oral performance development and prevent them to freely communicate and speak their minds with others, being teachers or classmates.

Therefore, oral expression teachers have to apply new techniques which would increase the learners' opportunities to use the target language as well as they would help them overcome all the difficulties they encounter when speaking in order to afford meaningful and effective classroom practice for learners to develop their speaking skill. Hence, employing Socratic Seminar Technique can be one of the most appropriate ways to develop the speaking skill as an alternative to the traditional techniques. Accordingly, this research work is an attempt to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill.

2. Significance of the Study

The reason behind conducting this research work is to suggest for teachers a new teaching method that is Socratic Seminar technique. In addition, the objective is to spotlight on the significance of this technique in helping EFL learners develop their speaking skill. In other words, this study is significant as it aims at raising teachers' awareness to use Socratic Seminar techniques in their classrooms to make teaching effective and to enhance the speaking skill of their learners.

3. Aims of the Study

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the role of the Socratic Seminar technique in developing EFL learners speaking skill. More specifically, the objectives of this study are:

- Introducing the Socratic Seminar Technique by defining its principles, use and application.
- Shedding the light on the major difficulties that EFL learners encounter during the oral sessions such as anxiety, lack of motivation, etc.
- Explaining the importance of mastering the speaking skill and its necessity.
- Checking if the Socratic Seminar is an affective technique for EFL learners to enhance their speaking skill.
- Determining the learners' attitudes and reactions towards the Socratic Seminar Technique

4. Research Questions

- What is meant by Socratic Seminar Technique, and what are its principles and usages?
- To what extent is the Socratic Seminar useful and effective in oral session?
- Does the use of Socratic Seminars help EFL learners improve their speaking skill?
- What are learners' attitudes towards the use of Socratic Seminars in oral session?

5. Research Hypothesis

The present work attempts to find out whether we accept or reject our hypothesis, which is as follows:

If the teacher uses the Socratic Seminar technique, his/her learners' speaking skill would be improved.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Research Approach

The ultimate aim of this research work is to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar Technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. Therefore, the qualitative approach was the most appropriate for the reasons that our research occurs only in the classroom contexts and that the purpose of this study is to observe the application of this technique not to test its effects. In addition, the approach offers the appropriate data collection methods that are the questionnaire and classroom observation to collect information/ about learners' opinions and perceptions concerning the Socratic Seminar Technique.

6.2. Data Collection Methods

To verify the hypothesis of this research work, two data collection methods were utilized in this study: a questionnaire and classroom observation. First, the questionnaire submitted to a sample of first year of English to elicit their opinions and attitudes towards the use of Socratic Seminar Technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. Second, a classroom observation conducted to observe the application of the technique as well as learners' attitudes during and after using the Socratic Seminar Technique in oral session.

6.3. Population and Sample

In this research work, the target population was first year LMD students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra in the academic year 2019/2020. The whole population consists of 336

students divided into 10 groups of 33-36 students in each. From the whole population, we selected group four (04) to be the sample of our study due to the teacher's cooperation and approval to apply the technique in her class. Therefore, the sampling technique selected for the present research is a purposive sample because we have selected a specific class in which the teacher applied the Socratic Seminar Technique.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of two main parts that are the theoretical part and the practical part. On one hand, the theoretical part includes two chapters related to the literature review about the dependent variable speaking skill and the independent variable Socratic Seminar Technique. On the other hand, the practical part includes one chapter devoted to the fieldwork and data analysis.

Chapter one presents an overview about the speaking skill. First, it provides definitions about the concept of speaking. Then, it identifies its importance and the aspects of speaking language. In addition, it distinguishes the various types of speaking and tries to display the different components of speaking. Then, it identifies the problems that may affect the speaking development. Additionally, it introduces the various speaking teaching techniques, displays the roles of the teachers in the oral session, principles of teaching speaking, and characteristics of successful speaking activity. Finally, it introduces the most common classroom activities used to develop the speaking skill.

Chapter two deals with the independent variable, which is the Socratic Seminar Technique. Firstly, it starts with providing a historical overview of this technique. Then, it provides definitions of the Socratic Seminar technique as well as its characteristics to distinguish it from other classroom activities used to develop learners' speaking. Furthermore, it displays the elements of the Socratic Seminar. In addition, it highlights teachers' role in the Socratic Seminar. Then, it presents the steps of the Socratic Seminar process and its advantage and disadvantages. Finally, it discusses how the Socratic Seminar Technique can help improve EFL learners' speaking skill.

Chapter three is devoted to the fieldwork and data analysis. First, it reviews the research methodology used to conduct this study. In addition, it presents the data collection tools used to gather the data, which are a questionnaire, submitted to first year students of English and a

classroom observation. Finally, it displays the results obtained to analyze and interprets them to draw conclusion about the role of Socratic Seminar to develop the speaking skill.

Chapter One

Speaking Skill

Introduction

Speaking skill is an important element in learning a FL. Since the success of learning a language resides within the success of using this language to communicate; i.e., developing this skill has a huge significance in learners' progress to become actual speakers of the language. Therefore, in this chapter, we will present an overview of the speaking skill. First, we will provide definitions of the concept of speaking. Then, we will identify its importance and the aspects of speaking language. Besides, we will distinguish the various types of speaking and we will try to display the different components of speaking. Additionally, we will introduce the various speaking teaching techniques and we will display the roles of the teachers in the oral session and principles of teaching speaking. Then, we will identify the problems that may affect the speaking development. Finally, we will highlight the major characteristic of a successful speaking activity as well introduce the most common classroom activities used to develop the speaking skill.

1.1. Definition of Speaking Skill

The main reason behind learning a foreign language is to speak it and to communicate with it fluently. Therefore, speaking is one of the main productive skills that should be mastered (with the rest of other language skills) especially by non-native speakers. For that, speaking has been defined by many researchers on the literature from different perspectives.

For a start, according to Brown (1994), Burns and Joyce (1997), "Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information" (cited in Florez, 1999). Moreover, Florez (1999) asserted, "its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking" (p. 1).

In addition, Byrne (1986, p. 8) suggested, "Speaking is a two way process between speaker and listener and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding" (cited in Asib, 2018). Hence, speaking includes two ways of communication: The first is speaking as the productive skill, and the second is understanding as the receptive skill which involves the speaker and the listener.

In conjunction to this, Chaney (1998, p.13) defined speaking as "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts"(as

cited in Kayi, 2006). It means that the paralinguistic features are needed in the process of building and sharing meaning because it enables the speaker to formulate his/ her abstract thoughts and produce them in a clear and comprehensible manner in various kinds of context.

Furthermore, Cameron (2001) pointed out, “speaking is about making people understand speaker’s feeling and ideas by doing an act communication using language” (p.40). It means that when people communicate using language, they transmit their ideas, meaning, feeling and desires.

Despite its importance, speaking is considered as the hardest skill to master because it requires hard work and consistent practice as Luoma (2004) argued, “speaking in a foreign language is a very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop” (p.1).

In the same vein, Thornbury (2005) added that speaking skill is viewed as the most challenging skills because mastering it requires more than just having an acceptable amount of vocabulary or being aware of some the grammar rules. In others words, in addition to those two aspects mentioned before, becoming good language communicators requires from learners to know how to interact well with other people; i.e., being aware of the major principle of communication such as turn taking, the co-operative principle, and politeness, etc.

To sum up, speaking is an interactive activity between two or more people. It enables the speaker to produce utterances to express his/her ideas and feelings to the listener in order to exchange information and knowledge . Speaking is one aspect of learning a foreign language. It is also considered as the prime goal of learning a foreign language because the majority of learners come to these classes with need to developing their oral skills in the target language.

1.2. Importance of Speaking Skill

To learn a language does not only involve the ability to write and to read accurately; it is also the ability to use the target language to communicate, express feelings, share knowledge, and exchange ideas. In this respect, Ur (1996) claimed that the mastery of the language requires the mastery of the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, she states that people who master the language are referred to as “speakers” which limited the concept of being a good language learner in being a competent language communicator as if speaking includes all the various knowledge of language.

Similarly, Nunan (1991) stated that the success in learning any foreign or second language is associated to the success within the conversation in this target language; i.e., language learners have to use the target language in the various contexts inside and outside the classroom either to exchange knowledge or express feelings and emotions. As well, to create social rapport. Therefore, speaking is the core of mastering a foreign language (Syukron, 2013).

In the same vein, Hedge (2000) also asserted the necessity of the spoken language to convey speakers' intentions and sustain social relations. Hence, she reported that in real-like situations people will certainly be part of events such as meetings, conferences or debates in which they need the speaking skill either to win or to lose a negotiation, influence people or create good social relations. For that, speaking accurately is a priority for the majority of language learners.

From a different angle, Corson (2001) and Gummins (2000) stated that spoken language is a sign of intelligence; i.e., if learners are unable to produce spoken language or they fail to express themselves effectively in the classroom or in daily communication, they become considered as a incompetent language communicator and unintelligent learners. In addition, they consider the main reason behind learners' poor performance at school to be the inability of learners to use 'mainstream' language valued in formal education (as cited in Goh & Burns, 2012).

In brief, it is doubtless that all the four skill are important in the mastery of the foreign or the second language, yet the speaking skill is believed to possess more importance since it is considered as the basic of communication. In other words, speaking represents the prime channel of communication in different contexts not only for academic and professional ones but also for social ones in terms of assisting social relationships and building good rapport with people. Indeed, Goh and Burns (2012) claimed, "Speaking is accepted by everyone as an essential language-communication skill, but its importance to language learners goes beyond just day-to-day communication" (p. 15). Thus, in FL classes the majority of learners come with the intention of developing their speaking ability.

1.3. Types of speaking

Brown (2004) introduced a taxonomy for the oral performance, which he divided into six basic types that are imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive and extensive (monologue).

1.3.1. Imitative

In EFL classes the majority of learners aim to perform the spoken language in way they sound like native speakers. For that, imitative speaking refers to learners' ability to imitate some language structure produced by natives correctly. Brown (2004) defined it as "the ability to simply parrot back (imitate) a word or phrase or possibly a sentence" (p.141). In this type of oral performance, the focus is on what learners has been pronounced rather than comprehending or conveying meaning because learners are not participating in an interactive conversation. The aim behind this type of speaking is mainly to reproduce correctly what has been said to the learners. More precisely, it is about strengthening and developing learners' grammatical competence to be able to produce correct grammar to ultimately enhance their speaking skill.

1.3.2. Intensive

According to Brown (2000), this type of speaking goes one step beyond imitative to cover any oral production that is designed to exercise some phonological or grammatical aspects of the target language. Intensive is a kind of speaking that gives importance to interaction among learners; thus, it takes part in both pair work and individual activities.

1.3.3. Responsive

Responsive speaking relies mainly on interaction. Nevertheless, it includes only short elements of conversation stretching from standard greetings and small talks to simple requests and comments. This kind of speaking helps learners to respond to the teacher's questions (as in the example) in a brief and comprehensible way but the conversation is still very meaningful and authentic. For example:

T: How are you today?

S: Fine, thanks, and you?

T: What is the main idea of the first paragraph of this text?

S: The United Nations should have more authority.

S1: So, what did you write on question number one?

S2: Well, I was not sure, so I left it blank. (Brown, 2000, p.273)

1.3.4. Interactive

The major distinction between the interactive speaking and the responsive one is in the length and the complexity of interaction, which frequently involves numerous exchanges and participants. More importantly, interaction comprises two forms. The first is transactional dialogue that is performed to transmit or exchange particular information or ideas. It is a derivative form of responsive language though; it has a more negotiable nature to reach agreement through discussion. It can take part of pair work activity. For example:

T: What is the main idea in this essay?

S: The united nation should have more authority.

T: More authority than what?

S: Than it does right now.

T: What do you mean?

S: Well, for example, the UN should have the power to force a country like Iraq to destroy its nuclear weapons.

T: You don't think the UN has that power now?

S: Obviously not. Iraq is still manufacturing nuclear bombs. (Brown, 2000, p.273-274)

The second form is interpersonal dialogues, which used for the sake of sustaining a social rapport. However, this kind of speaking is categorized to be a difficult task for learners to be part of because they include casual register, colloquial language, slang, ellipsis, sarcasm, and emotionally charged language, which are not easy to be used by learners.

1.3.5. Extensive (Monologue)

The last type is known as extensive oral production or monologue. In EFL classrooms, learners at intermediate to advanced levels are usually asked to present monologues in the form of oral presentations, short speeches, or even telling stories. This monologue can be planned or improvised. In addition, the language used in this form of speaking should be formal and deliberative. For example:

Amy: Hi Bob, how's going on?

Bob: Oh, so-so

Amy: Not a great weekend, huh?

Bob: Well, far bit from me to criticize, but I'm pretty miffed about last week.

Amy: What are talking about?

Bob: I think you know perfectly well what I'm talking about.

Amy: Oh, that...how come you get so bent out of shape over something like that?

Bob: Well, whose fault was it, huh?

Amy: Oh, wow, this is great, wonderful. Back to square one. For caring out loud, Bob, I thought we'd settled this before. Well, what more can I say. (Brown, 2000, p.274)

1.4. Components of Speaking Language

The following are the main characteristics of speaking skill that learners have to take into account in order to communicate correctly in English.

1.4.1. Fluency

The term "Fluency" frequently refers to the spontaneous use of language without any hesitation or misrepresentation in one's voice as Hedge (2000, p.54) claimed, "Fluency is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness, or undue hesitation."

Additionally, Thornbury (2005) highlighted that both speed and pausing are the key elements that determines fluency, yet the existence of frequent pauses in an utterance is an indication of the speaker's inability to speak and produce language effectively. For that reason, he proposed some 'tricks' or production strategies such as Pause Fillers; e.g. um, err, etc., Vagueness expressions; e.g. sort of, I mean, etc. and Repeats which is the repetition of one word when the formulation is paused. Lastly, fluency is regarded as the most demanding aspect of the speaking skill for most language learners.

1.4.2. Accuracy

The majority of EFL learners attempts to be fluent speakers and neglects the significance of accuracy in their oral production though accuracy is one of the essential language aspects that enables speakers to produce language correctly. Accordingly, accuracy refers to the speakers' ability of producing utterance without any mistake in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (Baker & Westrup, 2003). It is also associated with conveying meaning because if the speaker performs incorrect form of utterances each time, the hearer will not understand the speaker's

intentions as results s/he will lose interest about the conversation. For that, the speakers should pay attention when speaking to the correctness and completeness of their produced language.

1.4.3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary or what is also known as lexical knowledge refers to the amount of words learners know in the target language in order to produce language. It plays a vital role in successful communication because having huge amount of vocabularies will enable learners to communicate effectively and express their ideas properly. In this respect, Schmitt (2000, p.55) emphasized, “Lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language” (as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). Furthermore, Wilkins (1972) asserted that mastering the grammar rules alone does not help EFL learners to convey meaning or comprehend a passage in the target language. Therefore, he emphasized the necessity of exposure to the target language in order to develop the lexical knowledge (as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). For that, without mastering vocabulary sufficiently, learners will not be able to speak or to write properly in the target language.

1.4.4. Grammar

In general, Grammar is students’ ability to use the target language following its rules to distinguish between appropriate grammatical form and inappropriate ones. According to Harmer (2001), grammar is the ways words can be strung together and change to form sentences and express different in that language. Additionally, Luoma (2004) pointed out that learners develop their grammatical competence moving gradually from simple rules to complex ones and from making many errors to making few if any at all. Furthermore, she stated that learners’ proficiency progress can be tracked according to the grammatical structures they can realize correctly because it is easy to detect grammar in speech and writing.

1.5. Difficulties Affecting EFL Learners’ Speaking Skill Development

For the majority of EFL learners, mastering speaking skills is a priority. However, they may face several obstacles and difficulties such as fear of making mistakes, anxiety and interference of the mother tongue, etc. That may prevent them from developing their speaking skill as Ur (1996) confirmed that in EFL classes, students may face many problems in speaking freely. Therefore, many researchers have conducted studies investigating the reasons that hinder learners from practicing speaking and identifying difficulties that encounter their speaking performance.

1.5.1. Fear of Making Mistakes

The fear of making mistakes is viewed as one of the main factors behind EFL learners' unwillingness to speak or participate in their classes. Since, it is mostly related to the issue of being corrected or given negative feedback by the teacher on what learners' have produced as spoken language. For that, learners become afraid of the idea that they will make mistakes; as a result, they will receive a negative comment from the teacher and they prefer to be passive and avoid taking any risks to participate. Furthermore, this issue is linked to the peers' negative reaction on other learners' performance either by laughing at them, or by mocking them. In fact, this is considered as the primary reason of the fear of making mistakes because people worry about how other will see them; they do not like to look silly or foolish in front of their peers or classmates. As a result, learners commonly stop participating in the speaking activity, which prevent their oral performance development. Therefore, it is important for teachers to encourage their learners to take risks and speak. As well conceive them as learning a language; we should go through the process of making errors and mistakes (Juhana, 2012).

1.5.2. Anxiety

Another factor that can affect learners' oral development in EFL classes is anxiety. This latter is defined by Spielberger (1983) as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system" (as cited in Huang, 2012). Similarly, Scovel (1978, p.134) asserted anxiety is "associated with feelings of uneasiness frustration, self-doubt, apprehension or worry" (as cited in Brown, 2000, p.151). It means that the feeling of anxiety is intertwined with other feelings such as self-doubt and inhibition that might consciously or sub-consciously affect learners' participation and learning. Moreover, anxiety can influence the quality of oral language production and make individuals look less fluent than they really are. Therefore, teachers should make an attempt to create a learning atmosphere that offers for learners comfortable situations to feel less anxious and relaxed to speak and learn.

1.5.3. Lack of Motivation

According Songsiri (2007) Motivation is a key to students' learning success (as cited in Juhana, 2012). In other words, learners with high motivation are more willing to participate and interact in class with their teacher or one another. In contrast, learners with low motivation tend to be silent along the session and avoiding participate; thus, Nunan (1999) stated that motivation is a key

consideration is determining the preparedness of learners to communicate. The main reasons of lacking motivation in EFL classes are numerous. However, Gardner (1999) explained the main causes of the lack of motivation are uninspired teaching, boredom, lack of perceived relevance of materials, and lack of knowledge about the goals of the instructional program (cited in Juhana, 2012). For that, teachers should pay attention to the topics they choose and try to pick ones that fit their learners' interest in order to raise learners' motivation and encourage them to participate and to improve their speaking skill. In short, teachers should try to use new and modern activities and techniques to enhance learners' speaking ability.

1.5.4. Lack of Vocabulary

To be a fluent speaker means that one must have lots of vocabulary in that target language to communicate and to share knowledge effectively. However, the lack of vocabulary refers to the shortage of words and expressions that one may know or have in the target language. Hence, learners with poor vocabulary will not know how to express their ideas; as a result, they may face lots of difficulties in understanding and learning that language. In this respect, Baker and Westrup (2003) asserted that when the learner has few words to say about something and little knowledge about the subject matter, s/he cannot speak fluently and expresses his/her point of view. As a result, learners may start feeling uncomfortable and they may avoid participating in classroom activities that requires speaking and interacting with others.

1.5.5. Interference of the Mother Tongue

The use of the mother tongue is considered as one of the main issues that can affect the development of learners' oral communication competence. Usually in EFL classes, some learners share the same mother tongue, so they tend to use their first language (L1) rather than the target language (TL) either outside or inside the classroom. That is, learners feel more comfortable when using their L1 to communicate with their peers as Ur (1996) asserted "learners tend to use their L1 because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language, and because they feel 'exposed' if they are speaking their mother tongue" (p. 121).

However, according to Baker and Westrup (2003, p. 12), "Barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language." it means that, if EFL learners keep using their L1 either consciously or

unconsciously, they will be incapable to use the foreign language correctly in order to communicate.

1.6. Teaching the Speaking Skill

In teaching and learning a foreign language, speaking plays a vital part since it is the basic for communication. However, many studies proved that speaking skill is one of the most difficult and exhibited skill to learn mainly because of the numerous problems and difficulties learners experience in learning this skill, which results from the lack of practice and exposure to the TL as well its culture. For that, in what follows, we will discuss the various techniques for teaching speaking, teachers roles' in teaching speaking, main principles for teaching speaking, the major characteristics of successful speaking activity, as well some of the most common activities used by teachers of English to develop learners' speaking skill.

1.6.1. Techniques for Teaching Speaking

In the process of teaching and learning a foreign language, speaking skill is very important because through speech, learners' can communicate and exchange knowledge. Therefore, teachers try to use varies techniques to develop learners' speaking skill. In this respect, Nation and Newton (2009) mentioned their book "Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking" four fundamental and most used techniques, which are the 4/3/2, the best recording, ask and answer, and rehearsal talks techniques.

1.6.1.1. The 4/3/2 Technique

According to Nation and Newton (2009):

"In this technique learners work in pairs with one acting as the speaker and the other as listener. The speaker talks for four minutes on a topic while their partner listens. Then the pairs change with each speaker giving the same information to a new partner in three minutes, followed by a further change and a two-minute talk". (p.135)

It means that this technique focuses on the amount of learners' oral production. Besides, it involves the features that focus on the content of the message, quantity of production, learners' choice of the topic, and language used and repetition. Additionally, this technique deals with the ability to control time pressure to reach a high rate of production through the minimizing amount of time available for each delivery.

1.6.1.2. The Best Recording Technique

This second technique is very useful for fluency activity. It requires authentic materials such as a tape, digital recorder or the language laboratory, which learners will use to record themselves talking about a previous experience, telling a story, or describing a picture and many other things using the target language. As soon as they finish, learners will have to re-listen to the recording trying to focus on any development could be made. This will make learners keep repeating the same process until they feel satisfied with their performance. In other words, this technique is quality-based technique that is based on the repetition process to encourage learners to make an effort and improve their fluency.

1.6.1.3. The Ask and Answer Technique

According to Simcock (1993) The “ask and answer” technique is a follow-up activity to a reading task (as cited in Nation & Newton, 2009). In this technique, learners are asked to read carefully a text handed by the teacher until reach a high level of comprehension. Then, work in pairs with one learner to practice the act of questioning using the teacher’s prepared list of questions about the passage. The main goal of this technique is to prepare learners to know how to ask and answer questions fluently in front of their peers as well as an opportunity to develop their oral skills.

1.6.1.4. Rehearsed Talks

In rehearsed talks, learners should use the pyramid procedure. That is, first learners try to prepare a talk individually at home then rehearsing it with a partner and afterward practicing it in with a small group. Finally, they have to present it in front of the whole class. This technique will help learners to develop their oral performance and overcome some speaking problems such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes.

1.6.2. Teachers’ Roles in Teaching Speaking Skill

In order to, learners learn effectively and improve their speaking capacities in the target language, teacher are required to play various roles during speaking activities to boost their learners’ motivation and create an effective and safe learning environment. These roles generally change according to the type of activity and the lesson’s nature to urge their learners to participate and practice their English (Harmer, 2001). Therefore, Harmer (2001) in his book distinguished

various teachers' roles according to their main objective in the session. What follows is a brief description of the most common teachers' roles in teaching speaking skill.

1.6.2.1. Prompter

During classroom activities, learners may sometimes find themselves lost: They are unable to think of what to say next or to proceed productively. This is mainly due to the lack of vocabulary. In such a situation, the teacher should be very careful and not leave his/her learners struggling alone; instead, s/he should encourage them to think creatively and to be independent. Furthermore, at this stage teacher as prompter should offer his/her learners with some words and phrases such as "Well, ask him why he says that" (Harmer, 2001, p.109) or suggestions without hampering the activity or interrupting the discussion in a way to help learners improve and make progress.

1.6.2.2. Participant

In speaking activities such as debates and discussions, teachers can act as participants and take part in these tasks because their participation will help learners to be more engaged in the activity and create an enjoyable and interesting atmosphere. In other words, the teachers will covertly try to prompt their learners to keep the activity go along through introducing new information and ideas.

However, teachers have to be careful not to participate too much for the sake of not dominating the speaking and drawing all the attention to themselves because the main objective of this kind of activities is to give learners more chances to speak and practice their language.

1.6.2.3. Feedback Provider

After finishing a classroom activity, teachers should provide their learners' with feedback about both the content of the activity and the language used so that learners can assess themselves and develop their performance in coming times. However, teachers' should be careful and aware of when and how to give feedback and correct their learners' mistakes because over-correction and wrong timing may hamper their participation and affect their language learning progress.

1.6.3. Principles of Teaching Speaking

In teaching the speaking skill, teachers should be aware of the teaching speaking principles to teach English well. In this respect, Westwood, Peter, and Oliver (1979, p.57) stated that the principles are as follow (as cited in Muliaty, 2011, p.13):

- Create an enjoyable, entertaining social learning situation, which gives pleasure to the students. Teacher personality is a vital vector
- Ensure active participation remembering that it is what a student practices saying, not what he hears, that improves communicating ability.
- Have clearly defined, short term goals for each sessions: teaching a certain adjective, adverb, or conjunction: ‘and’ and ‘but’.
- Use material such as practices and games to hold attention as the basis for language simulation.
- Use pleasure and praise as reinforces.

Similarly, Brown (2007, p. 268-270) claimed that there are seven major principles that teacher should also take into consideration to teaching the speaking skill, and they are

- Focus on both fluency and accuracy, depending on your objective.
- Provide intrinsically motivating techniques.
- Encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.
- Provide appropriate feedback and correction.
- Capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening.
- Give students opportunities to initiate oral communication.
- Communication Encourage the development of speaking strategies

1.6.4. Characteristics of Successful Speaking Activity

According to Ur (1996, p.120) a speaking activity must involve a four major features to be categorized as a successful activity. These features are as follows:

- **The learners talk a lot:** As much as possible of the period allotted to the activity is in fact occupied by learners’ talk. It may seem obvious, but often most time is taken up with teacher talk or pauses.
- **Participation is even:** Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants: all get a chance to speak, and contributions are fairly evenly distributed.
- **Motivation is high:** Learners are eager to speak: because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective.

- **Language is of an acceptable level:** Learners express themselves in relevant utterances and easily comprehensible to each other, of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

1.6.5. Activities Used to Develop EFL Learners' Speaking Skill

1.6.5.1. Oral Presentations

Oral presentation is among the commonly used activities in EFL classes. In this activity either the teacher assigns a specific topic or gives the freedom to his/her learners to choose the topic that fits their interest then prepare and present it orally in the classroom. Therefore, oral presentation is a learner-centered activity that offers an opportunity for EFL learners to practice the TL in order to develop their oral performance. However, learners generally qualify it as a hard and challenging task to do because they will be asked to stand in front of the class and present the prepared work, which will create uncomfortable environment for them. As result of this, learners will not be able to produce their ideas and share knowledge the way they should. Additionally, this type of activity gives much importance to the oral presentation rather than the real conversation that should be between the learners and their peers or teacher. Usually the only interaction that occurs in this kind of activity is between the learner, who is presenting the work, and the teacher after the presentation either to give remarks or ask questions (Wilson & Brooks, 2014).

1.6.5.2. Role Plays

Role plays are type of group work activities that urge learners' imagination and creativity to create real-life situations to teach the speaking skill. In other words, this kind of activity involves learners' acting different roles in the classroom either followed by the teacher instruction or the learners are free to perform any topic they want. Underhill (1987) declared, "The learner is asked to take on a particular role and to imagine himself in that role in a particular situation" (p.51).

Furthermore, role-playing is considered to be an effective method that teachers can rely on in their classes to encourage learners to use the TL and to interaction with one another that would eventually help them enhance their speaking skill (Ur, 1996).

However, Harmer (2001, p116) stated, "working with a partner can be noisy and makes students switch to L1." It means that besides its benefits in helping learners enhancing their speaking skill adopting such activity always might cause conflicts or tensions between group members,

especially if the size of the group is large, i.e., it will create inappropriate environment for learning and it will waste time. As result, learners will not be able to develop their speaking skill.

1.6.5.3. Listening activities

According to Littlewood (1981), another type of activities, teachers use to help learners develop their speaking skill are the listening activities. In these type of activities, the teacher tries first to select some authentic material. Then let the learners listen to the selected audios or records for three to four times to well comprehend the content of conversation. After that, the teacher starts to explain the audios and facilitate complex words or expressions. Afterwards, based on these records teachers try to build further activities such as short answer question, drawing, filling the gap, and multiple-choice tasks in which leaners will work either individually or in pairs.

In this respect, Ur (1996) stated that these kind activities are very effective and beneficial to foster leaners' listening skill rather speaking skill. Because, they only provide learners' with vocabulary, which is one of the speaking aspects neglect the other aspects: fluency, accuracy, and grammar. Additionally, they do not offer for learners the opportunity to practice their TL or interact with one another, which are crucial elements to teach and develop leaners' speaking skill to become good language communicators.

1.6.5.4. Classroom discussion

Another commonly used activity in EFL classes to enhance learners' speaking skill is classroom discussions. This latter is defined by Gall and Gall (1976) as a method in which a group of persons are gathered and they are divided into two categories the first it include one as moderator-leader who is responsible to lead the discussion and the second include the rest as participants to communicate interactively using speaking and listening processes to achieve instructional objectives (as cited in Gall & Gall,1993) . In others words, in this kind of tasks, learners will form one group in which they will discuss, negotiate and exchange information about an appointed topic either chosen by the teacher or proposed by the learners. In this respect, Ur (1996) claimed that the purpose behind implementing classroom discussions in EFL classes is to increase learners' talking time and decrease the inhibition of learners who are afraid to speak. As result, many scholars assert that classroom discussion is an effective method especially that it offers opportunities for learners to practice their speaking.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we attempted to present a general overview of speaking skill, which is considered as the most difficult among the others skills. Initially, we provided different definitions of speaking skill and highlighted its importance and significance in the process of learning a foreign. Furthermore, we shed light on the components and types of speaking. Then, we introduced the various techniques for teaching speaking. After that, we displayed the different teachers' roles in EFL classes, principles of teaching speaking, and characteristics of successful speaking activity. Besides, we introduced the classroom activities and techniques used by the teachers to develop the speaking skill. Finally, we highlighted the different obstacles and difficulties that prevent students from benefiting the most of their speaking sessions, and improve their oral production.

Chapter Two:

Socratic Seminar Technique

Introduction

For learners to become good language communicators, teachers are required to choose and select teaching techniques that offer them an environment that increase their exposure to the target language as well foster their application in the most suitable and effective conditions that can incorporate in the hindrance of the difficulties that impede their speaking skill development. Therefore, in this chapter, we will try to shed the light and introduce the Socratic Seminar Technique. Initially, we will provide a historical overview of this technique then a thorough and complete definition as well as its characteristics to distinguish it from other classroom discussion used to develop learners' speaking. Besides, we will display the seminar's elements and its process/procedures. Furthermore, we will highlight teachers' role in the Socratic Seminar. Finally, we will concluded with its cons and pros in addition to a clarification of how this technique can develop learners' speaking skill.

2.1. Historical Overview of the Socratic Seminars

Socratic Seminars originates with the teaching method of Socrates, a great Athenian philosopher and moral teacher who lived around 470 B.C. Socrates was famous for attending gatherings and engaging in conversations whose goal was to define and simplify broad concepts like beauty, virtue, and justice through discussing their deep meaning, ambiguities and complexities (Delić and Bećirović, 2016). Socrates's philosophy of inquiry, which appeared 2400 years ago when Socrates entered into a deep conversation with young men of Athens. Usually begins by highlighting a subject-idea, statement or an argument of his day then moving to asking deep questions to arouse their critical thinking to help them probe the fundamentals of life because he worked under the belief that "the unexamined life is not worth living" (Ball & Brewer, 2000, p.2). In other words, he tried to inspire people to attentively embrace and understand the essence of living an examined life by encouraging them to think deeply about themselves through examining their ideas, believes, and thoughts searching for answers and interpretations to attain a deep and full understanding of life and self (Ball & Brewer, 2000).

In this respect, Delić and Bećirović (2016) stated that the Socratic seminar is named for the implementation of the Socrates' belief in the power of asking questions, prize of inquiry over information, and discussion over debate. To urge learners use their prior knowledge to construct new ones as well motivate them to speak their minds and thoughts. In fact, as Strong (1996, p. 5)

claimed the term “Socratic seminar” appears to have first been coined in 1937 by Scott Buchanan in his work with the St. John’s College New Program (as cited in Copeland, 2005, p. 8), and the notion has continued with organizations such as The Center for Socratic Practice, the Touchstones Project, Junior Great Books, the National Paideia Center, and the Coalition of Essential Schools (Copeland, 2005).

Over time, the Socratic seminar’s technique has been explored throughout history and appeared first in the United States as a part of Mortimer Adler’s Paideia Proposal school reform in 1980’s. Then, it has been adopted by many educators in their classes such as Dennis Gray, Lesley Lambright, Margaret Metzger and many other educators who believed in the power and the effectiveness of Socratic seminar technique (Copeland, 2005).

2.2. Socratic Seminars Definition

Socratic Seminars (also known as Socratic circles) is viewed as one of the most predominant methods of teaching especially in modern education. It came into the surface with Mortimer Adler in 1982 in his book *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto*, in which he referred to as Paideia Seminar. Adler (1982) asserted that Socratic seminar is an active and engaging mode of teaching that is based on questioning/probing what has been studied and shifting partially the classroom direction and control to learners to make them more motivated and involved in the learning process. That is because Socratic circles offer a type of real world learning that is more meaningful and applicable to their lives and futures.

Similarly, Ball and Brewer (2000) pointed out Socratic seminars “is a teaching technique that returns the ownership for learning to students as they explore the text in hand, use textual evidence to back up their opinions, challenge each other’s ideas and views, and, most importantly find, articulate, and develop “their voices” (p.3). As Eudora (1983) stated that giving learners more chances to be responsible for their learning and leading the discussion to explore the reading would certainly help them, gain self-confidence and self-worth as they share their ideas and thoughts with each other. Also, help them improve their skills in comprehension, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and critical thinking to deliver their ideas effectively.

According to Billings and Roberts (2013), claimed Socratic seminar “is a formal discussion based on the text in which the leader asks only the open-ended questions. Students are required to

read and study the text carefully, listen closely to the comments of others, think critically for themselves, and articulate clearly and coherently both their own thoughts and responses to the thoughts of others” (p.41). In other words, Socratic seminar is an active quest dialogue that is built upon a foundation of the following elements: a text that has been chosen carefully and learners who are divided into participants and one leader. Open-ended questions about the text that participants should prepare prior to seminar to lead the discussion and enlarging the meanings expressed in the text to go beyond the literal meaning. Lastly, a teacher acting as a facilitator, guider, and a co-learner (Copeland, 2005).

In conjunction to this, Moeller and Moeller (2013) defined “Socratic seminar as a process that begins with a problem (a prepared interpretative question), continues as a process of asking spontaneous follow-up questions, and results in a product of increased understanding and enjoyment” (p.17). It means that, Socratic seminar is an exciting and collaborative dialogue in which learners use open-ended and thought-provoking questions that they have prepared carefully at home to ask during the seminar as a natural part of the discussion to have an extended and thoughtful dialogue in which they explore the text and build a deep and full understanding of the author’s meanings and concepts.

To summarize, the Socratic seminar technique is an in-class discussion led by learners to explore and discuss the seminar text in terms of values, ideas, and issues, etc. through raising high-level open-ended questions to reach a full and mutual understanding. Moreover, this technique is an exciting and effective teaching strategy that can be adopted in various ways and adjusted to fit any classrooms from elementary to the university level.

2.2.1. Characteristic of Socratic Seminars

According to Dougherty, Billings, and Terry (2016, p. 40) Socratic seminar has five prominent characteristics, and they are as follow:

- Collaborative: Participants cooperate intellectually rather than compete, building on each other’s thoughts to construct more sophisticated understandings of the ideas under discussion.
- Intellectual: Participants address ideas and values, not factual information and so struggle with the ambiguity presented by challenging concepts.

- Democratic: Participants engage by sharing their thoughts through both statements and questions, and everyone's response has equal weight.
- Open-ended: The teacher guides the seminar by asking questions that have multiple "right" answers, thereby evoking a wide variety of responses from a wide variety of participants.
- Text-driven: The seminar is anchored by a text, which is a human artifact that embodies the curricular ideas and values chosen by the teacher.

2.2.2. Difference between Socratic Seminar and Traditional Classroom Discussions

According to Ball and Brewer (2000) and Copeland (2005), Socratic dialogue and traditional discussion are quietly different. Mainly, in traditional discussion, learners rely much on the teachers to direct the discussion and provide correct answers to the questions raised as Johnson (2003) stated "most discussion tend to operate like a bicycle wheel, in which the teacher is a hub and every comment comes from the teacher before another student speaks" (p.33). In other words, teacher takes the whole control of the class discussion acting as rescuer, who is spoon-feeding the knowledge to his/her, learners Copeland (2005). As a result, learners' role in class diminishes and they remain silent and passive, which prevents their speaking skill development.

However, in Socratic seminar, the primary goal is to foster students-to-students interaction to become active and more engaged in the learning process as well as to help them develop their speaking skill. Thus, it shifts the ownership of talk and learning to learners to thoroughly explore the piece of reading through raising questions, challenging each other's view (Billings & Roberts, 2013), and providing textual evidence to back up their answers to reach a full and mutual understanding within the group. In this case, teachers here are passive observers who act and intervene to guide them as Ball and Brewer (2000) claimed, "The teachers' real 'power to empower' is 'silence'" (p.27).

For more clarifications, Ball and Brewer (2000) listed the major differences in a table as follows:

Socratic Seminar	Classroom Discussion
Students and teacher are in a circle. All have eye contact; teacher is on the same level.	Students are often in rows. Teacher is set apart and often higher on a stool or behind a podium.
97% student talk; students know teacher won't comment.	97% teacher talk, even if many questions are asked. Teacher elaborates and answers.
Average response for students is 8-12 seconds.	Average response for students is 8-12 seconds.

No verbal or nonverbal approval is present. Affirming feedback by the teacher is taboo.	Teacher affirmation of correctness is typical. Sustaining feedback for incorrectness is expected.
Thinking, backed up with textual evidence, is paramount. Open-ended exploration, not rightness, is valued.	Rightness is usually paramount; thinking ends as soon as someone is right.
Students listen primarily to peers.	Students listen primarily to the teacher, who has the answer.
Students have ownership for most of the flow.	Teachers have ownership for most of the flow.
Students are held accountable for contributions based upon criteria that have been agreed upon.	Students see discussion as a frill, a nebulous, negligible “participation grade.” If you miss class, you didn’t miss much.

Table 2.1. Differences between Socratic Seminar and Class Discussion (Ball & Brewer, 2000, p.11)

2.2.3. Difference between Socratic Seminars and Debates

According to Copeland (2005), one of the main misconceptions learners fall into concerning the Socratic dialogue that it is a form of classroom debate. This latter is a form of discussion that allows learners to express their ideas in a competitive way. In addition, the aim here is that both groups must prove the strength of their position to win the argument because during the debate, they are divided into two opposite groups (Shan, 2005). This might trigger conflicts and tension among learners and they become afraid of making mistakes; thus, they will prefer to remain silent, which would affect their leaning, engagement, and speaking skill development. On the other hand, the Socratic seminar is a form of discussion in which learners work cooperatively to build a common understanding that serves equally all the members of the group; thus, there is no room for the concept of “winning an argument” which is the essence of debates (Copeland, 2005). To create a safe and risk-free setting for learners to learn appropriately, speak their voices, and get rid of any hindrance that could affect their speaking skill development.

2.3. Elements of Socratic Seminar

According to Fisher, Coleman, and Neuhauser (2005), the successfulness of Socratic seminar depends upon a foundation of the four following components: (1) the seminar text, (2) seminar questions, (3) the seminar leader and (4) the seminar participants.

2.3.1. Seminar Text

The seminar text is a fundamental component in the Socratic practice because the whole classroom conversation will be built upon it as claimed by Strong (1996, p. 40), “Text serves as a basis for a disciplined and thoughtful discussion” (as cited in Copeland, 2005, p.31). Thus, it is the teacher’s duty to carefully select and prepare for his/her learners a text, which is rich in terms of ideas, issues, and values as well as it has the ability to induce thoughtful conversation and inquiry (Canady & Rettig, 2000). In addition, Ball and Brewer (2000) pointed out that it is important to choose a text that creates a sense of discovery, mystery and ambiguity to attract learners’ attention to quest it in a deeper way to sustain a fruitful and thoughtful discussion. Besides, they mentioned that the teacher could pick his/ her text from any field such as philosophy, literature, sciences, current events or even other sources as films, songs and poems. Nevertheless, s/he should take into consideration the text selected has to fit the course objectives and expectations in order not to add more work for learners (Ball & Brewer, 2000). Instead, it should help them better their understanding about the subject matter. In this respect, Copeland (2005) added that seminar text should also suits learners' interests to urge their communication during the seminar to motivate them read deeply and gain lexical and topical knowledge to use as a backup during the seminar. Hence, Socratic’s text is viewed as “a springboard for discussion” that should be selected wisely and carefully by teachers.

2.3.2. Seminar Leader

In seminars, learners are divided into two categories participants and one leader who plays a dual role as leader and participant, and it is the teacher’s responsibility to choose from different seminar participants the leader of the seminar (Socratic seminar guidelines, n.d.).The seminar leader is responsible for leading the seminar and guiding the other participants to have fruitful discussion. Thus, s/he has to read the text carefully and prepare high level probing questions to use them to explore the text’s different ideas during the seminar. As well, s/he is responsible for helping and encouraging participants to clarify their positions when arguments become confused using follow up questions (Socratic seminar guidelines, n.d.). Lastly, s/he should know how to manage and maintain the group talk to avoid any dominance and guarantee that by the end of the seminar all the participants (even reluctant and shy ones) have participated in the talk and expressed their ideas and thoughts about the discussed topic (Canady & Rettig, 2000).

2.3.3. Seminar Participants

Seminar participants are also an essential element in the Socratic dialogue; they carry the burden of responsibility for the success of the seminar because they share the responsibility of leading the discussion with the leader (Canady & Rettig, 2000). However, they cannot participate in the discussion unless they have carefully prepared themselves for it; i.e., they have carefully read the text and annotated it as well as they have prepared high level questions to expand and probe the author's ideas (Socratic seminar guidelines, n.d.). Additionally, they are required to create an encouraging and inquisitive learning environment which is free from any judgment and scoffs to encourage and urge other learners speak their voices, ask questions confidently, and discuss their ideas and values that are totally related to the text to ultimately reach a mutual and deep understanding (Canady & Rettig, 2000).

2.3.4. Seminar Questions

Socrates' philosophy is based on the act of questioning because according to him if we consider everything human beings know today is because people are curious by nature and if there is something that sparked their interest they would formulate and ask series of questions to learn more about it and comprehend it. In fact, if they do the opposite and stop questioning, they will close all the sources of knowledge and open the door for ignorance (Vogt, Brown, and Isaacs, 2003). Thus, in classes where Socratic seminar is adopted, teachers or seminar leaders use the act of questioning along the discussion not to seek "a right answer" but rather to stimulate the participants' mind to think and explore into both conscious and unconscious assumptions to open up the space for new possibilities and thinking to occur as well as to help them express and reveal themselves easily and creatively (Vogt et al., 2003).

However, it is important to know that not all kinds of questions would help achieve a deep and well elaborated understating. That is why, the kind of questions used in Socratic circles are high-level cognitive questions. These latters are defined by Brualdi (1998, p. 3) as "questions that requires students to use higher order thinking or reasoning skills" because he believes that these skills are what enable learners not only to remember factual knowledge but also to use their knowledge to problem solve, to analyze, and to evaluate the text's ideas and issues. Additionally, this type of inquisitive and interpretative questions makes learners engage in the learning process not only academically but also emotionally. This encourages them to become more deliberate and cognizant as they articulate their own thoughts (Robinson, 2017).

2.4. Teacher's Role in the Socratic Seminar

In the Socratic seminar, the teacher's role appears to be pivotal. Nevertheless, it is related to its significance in helping learners learn effectively. Initially, since the seminar text is crucial to the success of the seminar teachers' most important role is selecting a text that is insightful, thought provoking, and relevant to the lives of students to encourage them to read and explore it. Additionally, the teacher act as a facilitator who guides learners to stay on the track and move the discussion forward using the follow-up questions whenever s/he feels that students drift off-topic of the discussion or that the comments of one student need to be clarified or repeated for the group's understanding. As Tredway (1995) stated the teacher's role in this type of seminar is to "guide students to a deeper and clarified consideration of the ideas of the text, a respect for varying points of view, and adherence to and respect for the seminar process"(p. 28). Besides, one of the teacher roles is to act sometimes as a participant or co-learner to highlight a missing idea or provide new insights that s/he believes learners need to grow their knowledge. Moreover, the teacher also can acts as an observer to guarantee that the seminar leader is doing his/her job and s/he is giving equal opportunities for the seminar participants to participate and speak their minds (Fisher et al., 2005; Canady & Rettig, 2000).

2.5. Stages of Socratic Seminar

To hold a successful Socratic seminar in the classroom and to reach fruitful and thoughtful dialogue in the end, teachers and learners should have a full understanding of the practice and be highly aware of the seminar's three stages process that are pre-seminar, the discussion itself (seminar), and post-seminar (Billings & Roberts, 2013).

2.5.1. Pre-Seminar (Preparation)

Pre-seminar is the preparation stage in which teacher first select a text carefully then submit it to his/her learners so as to read it thoroughly and write questions to be well prepared for the in-class dialogue.

2.5.1.1. Reading the Seminar Text

Reading is among the fundamental linguistic skills that have a significant position in individuals' intellectual life especially that perception, meaning construction, information retrieval. And, the reuse of the obtained information in communication is heavily reliant upon reading activities (Akın, Koray and Tavukçu, 2014). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the

approach that learners generally use to read the handed texts is quite superficial because they only go through the text, running their eyes to extract particular information, which allows them to absorb only the raw materials of factual information as quickly as possible, neglecting lots of details and issues in the text (Wheeler, 2004). In other words, it does not offer them the opportunity to go beyond the text's level and understand the real truth behind the authors' words to build an accurate personal understanding.

This latter is viewed as one of the main principles of the Socratic seminar because learners while reading the seminar text they should be active readers; i.e., they should read between lines and be more engaged with the text and writer as well to reach deep meanings of the writer's concepts, values, and issues. To help them reflect and ask questions using their personal experiences and prior knowledge as a basis to be well prepared for the seminar (Copeland, 2005).

Thus, teachers emphasize the importance of the "critical reading" approach, which is defined as an active process that helps learners analyze, interpret and well comprehend the piece of reading. In addition, it involves critical thinking, which allows learners to evaluate the ideas and information in the text because after breaking the text up into logical subdivisions and analyze each section alone, to fully understand (Wheeler, 2004). It comes the part when the reader has to expand upon or question the findings considering his/her prior knowledge to decide what to accept and reject. To be well prepared for the seminar and more successful at creating a thoughtful discussion (Wheeler, 2004).

According to Nasrollahi, Krishnasamy and Noor (2015), critical reading is the source that enables EFL learners fully comprehend and understand the seminar text and be well prepared for the discussion. Nevertheless, to reach this goal they have to follow some critical reading techniques, which are going to facilitate the process and help them developing their critical reading abilities. The most commonly used techniques are text annotations, and text-to-reader connections.

For learners to become active readers and be well prepared for the in-class dialogue, they should learn to read between the lines, and they must learn to write between the lines to understand and effectively interact with the seminar text (Adler & Van Doren, 1972). Reading actively is a mental process that requires much energy, work, and effort to deep into and fully understand the piece of writing. Moreover, text annotating is what makes that mental process more visible because it documents the thinking that has occurred as Porter-O'Donnel (2004) claimed, "it helps readers

reach a deeper level of engagement and promotes active reading while making a visible record of the thoughts that emerge.”(p.82). In other words, marking a text is an efficient reading method that teachers should teach to his/her learners to help them get more engaged with the text to comprehend the author's concepts deep meaning. In this respect, Adler and Van Doren (1972) have presented various methods (Figure 1) that learners can use as a starter to annotate his/her texts until they get familiar with the technique and develop a method that works best for him/her (as cited in Canady & Rettig, 1996).

1. Make notations in the margins as you react to passages that are unique or noteworthy.
2. Place a question mark (?) in the margin if you don't understand what the passage means
3. Put an exclamation mark (!) in the margin to indicate something surprising or unusual.
4. Consider using these symbols:
 - * To emphasize a statement already underlined or to denote recurring idea.
 - + or ✓ to indicate something you want to remember.
5. Use sticky note for marking major ideas, for cross-referencing ideas, or for easy access to specific pages in the text (suggestions: use a variety of colors for different purposes).
6. A smiling face, 😊, shows that you agree or like an idea.
7. A frowning face, ☹, shows disagreement or dislike.
8. Circle key words or phrases.
9. Underline and highlight vocabulary words you don't know. Jot down a brief definition in the margin, especially if the word is critical to your understanding of the passage.

Figure 2.1. How to Mark a Book (Canady & Rettig, 1996, p.38-39)

According to Akyol (2005) Güneş (2013), and Arıcı (2008) reading is a meaning-making process that consist of physical and mental processes carried out in a regular environment where prior knowledge is used to construct an effective communication between author and reader to understand and comprehend well the text (as cited in Kırkkılıç, Başar, & Söylemez, 2018). In other words, the process of reading does not only depend on a physical act of annotating the text. Instead, it also includes a mental process of making connections with learners' personal knowledge, experiences, and previous read texts to offer a better opportunity for some profound thinking to germinate the ideas and information to deepen the comprehension and increase long-term memory to facilitate the process of retrieving the absorbed information later in the dialogue (Ball& Brewer, 2000). For that, Tovani (2000) presented three main reading connections that learners can

throughout interact with what they are currently reading and they are: the Text to self (T-S), text to world (T-W) and text to text (T-T) connections (Figure 2).

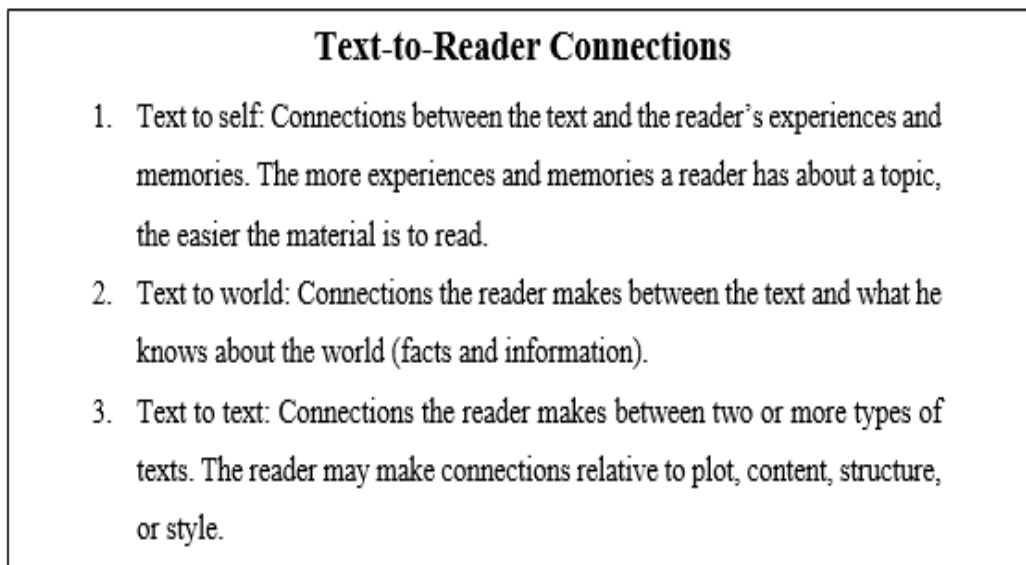


Figure 2.2. Text-To-Reader Connections (Tovani, 2000, p. 69)

2.5.1.2. Writing Seminar Questions

After reading the seminar text thoroughly and carefully, it is time for learners being a leader or participant and teachers as facilitator to write high order and thought-provoking questions to be well prepared and lead the in-class dialogue. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this step is one of the most challenging steps in the preparation phase for learners because it is usually the teacher's role to ask questions not theirs. Thus, teachers are required to design a session before the first seminar to explain to their learners the right process to write and formulate well-crafted questions.

The process generally begins with learners' careful reading of the text, then highlighting and listing all ideas and issues that should be explored later on in a rich and thorough discussion and lastly translating the prepared list into a series of questions to germinate a discussion of most of the ideas (Ball & Brewer, 2000). The type of questions prepared should be high level cognitive questions in order to encourage the participants to process and critically think about the productive use of information presented in the text in-hand in order to come to their own conclusions and use it during the group discussion to reach a new, deep and well-shaped mutual understanding of the subject matter (Hunkins, 1989).

According to Ball and Brewer (2000) and Dougherty et al., (2016), in the endeavor of writing the seminar series questions, teachers and learners may construct questions in any order they like;

but when it comes to the delivery, they should follow a clear sequential order which is “opening, core and closing questions” and follow up questions whenever it is necessary. In other words, Socratic discussion has three essential types of questions in addition to follow up question, and they are explained in details as follows:

- **Opening Question**

It is the first question raised during the seminar, and it denotes that the discussion has started. Usually, it is either asked by the seminar leader or the teacher in case the leader is not well prepared. To prepare an effective and powerful opening question, it should meet several criteria. First, the opening question should not be a “yes” or “no”, factual, single-answer, or finite responses questions, but rather an open-ended to explore/enlarge ideas and issues presented in the text. Second, it should be broad, compelling, and provocative to instantly engage participants’ minds in the discussion, stimulate their thinking, and send their eyes directly to the text. Third, the language used should be simple to suit learners' basic level of understanding and enable all of them to answer the question. Lastly, it should be value-free; i.e., it should not contain any judgment words.

- **Core Questions**

After exploring thoroughly the opening question, the turn comes to raising and exploring a series of questions named “core questions”. These questions are asked either by the seminar leader or by the participants. Usually, they are between three to eight cores depending on the length and the complexity of the piece of writing. Core questions focus more on the text’s finite issues and ideas; thus, they require learners’ high order thinking to fully understand the writer’s words and reach his/her intentions behind them. In addition, these questions may begin or end with “how” or “why”, which requires learners during the discussion to concentrate on one main point until they discuss and examine it in-depth then move to another point. The quality of core questions directly determines how much and how deeply the text is explored and to what extent the teacher lesson objectives are covered in the seminar. Furthermore, these questions are viewed as powerful chances to increase and maximize learners’ ownership of the talk, which would help them practice more their language to develop their oral skills.

- **Closing Questions**

The closing question signifies the end of the seminar, and it is either asked by the seminar leader or the teacher. Generally, this type of question is raised to connect the text’s ideas and issues to learners’ personal lives and experiences. In writing closing questions, seminar leader should keep

several considerations in his/her mind such as unlike the opening and core questions that focus on textual understanding and the implications, the closing questions clearly asserts learners to keep the seminar text as a self-reference. In addition, s/he should ensure that the closing question is applicable to all learners so that all of them have equal chances to participate and express their own thoughts freely. Finally, it is preferable to prepare two closing questions to keep one as a backup in case the first fails to trigger learners to reflect the content of the text on their lives or the world, which is the sole purpose of this closing question.

- **Follow-up Questions**

These types of questions are either asked by the teacher or the seminar leader. Generally, follow-up questions are asked in parallel with the cores to thoroughly explore specific text content because sometimes learners may fail to answer effectively the raised question or the answer they offer is unsatisfactory or unclear; i.e., it needs a further exploration.

In other words, follow-up questions are questions used to stimulate participants' thinking in order to push and prod them to activate their prior knowledge to clarify and defend their answers/positions and construct a well-developed and intriguing ideas and thoughts to share within the group. In addition, it is to ensure that during the seminar, learners extend the talk to cover the text's various perspectives, and thus, guarantee the success of the seminar.

2.5.2. The Seminar (The Discussion)

Before starting the discussion, teachers first will have to arrange learners in a form of circle because the success of Socratic seminar is also attributed to the classroom arrangement it provides in contrast to the one in traditional in-class discussion (Ball & Brewer, 2000). In fact, sitting in straight rows facing the teacher will not be a conducive environment to an open, free-flowing dialogue. That is mainly due that the eye contact is only made with the teacher who is dominating the talk; i.e., fostering a teacher-centered class that would largely diminish the learners' talk and easily affect their engagement and learning (Queen, 2003). However, in Socratic seminar learners sit in a circle facing their peers making eye contact with one another because this is essential to make learners feel that they are all equal, which would increase and foster their self-esteem and confidence. As a result, they become more comfortable and more likely to take risks in sharing their ideas to lead the discussion using the act of questioning to reach a better and mutual understanding. Thus, this technique is qualified as an exciting and effective learner-centered

teaching strategy that increases equally learners' learning, engagement and interaction (Copeland, 2005; Queen 2003).

In Socratic seminar, there are four types of layouts but the most commonly used ones are Inner/Outer Circle (Fishbowl) and One Large Circle. These two are explained in details in the following paragraphs. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the teacher have to determine which layout s/he will opt for prior to the seminar to assign who is going to be a participant or coach.

- **Inner/Outer Circle or Fishbowl**

It is a form of classroom arrangement that teachers opt for when the group size is more than 30 learners. It divides learners into two concentric circles with two or three empty chairs known as hot seats. In the inner circle, learners engage in a thoughtful dialogue in which they try to explore and enlarge the ideas, thoughts, and perspectives presented in the text through asking and answering peers' questions and using textual and personal evidence to support their points of view. Learners in the outer circle, however, act as observers who are responsible for observing the inner circle's performance to offer them a constructive criticism rather than judgments and at the same time jotting down notes on the seminar process and new understandings about the text as a part of the debriefing process (Socratic seminar guidelines, n.d.). Concerning the hot seats, they are designed in case one of the learners in the outer circle wants to join the conversation because s/he has something to say. So, s/he moves quietly from the outer row to the hot seat, where s/he becomes recognized as a fully functioning member of the inner circle. Once s/he finishes the talk/intervention, s/he vacates the seat and moves back to his/her original place to leave the chance for others to participate. Besides, in order to guarantee that all learners participate, engage in the task and offer them equal chances to practice their language and speak, the teacher- after spending part of the seminar with half of the learners acting as participants in the inner circle and the rest as observers in the outer circle- usually asks them through the leader of the seminar, who is responsible for leading the discussion, to switch places and swap the roles (Ball & brewer, 2000; Copeland, 2005).

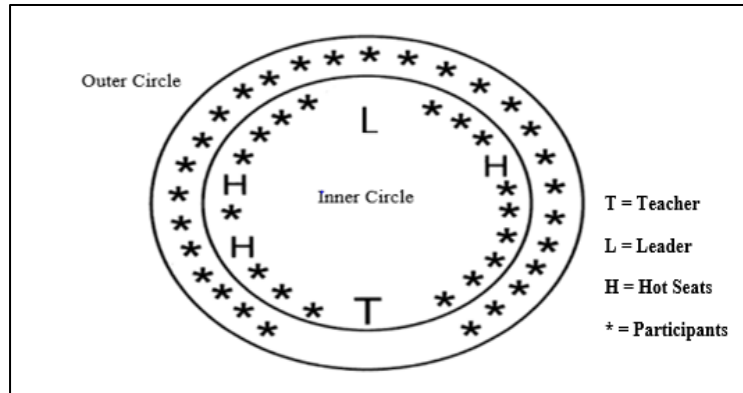


Figure 2.3. Inner/ Outer Circle or Fishbowl (Ball & Brewer, 2000, p.23)

- **One Large Circle**

In this arrangement, learners are asked to move their desks to form one large circle, in which all of them play the role of the participants; i.e., all of them have the right to speak and share their ideas, points of view with one another. Even the seminar leader and the facilitator (teacher) will join them and sit in the circle at the same level as the participants to illustrate the concept of equalization of roles in the seminar to create a safe and non-threatening environment where learners can practice their language freely without any fear of being judged by their peers or teacher. Besides, the leader and teacher are essential to guide learners if they strayed from the text and help them lead and move the conversation forward by asking some follow-up questions to ensure the success of the seminar. This kind of layout is more applicable in averaged sized classes because applying it in larger ones may create overcrowding; thus, impeding the progress of the mutual inquiry (Canady & Rettig, 1996; Socratic seminar guidelines, n.d.).

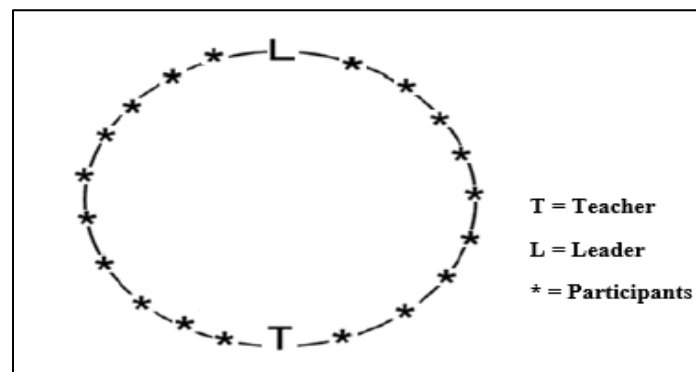


Figure 2.4. One Large Seminar Circle (Canady & Rettig, 1996, p.32)

The seminar dialogue often begins when the teacher is sure that all learners are prepared to participate and be part of the seminar; i.e., they have read the seminar text and carefully annotated

it as well as they have prepared series of high level open-ended questions to lead the discussion. In addition, confirming that the physical environment and the emotional climate are well established to offer for learners a motivating and non-threatening environment to have a successful and fruitful discussion. Thus, the teacher as a facilitator or the seminar leader should first review the discussion norms with his/her learners before each seminar to guarantee its success (Enright, 2011). Some of these norms are:

- Listen and look at each other when you speak.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Respond to the person who asks the question.
- Use evidence from the text to support yourself.
- Be courageous in presenting your own thoughts and reasoning, but be flexible and willing to change your mind in the face of new and compelling evidence.
- Always treat each other with mutual respect.
- Use sensitivity to take turns and not interrupt others.

After that the teacher can finally announce the launch of the discussion and give the seminar leader the green light to ask the opening question, which directly leads learners to go back to the text to analyze and evaluate text's initial and least complicated ideas to lure that all participants into the discussion Dougherty et al., (2016). Then, the leader moves to ask cores questions to stimulate participants critical thinking to delve deeply into the text to explore and analyze its various ideas from different perspectives. After that, s/he shifts smoothly the talk to the other participants because cores questions give the rest of participants the opportunity to speak their voices as they contribute to answer/ask questions that are either prepared or spontaneous, cite evidence from the text, add insight or new knowledge to discuss their point of view in regards to the opening question, and react to peers interventions and interpretations' (Socratic seminar, n.d.). Also, when they use follow-up questions to clarify things or help one another to deliver their thoughts effectively. The teacher here, as facilitator, can intervene in the discussion to guide students to go back on track if they strayed from the topic of discussion or if they missed to consider or tackle essential ideas in the text using also follow-up questions; i.e., teacher questions are always sparingly and deliberately (Socratic seminar, n.d.)

Usually, learners at this point become more engaged and motivated to move the discussion bringing forward all what they know to create and make connections between the subject matter and their prior knowledge, personal experiences and the world they are living in (Suhardiana, 2019). Yet, it also signifies the end of the seminar because when learners start to relate and apply the topic to their own lives or the world they live in. It means that the closing questions are raised and they have to work collaboratively to summarize and combine the main ideas and concepts examined during the discussion to reach a mutual and deep understanding of the text (Copeland, 2005; Dougherty et al., 2016; Candy & Rettig, 2000). Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the length of this seminar dialogue varies depending on the text used for the discussion as well as how well seminar participants are competent and well prepared to lead and move the discussion forward. Nevertheless, generally the discussion lasts from 50 to 60 minutes (Awada & Ghazi, 2018).

2.5.3. Post-Seminar

Post-seminar is defined as the phase in which the teacher gives time for his/her learners to reflect on the knowledge and understanding they reached within the whole group discussion, and of equal weight assess their participation and contribution during the seminar (Dougherty et al., 2016). Thus, teachers try to create and design some follow-up assignments and activities that enable learners to further process and reflect all thoughts that took place during the seminar not only in their individual minds but also at their fingertips for future reference (Copeland, 2005).

According to Copeland (2005) the most significant follow-up activities that teachers highly use and advise others to use are:

- **Reflective Writing**

It is viewed as the easiest follow-up activity because learners are free to write in their journals and keep comments and notes they appreciate about their or other learners' participation. After that, they will try to reflect on those ideas and make connections with their prior knowledge in a written form. To help them by the end of the session reach opinions and insights that may not have been incorporated into the dialogue itself as well as suggesting places where their entries might be expanded and their ideas made clearer. Most importantly, it will help them see their growth and the power of Socratic circles in enhancing their learning. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that reflective writing can be done in a number of ways that might vary depending on teachers, classes, formats, and time constraints.

- **Creating Thesis Statements**

In this activity, teachers ask their learners to compose thesis statements for each of the dialogues they engage in based on the content they will discuss. So, usually they take all the concepts, ideas, and lessons that have been explored during the seminar and try to write them down into a concise sentence, including some personal ideas from what they have generalize and summarize in the discussion. The objective of this writing assignment is to give learners more opportunities to practice writing thesis statements, which would overtime and after several Socratic circles, help them develop their writing skills in English to move from being able to write only short sentences to write a well-crafted paragraphs and essays.

Briefly, post-seminar is an essential phase that learners should go through after having a thorough discussion exploring multiple points of view, ideas, and interpretations of the seminar text because it gives them another chance to enhance the overall quality of their growth and learning.

2.6. Advantages and Disadvantages of Socratic Seminars

Alike any teaching technique, Socratic seminar has numerous strengths and some weaknesses. Therefore, we opt to demonstrate both to know how to utilize Socratic seminar's strength and deal with its weaknesses.

2.6.1. Advantages of Socratic Seminar

According to Lammendola (2009), Socrates method has several advantages (as cited in Hardini, 2019), namely:

- Socratic seminar guides learners to be able to think rationally and scientifically through stimulating their critical thinking in the process of analyzing and probing the seminar text to deeper and wider their comprehending.
- It strengthen learners' interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate effectively with others by providing them with a huge amount of topical and lexical knowledge.
- It forces a higher level of class preparation because being well-prepared (reading the text critically and preparing high-level questions) will help learners to go beyond the literal meaning of the text and consider broader implications to have an extended and thoughtful dialogue.

- It establishes a supportive environment that appreciates learners' multiple and divergent points of view, ideas, and thoughts to foster their self-confidence as speakers and let even shy and non-participating learners want to speak their voices and question the case under discussion.
- It fosters an active inquiry-learning environment by shifting the ownership of conversation to learners and making them responsible for the quality of the discussion and the ideas explored to make learners more engaged in the learning process.
- It offers an interactive, interesting, and risk-free learning environment through teaching learners to accept each other's opposing points of view with more logic and reasoning rather than judgment. That is, to maximize learners' participation as well as to motivate and encourage them to express their opinions and thoughts freely to develop their speaking skill.

2.6.2. Disadvantages of Socratic Seminar

Despite the advantages Socratic seminar offers, it still represents some challenges and disadvantages, and they are as follows:

- According to Lammendola (2009), implementing Socratic seminars in EFL classes is more time-consuming than the lecture-based environment. In such activities, the majority of learners show lots of eagerness and willingness to participate and express their voices which leads the dialogue to move forward and examine other ideas, as a result, drifting too far from the topic and wasting too much time, which would oblige the teacher to postpone the dialogue to another session to complete it (cited in Hardini, 2019).
- For Canady and Rettig (2000) one of the main challenges and disadvantages of the Socratic seminar is that some learners may come to the seminar not prepared or not well prepared mainly because learners' learning styles differ and not the majority of them prefer to read. In other words, it is difficult to get the majority of students to prepare adequately prior to the seminar and this would affect the quality of the discussion, thus, Johnson (2003) asserted the importance of including and designing pre-seminar activities in class to ensure that all learners are well prepared and ready to participate in the seminar.
- According to Copeland (2005), Socratic seminar can cause uneven chances to speak because some learners tend to be over-zealous speakers and monopolize the conversation at the expense of shy and introvert ones, who prefer to remain silent. As a result, this inhibits their oral skill improvement.

- According to Lammendola (2009), When adopting the Socratic seminar technique in the classroom, teachers should take into consideration that the group size should not exceed the 25 learners. The reason is that having large groups will diminish other learners' opportunities to participate; i.e., diminish their talk time (cited in Hardini, 2019).

2.7. Socratic Seminars to Develop EFL Learners' Speaking Skill

Speaking is one of the vital skill that EFL learners aim to master because the success in learning any foreign language is highly combined to the success within the conversation using this target language (Ur, 1996). However, learners still face plenty of problems and difficulties while learning it. This is mainly due to the shortage of opportunities to interact and practice the language in our context, which creates a state of inhibition and discomfort whenever they are asked or they want to speak. Hence, the Socratic seminar is implemented as an alternative technique to offer learners an environment with the suitable conditions in addition to its advantages to hinder all the problems and difficulties to enable them develop their speaking skill through a meaningful and effective classroom practice.

First, Socratic seminar provides learners with the necessary lexical and topical knowledge to reinforce their semantic repertoire in order to be able to convey the meaning fully in English when speaking without the need to code switching; i.e., use of the mother tongue or any other language learners master to effectively express themselves without hesitation and to prevent any kind of cliché scenarios of “I don't know” or “I have nothing to say” (Baker & Westrup, 2003; Harmer, 2001). In fact, reading the seminar text carefully and doing further research about the topic help learners to absorb and learn consciously and unconsciously huge amount of vocabulary about the subject matter that enables them during the seminar to speak spontaneously and even come up with unexpected ideas and thoughts as part of their natural talk through making connections with their prior knowledge.

Second, it decreases learners' fear of making mistakes through its (1) enquiry nature that does not give importance to answering questions in right or wrong way- eliminate teachers' negative feedback, (2) collaborative nature that teaches learners that all contributions, even the ones that appear tangential or erroneous on the surface, can help the group develop their ideas and move toward their discovery of meaning (Copeland, 2005) to encourage them to participate and feel more relaxed to speak among the group. Since, the fear is resulted either from the negative feedback teachers' provide them with when they fail to answer and perform correctly or peers'

negative reaction on their performance either by laughing at them or mocking them (Juhana, 2012), which ultimately make them stop participating; thus affecting their oral performance development. In other words, Socratic seminar empowers students' self-confidence and self-esteem because they treat them as people with valuable ideas worth listening to. As a result, students' enthusiasm arises and they become more likely to take risks to share their opinions and speak their mind freely without being afraid or anxious and of equal weight practice their language in a meaningful way to develop their oral communication competence.

Lastly, creating a less anxious environment through the Socratic seminar classroom arrangement "the circle layout" would emphasize the eye contact between all learners to make them feel that they are equal; i.e., there is no high authority to facilitate interaction between the participants that is essential to develop speaking skill and listening skill. Since, speaking skill involves speaking includes the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding to comprehend, understand, and interpret their utterance to produce language. In addition, the most important is that Socratic seminar shifts the ownership of the talk to learners to form learner-centered classroom where learners speak 97% of class time. Thus, this will diminish the teacher's talk; s/he can intervene only to guide his/her learners, which give learners plenty of chances to express their thought and develop their oral performance as well (Ball & Brewer, 2000).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we attempted to provide a general overview about the Socratic seminar technique. First, we provided a historical overview of this technique, definitions as well as its characteristics to distinguish it from other classroom activities used to develop learners' speaking. Furthermore, we displayed the elements of the Socratic Seminar. In addition, we highlighted teachers' role in Socratic Seminar. Then, we presented its stages and its advantages/disadvantages. Finally, we discuss how the Socratic Seminar Technique can help improve EFL learners' speaking skill.

Chapter Three

Field Work and Data Analysis

Introduction

The current chapter will deal with the fieldwork and the analysis of the collected data. Initially, this chapter will attempt to provide a clear description of the research approach, population and sampling as well as the data collection tools (semi-structured questionnaire and classroom observation) used to gather the necessary data to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. Moreover, it will present the analysis and the interpretation of the gathered data. Finally, this chapter will provide a synthesis of the findings and the conclusion in an attempt to confirm or reject the research hypothesis.

3.1. Review of Research Methodology

3.1.1. Research Approach

The present study aims to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar Technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. It also seeks to elicit learners' attitudes and reactions towards being taught using this technique. Therefore, the research approach adopted to carry out this study is the qualitative research approach because it serves the nature of this research. Furthermore, it offers the appropriate data collection methods, which are a semi-structured questionnaire and classroom observation to answer the research questions and achieve the aims of our work.

3.1.2. Population and Sampling

The sample of this study was first year LMD learners (Group 4) of English at MKU of Biskra. The purpose of choosing first year learners is because they are fresh comers and they are not familiar with the university atmosphere. In addition, they are not used to speak or express themselves fully using the target language; i.e., the majority of learners have an intermediate level of English, which can make them face plenty of difficulties that may unable them form communicating accurately and fluently using the English language and of equal weight prevent them from developing their speaking skill.

The selection of group 4 as representative to our work from the whole population was based on the teacher's collaboration and acceptances to help the researcher accomplish her research work. The whole population of first year LMD consists of 336 learners divided into 10 groups of 33-36 learners in each. The sample we have chosen encompasses of 29 learners, but not all of them attended.

3.1.3. Data Collection Methods

The nature of the research study is what dictates on the researcher what research approach and data collection methods s/he should use. Thus, in order to fulfill this research work, a semi-structured questionnaire and a classroom observation were used as data collection tools because they are the most appropriate and suitable to the nature of our research work.

3.1.3.1. Learners' Questionnaire

a. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the most commonly used methods to collect information about a specific phenomenon in order to detect the respondents' perceptions, opinions and attitudes. Besides, this method is supposed to be a workable data collection method because the respondents have enough time to provide us with efficient and organized answers. In addition, it can be gathered quickly from a large number of respondents at once and at a low cost. Therefore, for the sake of accomplishing the present study, we opted for a semi-structured questionnaire.

b. Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to obtain data about the subject under investigation. Initially, it investigates the importance of speaking skill and the major difficulties that EFL learners face when communicating using their target language. More importantly, the questionnaire is basically designed to know the respondents' opinions and perceptions about the role of Socratic Seminar Technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill.

c. Structure and Content of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire includes three sections that in turn include a number of questions. Since this questionnaire is semi-structured, the questions are a combination of both close-ended questions and open-ended questions. The first type of questions targets to collect short and direct answers using yes/no questions, multiple choice, and check-boxes whereas the second type of questions is used to collect longer answers and to obtain more details about the present issue through justifying their answers and setting the reasons behind them. The questionnaire (see appendix A) was designed as follows:

Section One: Background information

The first section of this questionnaire contains two questions aiming to collect general information about the respondents such as learners' gender and their reasons behind choosing to study English language as a branch at university.

Section Two: Speaking Skill

The second section includes nine questions that focus on learners' perceptions of the speaking skill so as to estimate the degree of speaking skill importance to learn a foreign language. More importantly, the aim is to elicit the speaking level of the learners and detect the major difficulties learners generally encounter while learning speaking. Besides, the questionnaire seeks to identify learners' opinions about the importance of classroom interaction and participation to improve their speaking performance.

Section Three: Learners' Attitudes towards Socratic Seminar Technique

This section consists of ten questions that are devoted to probe the learners' perceptions of the Socratic Seminar Technique through asking them about its major elements and principles and how they influenced their learning process. Furthermore, the aim is to explore to what extent Socratic Seminar Technique was an effective to improve their speaking skill.

d. Administration of the Questionnaire

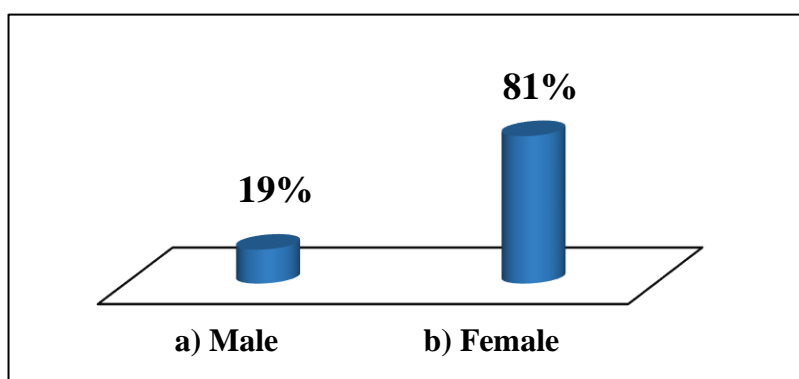
The questionnaire was distributed online to first year LMD students (Group 4) of English at MKU of Biskra. It took a google form and it was posted on their Facebook group 'First year group 04'. The questionnaire was delivered on March 16th, 2020 and we received the intended number of answers on April 18th, 2020. However, it is worth noting that some learners had sent private messages to our account and asked us to clarify and explain some questions. Unfortunately, we received only 16 replies because we could not have access to all learners we worked with since the university was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

e. Analysis of Learners' Responses**Section One: Background Information**

Item1. Would you specify your gender, please?

Table 3.2. Learners' Gender Distribution

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Male	3	19%
b) Female	13	81%
Total	16	100%

**Figure 3.5. Learners' Gender Distribution**

The table (3.1) demonstrates the distribution of gender in our sample. As the table displays, the questioned participants represent more females (81%) than males (19%), which indicates that studying English as a foreign language is preferred by females rather than males who generally prefer to study other branches especially scientific ones.

Item2. Why do you study English for (purpose)?

Table 3.3. Learners' Reasons behind Choosing to Learn English at University

Option	Number	Percentage
a) For an Academic Reasons	6	37.5%
b) For a Communicative Reasons	6	37.5%
c) Others	4	25%
Total	16	100%

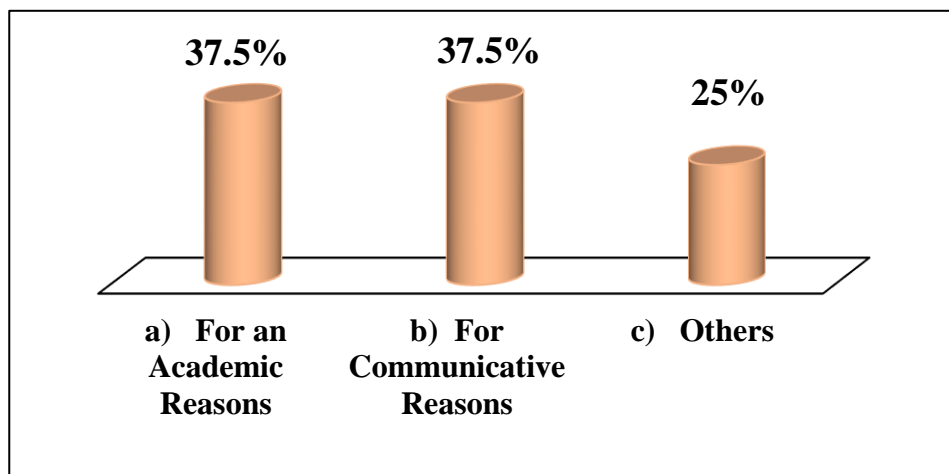


Figure 3.6. Learners' Reasons behind Choosing to Learn English at University

This question aimed to determine the respondents' reasons behind choosing to study English language as a branch of study. As shown in figure 3.1, the highest percentage is 37.5% and it is given for both first and second choice because six of the respondents consider that the main reason behind learning English is to get an academic diploma; i.e., they need it to get a job. However, the other six participants responded that the purpose behind choosing English is to communicate freely either with their mates or foreign people. Finally, the remaining four learners who represent the lowest percentage 25% chose other reasons where they all agree on the fact that they have chosen to learn English simply because they love the English language and they want to learn more about it. Also, that they want to become English language teachers.

Section Two: Learners' Perception about Speaking Skill

Item3. Do you agree that in order to learn a language, you have to speak it?

Table 4.3. Learners' Opinions about Speaking English and Its Relation with the Learning Process

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	16	100%
b) No	0	0%
Total	16	100%

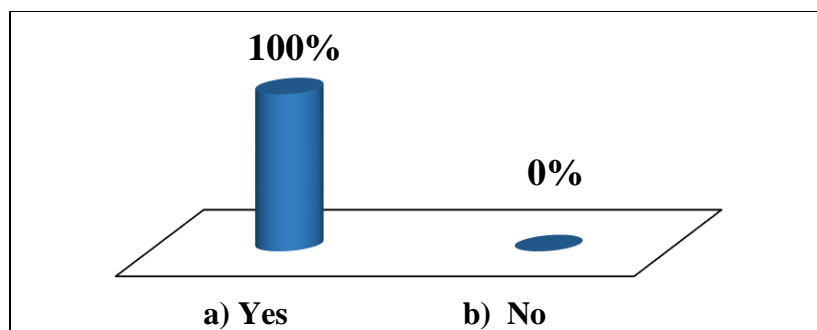


Figure 7.3. Learners' Opinions about Speaking English and Its Relation with the Learning Process

From the above table, we have noticed that the majority of our sample has agreed that speaking is an essential skill in learning the English as 100% of respondents answered with “yes”; i.e., they all agreed that no one can learn a language without speaking it.

Item4. How do you evaluate your level in speaking?

Table 3.5. Learners' Evaluation of Their level in English language

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Poor- I definitely need some help	2	12.5%
b) Ok (average)- but I know I could improve	6	37.5%
c) Good- I could improve more with some advanced tips	8	50%
d) Excellent- I do not think I could improve much	0	0%
Total	16	100%

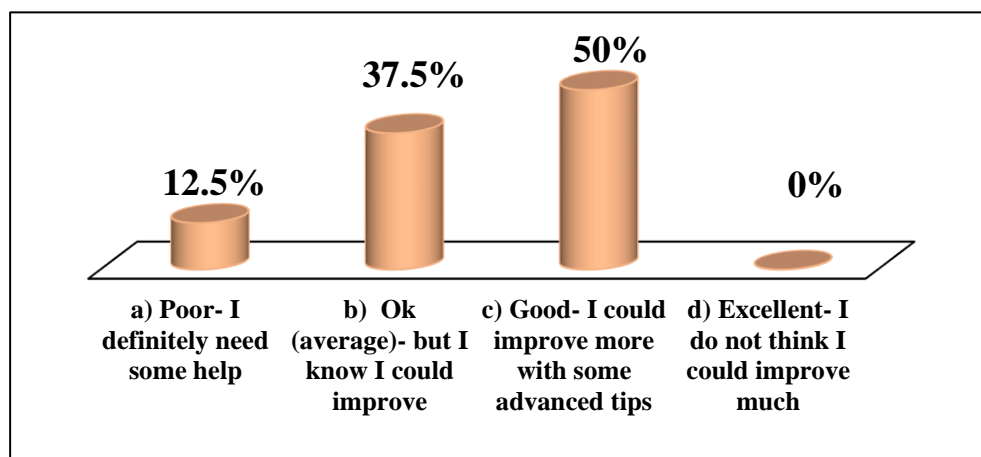


Figure 3.8. Learners' Evaluation of their Level in English Language

This question aimed to elicit the respondents' level in speaking. As we notice in the table (3.4.), learners who represent 50% from the sample declared that their level in speaking skill is good

whereas six learners with a percentage of 37.5% stated that their level is ok (average). Additionally, two learners who represent 12.5% of the sample believe that their level in English is poor. However, no learner stated that his/her level is excellent, which means that the majority of learners do not consider themselves as ideal speakers.

Item5. Do you think that Oral Expression course is?

Table 3.6. Learners' Opinion about the Oral Expression Course

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Very interesting	11	69%
b) Interesting	4	25%
c) Less interesting	1	6%
d) Uninteresting	0	0%
Total	16	100%

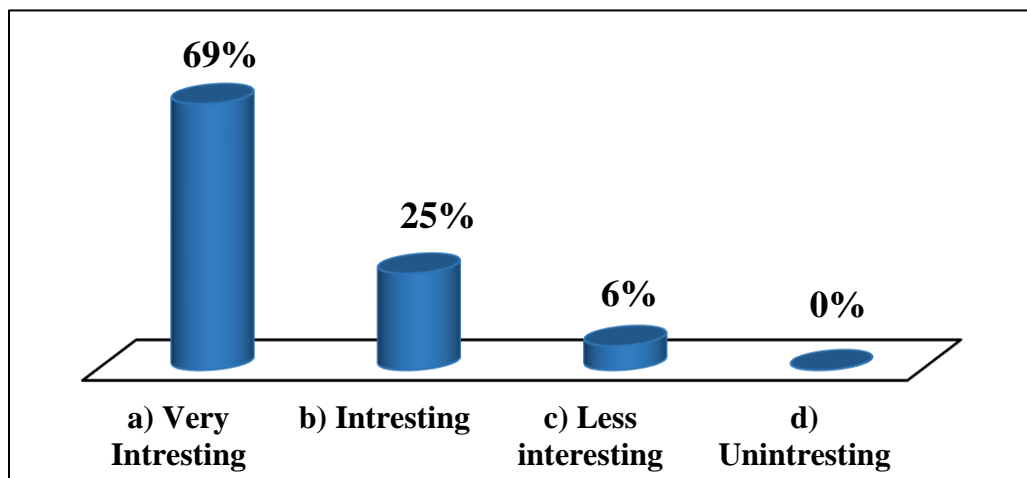


Figure 3.9. Learners' Opinion about the Oral Expression Course

This question sought to identify the respondents' opinions about the oral expression course. As we notice in the figure (3.3.), 69% of respondents consider the session very interesting. Additionally, 25% of them claimed that it is interesting while only 6% of the respondents claimed that it is less interesting. Finally, none of the respondents stated that it is an uninteresting session.

- **Whatever your answer, please explain?**

This sub-question aimed to know the justification behind the participants' answers. However, it is important to mention that fifteen participants gave their opinions about the statement whereas only one learner left the answer blank. As observed, the majority of the learners' claimed that in

the oral expression session, they can have more opportunities to speak (i.e. practice their English) and develop their English.

Item6. How often do you participate in oral sessions?

Table 3.7. Frequency of Learners' Participation in Oral Expression Classes

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Always	1	6%
b) Often	7	44%
c) Sometimes	8	50%
d) Never	0	0%
Total	16	100%

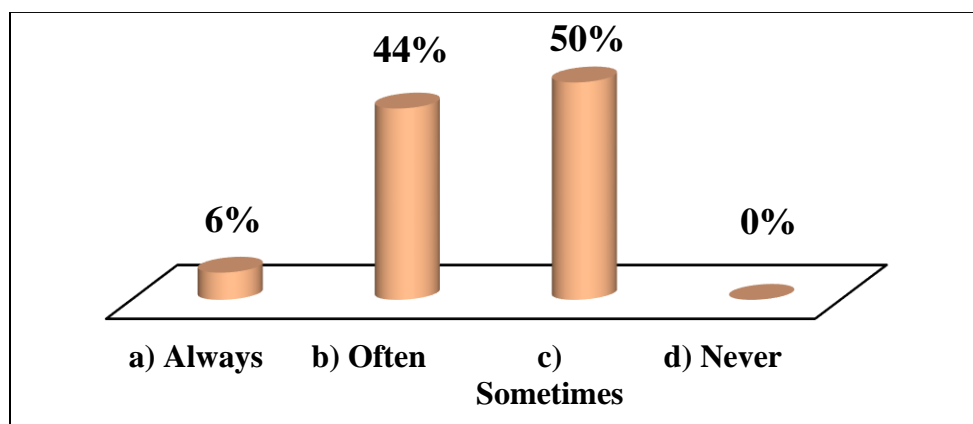


Figure 3.10. Frequency of Learners' Participation in Oral Expression Classes

This question aimed to know how much learners participate in class in order to identify both their motivation to speak and the opportunities they are given to practice their English. As it is shown in the table (3.6.), seven participants who represent 44% stated that they frequently participate because they are active learners and love to participate. While, the majority of the learners who represent the highest percentage 50% claimed that they sometimes participate in the classroom; i.e., only when it is necessary to participate. Nevertheless, only one participant (6%) stated that s/he always participates in class.

Item7. Do you face difficulties when speaking?

Table 3.8. Learners' Responses about Having any Difficulties When Speaking

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	13	81%
b) No	3	19%
Total	16	100%

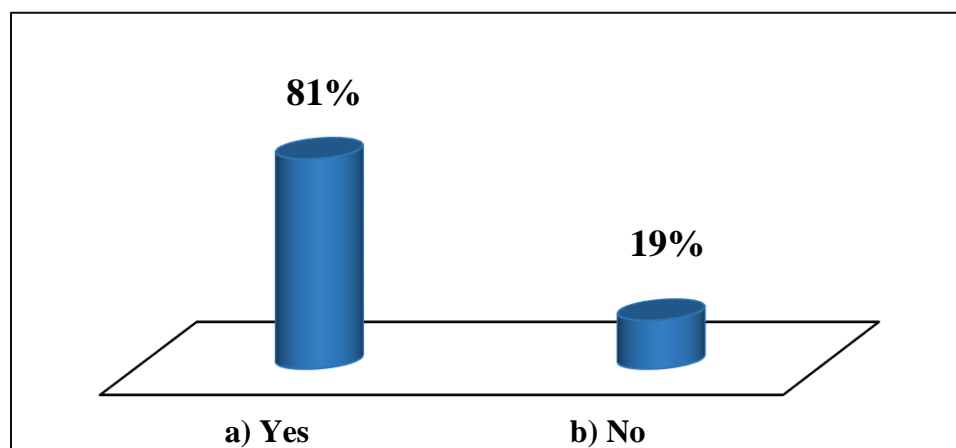


Figure 3.11. Learners' Responses about Having any Difficulties When Speaking

The aforementioned table (3.7) shows that the highest percentage 81% of respondents confessed that they do face difficulties when they speak English whereas the rest of respondents, representing 19% of the sample, claimed that they face no problems in oral tasks.

- If "yes", what kind of difficulties?

Table 3.9. Learners' Difficulties When Speaking in English

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Lack of vocabulary	2	13%
b) Lack of grammar mastery	0	0%
c) Anxiety / Shyness	1	6%
d) Fear of making mistakes	4	25%
e) Lack of motivation	0	0%
f) Interference of the mother tongue	1	6%
More than one choice	8	50%
Total	16	100%

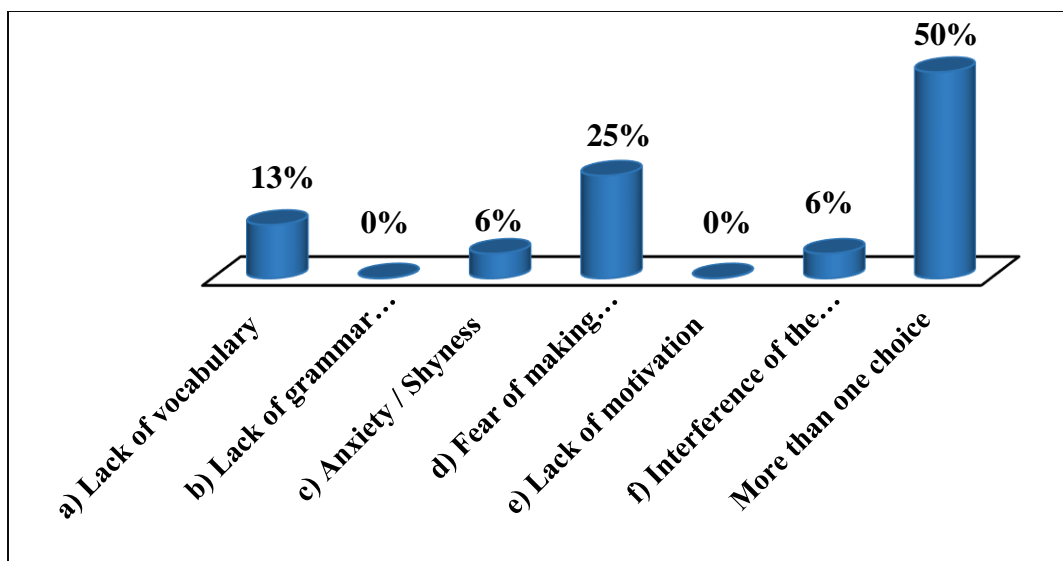


Figure 3.12. Learners' Difficulties When Speaking in English

This sub-question aimed to identify the major difficulties learners encounter in speaking English. As it is clearly observed in figure (3.5.), it is highly remarkable that half of the participants (50%) have chosen more than one choice. This means that the major difficulties respondents generally face while speaking are a mixture of all these problems. Nevertheless, the most common difficulties were the lack of vocabulary, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes. Additionally, four of the respondents who represent 25% of our sample stated that the major difficulty they do face while speaking is the fear of making mistakes whereas only two learners (13%) claimed that they face only one difficulty, which is a lack of vocabulary. In addition, only one learner (6%) stated that his/her major difficulty is anxiety, as well as for the interference of the mother tongue. Moreover, according to the table (3.8.) it is well observed that no one has chosen a Lack of grammar mastery and Lack of motivation, which means that they are not widely spread among learners.

We assume that the majority of these difficulties can prevent learners from engaging in conversations to practice their language and become more fluent and accurate speakers. Indeed, having poor vocabulary knowledge can easily affect learners' self-confidence and make them not willing to take any risks to participate because they are afraid of committing mistakes and receiving negative feedback, judgment, and comments from the teacher and peers. As a result, they become incapable to speak or express themselves during oral sessions.

Item8. Do you learn speaking better when?

Table 3.10. Learners' Responses about When They Learn Speaking Better

Option	Number	Percentage
a) The teacher talks the most	0	0%
b) The teacher lets you talk	3	19%
c) The teacher and you both join together in the talk	13	81%
Total	16	100%

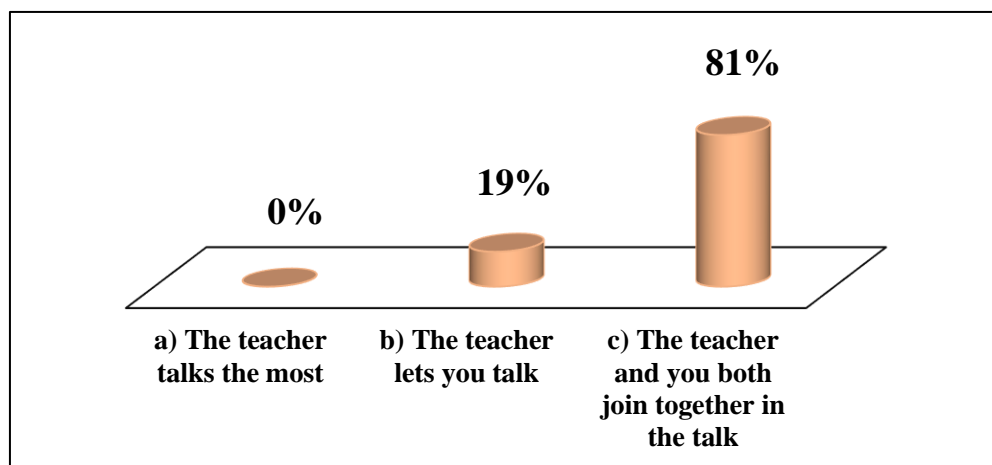


Figure 3.13. Learners' Responses about When They Learn Speaking Better

This question aimed to determine the learners' perceptions of the most suitable way to teach them how to speak. As it is shown on the table (3.9.), the majority of the participants who represent 81% asserted that they can learn to speak better when the teacher and the learners join together in the talk. Nevertheless, the rest of the participants (19%) stated that they speak better when the teacher lets them speak. However, no respondent (0%) think that they can learn to speak when the teacher dominates the talk.

Item9. Which of these speaking activities is the most used in your class?

Table 3.11. The Speaking Activities Most Used by Oral Expression Teachers

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Role plays	2	13%
b) Oral presentations	1	6%
c) Listening Activities	8	50%
d) Classroom Discussions	5	31%
Total	16	100%

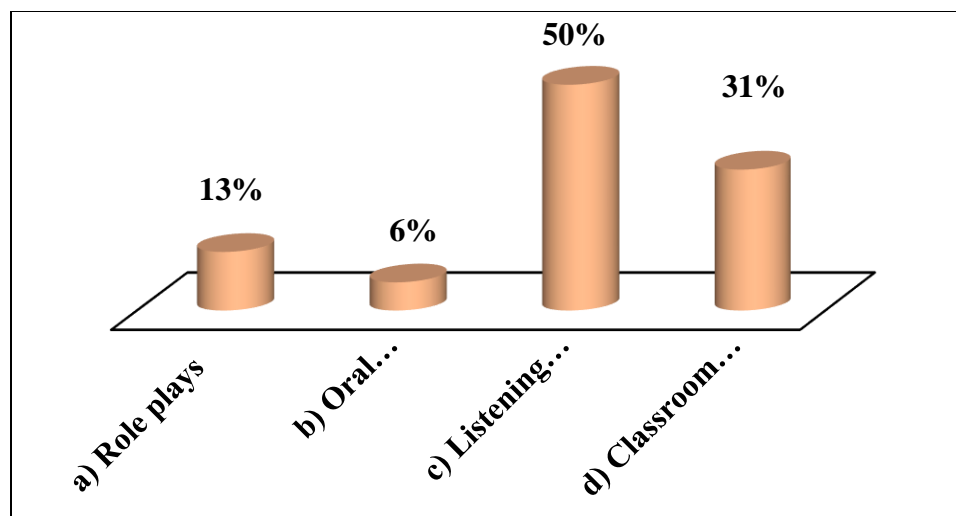


Figure 3.14. The Speaking Activities Most Used by Oral Expression Teachers

This question sought to identify the most carried out oral activity in the classroom by EFL teachers to develop their learners' speaking skill. As the figure (3.7) indicates, listening task is the prominent activity with 50% of total responses. Then, it comes classroom discussions with 31% of total responses and 13% for role-plays. Finally, oral presentations with 6% as the least frequent implemented activity by EFL teachers.

Item10. Which one the previous mentioned activities do you prefer most? Please justify.

The aim behind this question is to identify the speaking activity that respondents prefer to practice and develop their English in oral expression classes. The majority of respondents (10 learners) have chosen classroom discussion, justifying that it is a motivating activity that provides them with more chances to speak their voices without being afraid of teachers' comments and judgment. In addition, throughout classroom discussion, they can interact with one another, which gives them the opportunity to see the topic from different angles and develop their knowledge. On the other hand, only three respondents selected role plays, claiming that it looks like a creative game where they have to use their imagination and that they feel more comfortable when they act and pretend to be someone else because their peers will not focus on their oral proficiency but rather on to what extent they were good actors. Moreover, only two learners opted for oral presentations stating that it is a hard activity, yet it is the best way to develop oral performance and public speaking skill because they will have to stand in front of their peers to share their different ideas about a certain topic. Finally, only one respondent selected listening activities, declaring that this activity can foster his/her listening abilities, which are essential to develop his/her,

speaking considering that to speak well, a learner needs to imitate what s/he hears. Hence, we can presume that the majority of the learners prefer to learn and develop their speaking skill through classroom discussion because it enables them to practice their TL, interact with their peers, and work collaboratively, which are essential elements to become good language communicators.

Item11. Do you think that participating/interacting with peers in class is essential to improve your speaking skill?

Table 3.12. Classroom Interaction/ Participation effectiveness

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	16	100%
b) No	0	0%
Total	16	100%

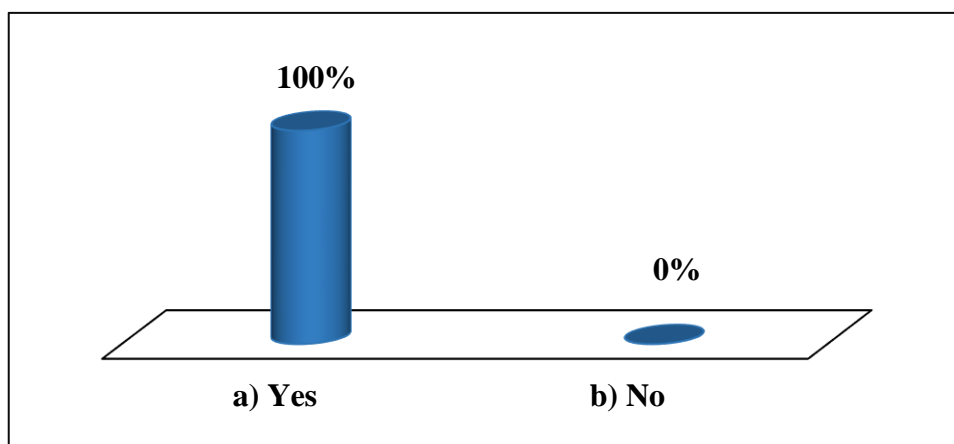


Figure 3.15. Classroom Interaction/ Participation effectiveness

This question aimed to obtain learners' opinions about whether being involved (i.e., participation) in classroom activities is important to develop their speaking skill or not. We have noticed that the whole sample (100%) asserted the fact that participation and classroom interaction are essential to enhance their speaking skill.

As a sub-question, we asked respondents to justify their answer. The majority of them claimed that throughout the participation and classroom interaction, they could practice their English language, make mistakes, and benefit from the teachers' correction to avoid them in the future. In addition, they will be obliged to use only English to communicate, which will help them become

more fluent and accurate speakers. Finally, it will help them increase their self-confidence in order not to feel stressed or afraid when they speak in English in front of others.

Section Three: Learners' Attitude towards Socratic Seminar Technique

Item12. After attending Socratic seminar sessions, do you think that it offered you the chance to practice your English in the classroom more comparing to other activities?

Table 3.13. Learners' Opinions about Socratic Seminar

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	16	100%
b) No	0	0%
Total	16	100%

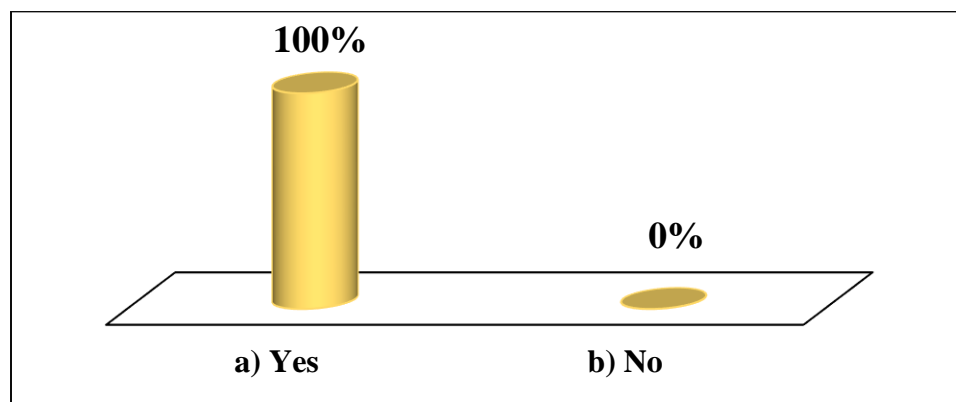


Figure 3.16. Learners' Opinions about Socratic Seminar

The aim behind this question was to determine learners' opinions about whether Socratic Seminar helped them to practice more their English comparing to other activities or no. As it is shown on the table (3.12.), the majority of respondents answered with "Yes", which indicates that they have all agreed on the effectiveness of Socratic seminar in offering them chances to speak and practice their English.

As a sub-question, we asked them to justify their answers. Students claimed that in the Socratic seminar they are given more control of discussion, which gives them plenty of opportunities to speak and interact with one another in contrast to other activities where the teacher dominates the talk and they listen more than they speak. In addition, comparing it to other classroom discussion, Socratic Seminar works on establishing a non-threatening environment free from any judgment because it does not focus on proving the others wrong; i.e., it does not focus on finding the others'

flaws to counter their arguments. Therefore, this encourages them to speak more without being afraid of what the others will think if they make a mistake. Instead, everyone will wait for their turn to finish their idea than help to formulate and correct mistakes. Moreover, the prior preparation of the seminar text helped them gain lots of lexical and topical knowledge, which motivates them to speak about the subject matter, share their various ideas, and at the same time, practice their TL confidently without any hesitation.

Item13. Do you believe that the classroom arrangement in Socratic seminars helped you to interact and participate more?

Table 3.14. The Significance of Socratic Seminars Classroom Arrangement

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	15	94%
b) No	1	6%
Total	16	100%

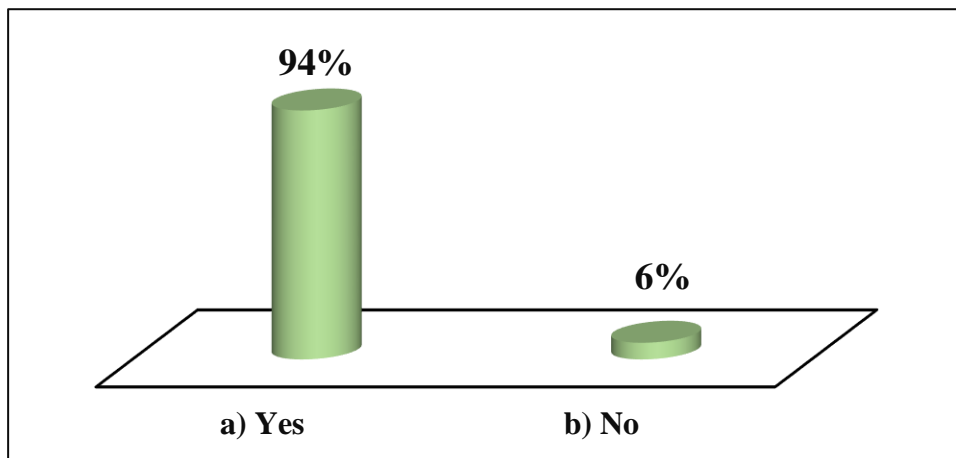


Figure 3. 17. The Significance of Socratic Seminars Classroom Arrangement

This question sought to obtain learners' opinions about the significance of the Socratic seminar physical layout of the classroom. As the figure (3.9.) displayed, the majority of the respondents that represent 94% answered positively. However, only one learner (6%) answered negatively. In order to know the reason behind their choice, we asked them to justify their responses. Those who were in favor of the Socratic seminar classroom arrangement claimed that seating in a form of circle allowed them to see and make eye contact with everyone, the fact that increased their sense

of belonging and made them feel that they are all equal. Moreover, they stated that it enabled learners to share their personal ideas and opinions freely without being afraid or anxious about their peers' behaviors or comments when making mistakes. It means that, this classroom arrangement helped learners' increase their confidence and made them more involved in the discussion. Nevertheless, the respondent who expressed his/her disagreement did not provide any justification; s/he left his/her answer blank.

Item14. Do you believe that preparing yourself and reading the text critically helped you to have more topical and lexical knowledge to use it during the seminar?

Table 3.15. Learners' Opinions about the Significance of the Prior Preparation of the Seminar Text

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	14	88%
b) No	2	12%
Total	16	100%

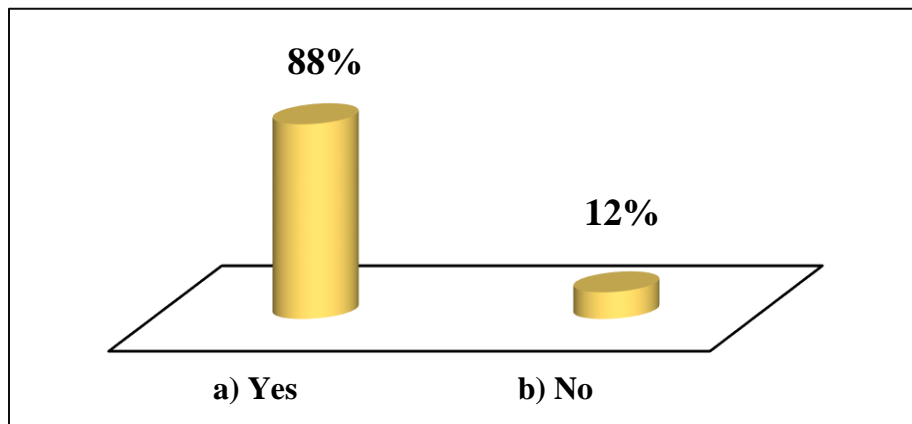


Figure 3.18. Learners' Opinions about the Significance of the Prior Preparation of the Seminar Text

This question sought to identify the respondents' opinions about the significance of the prior preparation (i.e. critical reading, text annotation, and text-to-reader connections) of the Seminar text. As it is shown in the table (3.14.), 88% of respondents claimed that reading and preparing the text before the actual session of the seminar gave them the opportunity to understand and explore every single idea in the text and even search on the internet for further information to know exactly the core of the subject matter and have a clear vision about the points and ideas that needs to be

discussed and expanded. Moreover, it provided them with new and relevant vocabulary that they can use to express their points of view with confidence during the dialogue. On the other hand, 12% of respondents believed that the prior preparation of the text was not beneficial and they did not provide any justification to their response.

Overall, almost all respondents do consider the prior preparation of the seminar useful and has a huge impact on their speaking development by hindering one of the major difficulties they usually face in the oral expressions that are the lack of vocabulary and the shortage of topical knowledge.

Item15. Were the topics discussed during Socratic seminars interesting and engaging in learning?

Table 3.16. Learners' Evaluation of Socratic Seminar Texts

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	14	88%
b) No	2	12%
Total	16	100%

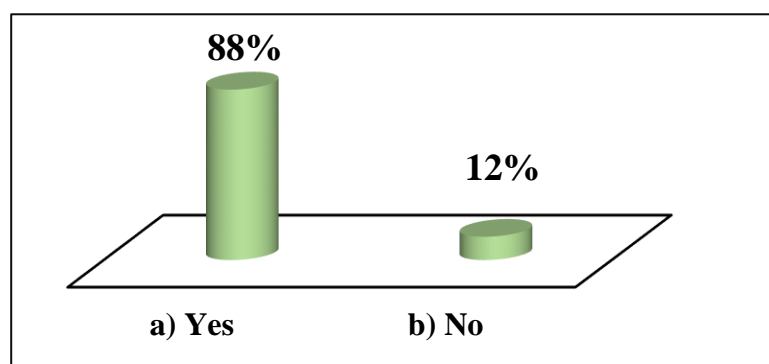


Figure 3.19. Learners' Evaluation of Socratic Seminar texts

This question sought to determine learners' opinions about the topics that were discussed during the seminar sessions. As it is shown on the table (3.15.), the majority of respondents (88%) showed agreement affirming that the topics discussed during Socratic seminars were very interesting and engaging in learning. (12%) of the respondents, however, were less enthusiastic as they found the topics discussed boring and not engaging.

To justify their answers, the great majority asserted that the topics selected were not only rich in terms of idea but they were also topics that dealt with current events, which (1) increased their curiosity to explore and learn more about them through expanding their readings at home and (2)

urged them to engage later on in the dialogue to discover their peers opinions' and points of view. It means that the topics selected were interesting and engaging in speaking because they were meaningful to learners' lives and relevant to what they are learning to develop their oral performance.

Item16. In which of the following stages of Socratic seminar you found difficulties with?

Table 3.17. Learners' most Difficult Stage in Socratic Seminar

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Pre- Seminar	9	56%
b) During Seminar	7	44%
c) Both	0	0%
Total	16	100%

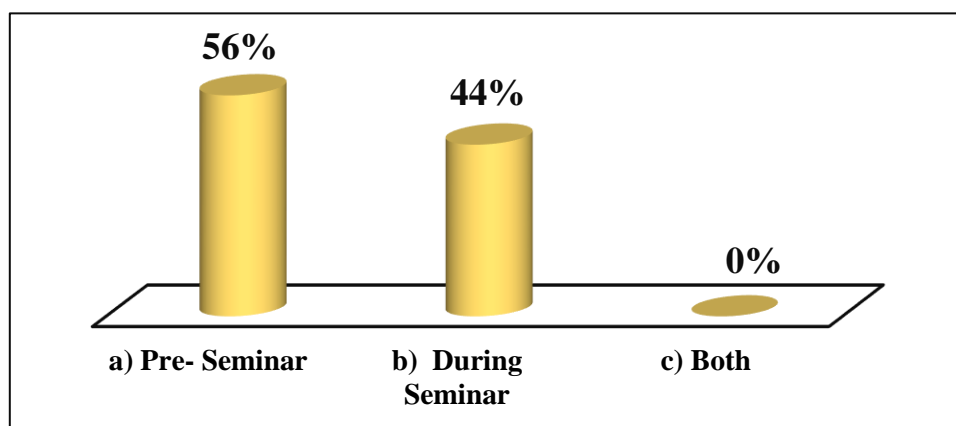


Figure 3.20. Learners' most Difficult Stage in Socratic Seminar

This question was asked to learners to give their evaluation about Socratic Seminar Stages. As the table (3.16) indicates, the majority of respondents (56%) stated that the Pre-Seminar phase was quite difficult in contrast to the other phases. Seven respondents (44%), however, had a different point declaring that During Seminar (i.e. the discussion) is the phase where they found more difficulty with.

As a sub-question, we asked learners to justify their answers to know the reason behind their choice. The majority of learners who have chosen Pre-Seminar stated that they were not fans of reading. Thus, they found it difficult to start reading, especially reading critically and actively where they had to explore and analyze the text and prepare good stimulating questions to urge their peers later on in the discussion to think critically and share their ideas. The students also declared that in the first two sessions, writing seminar questions was a hard task to do because learners are

used to receive questions from the teachers to answer them not to ask questions. However, they mentioned that after few sessions of the seminar, they felt that these difficulties started to disappear slowly because they became more familiar with the technique. This resulted in enhancing their skills in reading and writing questions. On the other hand, learners who selected the answer “During Seminar” (i.e. the discussion) claimed that they are shy by nature and it was not that easy to take the first step to speak in front of others using the target language because they are afraid of making mistakes. They added that sometimes they do not find the appropriate words to deliver their message the way it should because of their anxiety.

Item17. To what extent do you agree/disagree that Socratic seminar is a suitable way to learn English?

Table 3.18. Learners’ Agreement on the Effectiveness of Socratic Seminar in Creating a Suitable Environment to Learn English

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Agree	12	75%
b) Neutral	4	25%
c) Disagree	0	0%
Total	16	100%

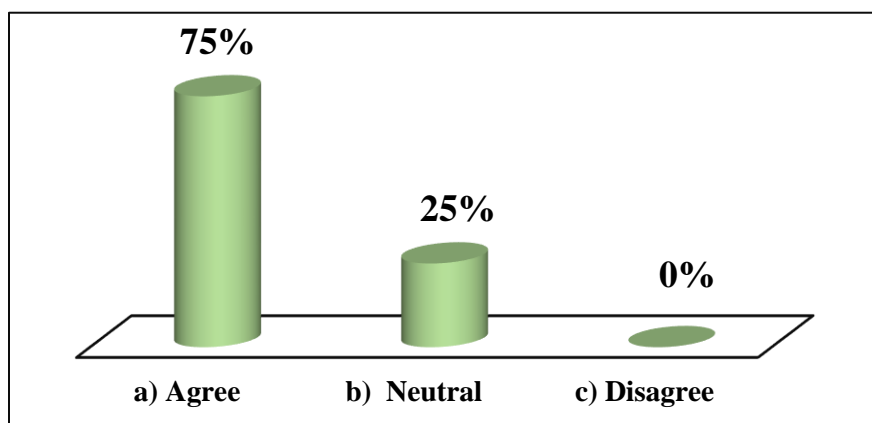


Figure 3.21. Learners’ Agreement on the Effectiveness of Socratic Seminar in Creating a Suitable Environment to Learn English

The aim behind this question is to determine to what extent learners agree that the Socratic seminar is an effective technique to create a suitable environment to learn English. As the figure (3.13) displays, the majority of respondents (75%) agreed with the aforementioned statement

declaring that Socratic seminar is not about right or wrong answers but rather about participating in the dialogue to reach a mutual conclusion. In other words, it was less stressing for them and more encouraging to speak and share with their peers what they really feel and think without being afraid of making mistakes or providing wrong answers. Additionally, in Socratic Seminar, they should listen to one another respectfully and accept their points of view and in case there is a problem or mistake; they are responsible to work collaboratively and help that person correct his/her mistakes.

Four participants who represent (25%) showed a neutral position towards the statement without providing a clear justification to their answer; nevertheless, none of the participants (0%) disagreed with it. This denotes that the majority of learners are aware that Socratic seminar is a useful method that contains the necessary conditions to create a suitable environment to learn English and develop their speaking skill.

Item18. Do you believe that because the teacher's role was equal to the role of the learners this gave you more opportunities to speak and interact with the teacher and other participants?

Table 3.19. Learners' Opinions about the Role of Socratic Seminar in Increasing Interaction

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	15	94%
b) No	1	6%
Total	16	100%

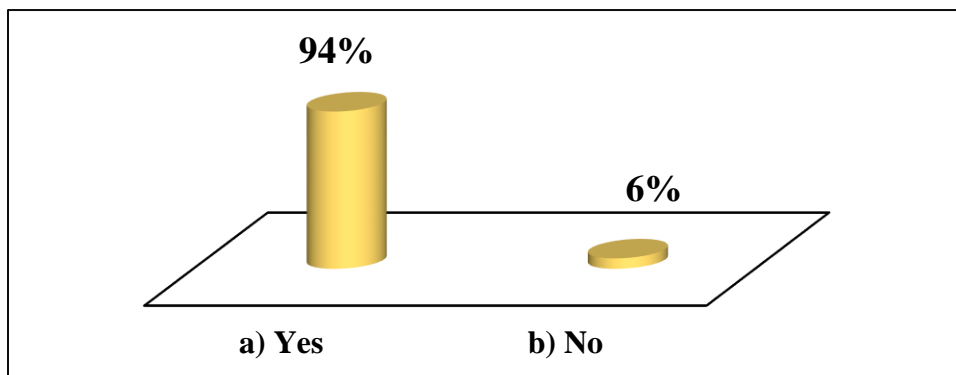


Figure 3.22. Learners' Opinions about the Role of Socratic Seminar in Increasing Interaction

This question sought to determine learners' opinions about the role of the Socratic seminar in increasing their opportunities to speak and interact with the teacher and one another in class. As the table (3.18) displays, the majority of learners, representing 94% of the whole sample emphasized the role of Socratic Seminar in increasing interaction. Stating that it helped to maximize their talk time; i.e., it helped them to speak, communicate, and interact more with one another through asking questions and sharing their unique ideas without any intervention or interruption from the teacher, which would have resulted in decreasing their enthusiasm to participate and practice their English language. Besides that, learners in class consider the teacher as a high authority with a high level of English and knowledge; as a result, they feel afraid and anxious to participate and speak because they are worried of making mistakes and this may have a huge impact on their speaking skill development. On the other hand, only one learner (6%) declared that decreasing the teacher's role in class may increase the interaction between students but of equal weight it may cause a bit of noise and the teacher will not be able control the learners.

This means that the majority of our participants do believe that Socratic seminar offered them more chances to interact and speak with their peers and teacher thanks to its nature that equalizes between the teacher's role and the learners' role through shifting the ownership of talk to them.

Item19. To what extent do you agree/disagree that using Socratic seminar helped in reducing some difficulties you face while speaking?

Table 3.20. Learners' Agreement about the Use of Socratic Seminar in Reducing their Speaking Difficulties

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Agree	10	63%
b) Neutral	6	37%
c) Disagree	0	0%
Total	16	100%

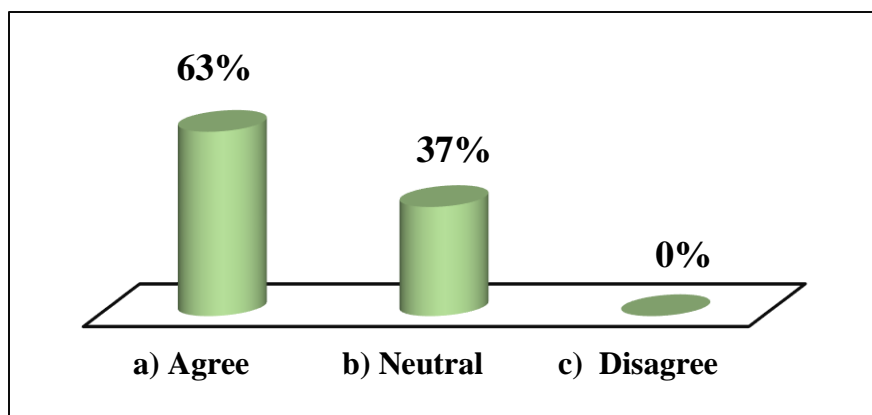


Figure 3.23. Learners' Agreement about the Use of Socratic Seminar in Reducing their Speaking Difficulties

This question was asked to determine if the Socratic Seminar helped learners overcome some of their speaking difficulties or no. As the table (3.19) displays, the majority of respondents (63%) agreed that this technique helped in reducing the problems that may hinder their oral performance development. The rest of participants (37%) showed a neutral position towards the aforementioned statement. However, none of the participants 0% expressed disagreement with the statement. This indicates that Socratic seminar is an effective technique as it can decrease learners' speaking difficulties and encourage them to participate more in class and practice their English language freely without being afraid of others' comments and judgments.

Item20. Has Socratic seminars technique helped you improve your speaking skill?

Table 3.21. Improvement of EFL learners' speaking skill

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Yes	15	94%
b) No	1	6%
Total	16	100%

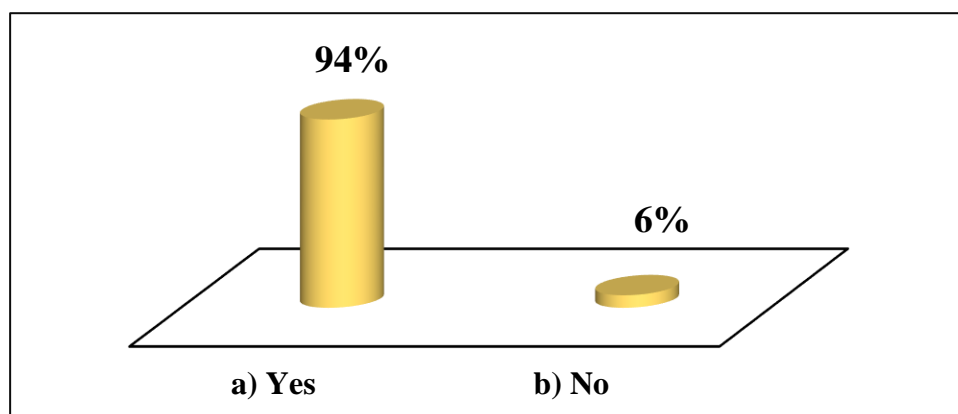


Figure 3.24. Improvement of EFL Learners' Speaking Skill

This question sought to determine learners' opinions about Socratic seminar as a technique to develop their speaking skill. The majority of participants with a percentage of 94% supported the fact that Socratic Seminar can be an effective technique to develop EFL learners' speaking skills. Highlighting that implementing Socratic seminar in oral sessions helped them to be good language communicators because it offers them plenty of opportunities to speak their minds, interact with their peers/teacher, and practice their target language because, as they claimed, the more they practice the more they succeed in developing their speaking skill. In other words, it provides them with a full time practice because in Socratic Seminar learners speak 97% of their time while their teacher speaks only 3% of the total time because s/he acts as a facilitator who only intervenes to keep the dialogue moving forward.

Moreover, it helps them overcome the major difficulties and problems that prevent them from developing their oral performance. It starts from providing them with a huge amount of topical and lexical knowledge through emphasizing the prior preparation of the seminar text to develop their critical reading skills, which would help them to deeply comprehend the topic and absorb consciously and unconsciously plenty of vocabulary. As a result, it allows them to have a smooth delivery and enriches their contributions to the dialogue. Furthermore, it helps establishing an environment, which offers all the necessary conditions to yield for learners a safe and non-judgmental environment to have an effective and meaningful practice to develop their speaking skill without being afraid or anxious about making mistakes or being judged or scaffold by their wrong answer.

However, only one learner, who represents (6%) of the sample, believed that Socratic Seminar is not a beneficial technique to enhance EFL learners' speaking skill; declaring that the problem is in her, not in the Socratic Seminar technique. In other words, she does consider it as an effective strategy to develop speaking but not form her because she is shy by nature and she cannot participate in any other module or practice their English with anyone.

Consequently, we assume that the Socratic Seminar technique is viewed as an effective and a useful way to teach and learn speaking skill better and considering it and applying it in all oral expression sessions will have positive results on learners' progress.

Item21. Among the following skills, which one (s) do you think they have ameliorated through Socratic seminar?

Table 3.22. Skills that Socratic Seminar Technique Can Develop

Option	Number	Percentage
a) Speaking Skill	2	13%
b) Reading Comprehension	0	0%
c) Leadership and Responsibility	0	0%
d) Communicative Skill	1	6%
e) Critical Reading and Thinking	0	0%
f) Collaboration / Teamwork	2	13%
g) All of Them	11	68%
Total	16	100%

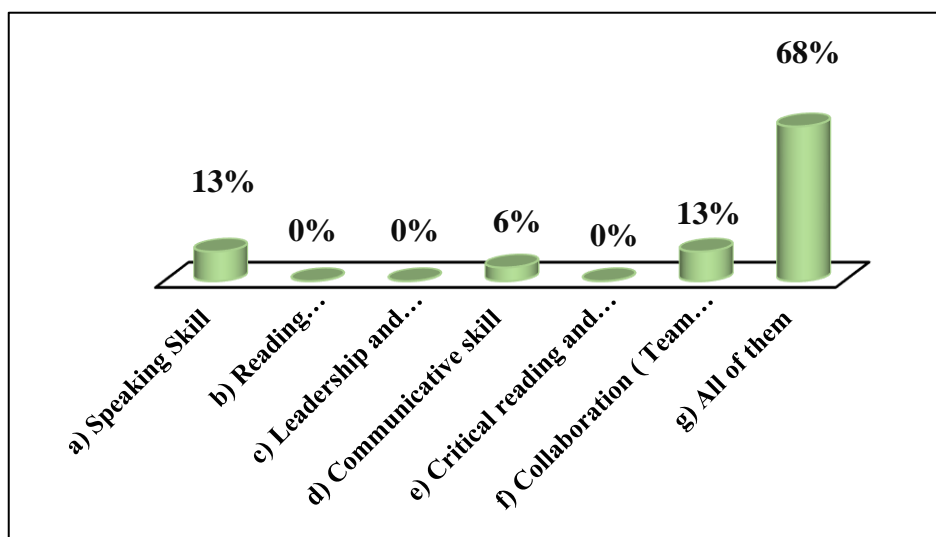


Figure 3.25. Skills that Socratic Seminar Technique Can Develop

This question aimed to determine which skills the Socratic Seminar technique can develop. As it is shown on the table (3.21), the majority of respondents, representing 68% of the sample, claimed that Socratic Seminar is a good technique to develop all the mentioned skills. Additionally, two of the respondents (13%) selected only speaking skills as well as for Collaboration and Teamwork. Moreover, only one learner (6%) opted for communication skills while none of the respondents (0%) has selected the rest of the suggested options: Reading Comprehension, Leadership and Responsibility, and Critical Reading and Thinking individually. This means that the Socratic Seminar is an effective technique for EFL learners because it helps them from many sides.

3.1.3.2. Classroom Observation

a. Aims of Classroom Observation

In order to fulfill this research work and enrich the thoroughness of the obtained data from the questionnaire, we have undertaken a non-participant classroom observation. This data collection tool aims at investigating how the Socratic Seminar technique is implemented with first year LMD learners as well as determining teacher's role and exploring learners' reactions and attitudes towards being taught with Socratic circles in oral sessions. Moreover, this tool attempts to investigate the impact of Socratic seminar in enhancing learners' speaking skill in a realistic context. In addition, the aim is to compare learners' performances and participation in Socratic circles to their performances in other oral activities as listening tasks. Furthermore, the observation that we have undertaken was overt and direct because we have not used any kind of audio recording or filming devices. It was only conducted by using a checklist (see appendix B).

b. Classroom Observation Procedures

The classroom observation was conducted during the second semester of the academic year (2019/2020) specifically from the period of February 4th, 2020 till March 9th, 2020. The observation was done only with one group of first year 'Group 4' for a variety of reasons. Mainly, the Socratic circle is a new technique that not all oral expression teachers are aware of. Thus, along the first semester, we tried to provide some of first year oral expression teachers a thorough explanation of the Socratic seminar through sharing with them some documents and videos that illustrate and clarify in details the full procedures and benefits of this technique to understand it well and convince them to apply it in their classes. Indeed, the majority of teachers agreed on the powerfulness and effectiveness of the technique, yet they refused to apply it in their classes

reporting that they have a limited time to complete the curriculum. Besides, adopting a new method in the middle of the year can be hard for learners. However, one oral teacher (of Group 4) welcomed the idea and accepted to implement this technique with the condition that the researcher is responsible for preparing the Seminar Texts (see appendix: C, D, E, F) that the teacher should hand to the learners a day before the seminar to prepare themselves and explain to them the technique and its procedures.

In the classroom observation, we assisted five sessions with the ‘Group 4’ in addition to an introductory session on February 3rd, 2020 that was designed to explain the aim of our study. More importantly, this “extra session” was done to introduce the Socratic seminar technique to the learners, its various stages, and their roles along the seminar. For a further explanation, we have shared with them videos that explain in detail the technique. The first four sessions we attended were devoted to Socratic Seminar Technique in regular English classrooms at the CEIL whereas in the last session we assisted, the teacher used her ordinary way of teaching where she relied on listening activities to teach speaking in the Laboratory at the CEIL. The duration of the five sessions was one hour and a half each. The number of learners in each session was different due to the timing, which was every Tuesday in the afternoon from 14:50 to 16:20 (students at this time are tired from a long day of study and tend to be absent for this last session).

c. Description of the Classroom Observation Checklist

The classroom observation sheet contains five sections: General Classroom Atmosphere, Teacher’s Roles, Socratic Seminar Technique, Learners’ Oral Performance, and Learners’ Participation. The first section contains a general description of classroom mood and physical seating arrangement. The second section is devoted to determine teacher’s roles during the Socratic circle. The third section is designed to capture the way Socratic Seminar Technique is implemented throughout the oral expression sessions and to know how learners’ are acting and performing. Besides, its aim is to observe if both the teacher and learners would respect all the seminar’s steps and principles. The next section is devoted to observe the improvement in learners' oral production in terms of fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary. The last section is devoted to observe learners’ participation along the sessions.

d. Analysis of Classroom Observation

Part One: The Traditional Classroom (Listening Activities)

This session took place on (09/03/2020) and it was dedicated for listening tasks. Initially, it was observed that the teacher was friendly and created a sense of humor during classroom instruction. Moreover, she used audiovisual aids that were her own computer, LCD projector, and the speaker so that all learners could be able to hear the prepared tracks of native speakers and for extra activities. However, they were not sufficient because learners were not able to hear well, so the teacher was obliged to ask them to move their seats to the front to be closer. Thus, the classroom sitting was unorganized. Although, the sessions was conducted at the CEIL's laboratory where we noticed the availableness of the needed materials for such activity, but they were not allowed to use them.

Along this session, we noted that the teacher started by explaining the instructions of the activity. Moreover, we observed that she had used four audios that tackled four different topics, which are "Au 1: Radio Show about Parenthood, Au 2: Business Phone Conversation, Au 3: Teacher Explains the Weakly Timetable, and Au 4: Professional Phone Call". The records were about 4 to 8 minutes and she repeated each track from 3 to 4 times. It was observed that after listening to each audio alone, she started to ask her learners questions to know if they were able to recognize the type of the audio; if 'yes' what is it about and other questions. Then, she moved to explaining the tracks one by one in details as well as clarifying to them all the difficult words in these records. Then, she displayed on the screen the extra activities and asked them to work individually the first activity was filling the gap after listening to record '2' and the second activity was to re-listen to the audio '3' and try to draw a timetable to classify the courses mentioned. Thus, we observed that the teacher had an authority on right answer.

Concerning the students' participation, we observed that in this activity the majority were passive and silent. Indeed, only few learners spoke during the activity and their intervention was limited to answer the questions raised by the teacher relying on the records. Thus, we noted that the only interaction that existed was a teacher-learner interaction. Besides, the class was teacher-led because the teacher dominated the talk as she spoke 97% of class time. Therefore, we observed the existence of some side conversation at the back, which indicates that some students were not interested about the activity. Concerning learners' oral performance, as we mentioned before, only

few learners participated. They were mixture of good and average learners because the teacher was responsible for selecting who is going to answer the question. We observed the existence of pauses and hesitations in their utterances as well as the use of interjection marks. However, they used the grammatical rules correctly and the majority formulated well-structured sentences. The responses were short answers. Nevertheless, the vocabulary used was very simple and limited to what the teacher presented to them; only two learners tried to include few of the explained words in the records such as 'Parenting' and 'Current Events'.

Part Two: The Socratic Seminar

Section One: General Classroom Atmosphere

Along the four observational sessions under The Socratic Seminar Technique, the classroom environment was arranged according to the requirements of the task. However, in the first seminar, the physical setting was not suitable to do the activity because generally, learners study oral expressions at the level of the CEIL's laboratory where they sit in an unorganized way and with no enough space to form a circle, which is a crucial element in the success of the Socratic seminar. In fact, the room was small and full of equipment such as computers and furniture the reason that made it impossible for students to change their places. Thus, during the seminar sessions, they had to look for an empty classroom that is more appropriate and suitable to accomplish the seminar.

The seminar's major aim was mainly to enable EFL learners to carry out meaningful and effective practice in English to develop their speaking skill. Accordingly, we observed that altering the physical setting in a form of circle facilitated the interaction among the learners and boosted their motivation to communicate with each other and perform more conversations in English to ameliorate their oral performances. The classroom arrangement that the teacher opted for in her class was 'one large circle' because the number of learners in all sessions were either 20 or 22 learners.

During the four seminar sessions, it was observed that the teacher was quite friendly and created a sense of humor during seminars. Moreover, she did not make any of her learners feel afraid or ashamed to participate. Furthermore, it was highly observed that during the seminar sessions, both the teacher and learners were interested and engaged in the learning process. Indeed, the majority of learners were motivated and enthusiastic to participate, share their own ideas, and ask questions

to further explore the subject matter and acquire new knowledge. Besides, the teacher was attentive to learn from her learners' interruptions and explanations of the ideas presented in the text. In addition, she was interested to hear about their various experiences that are totally related to the discussed topic and to share with them her own experiences. In other words, there was no room for confusion and boredom.

Section Two: Teacher's Roles

In the first seminar (04/02/2020), it was observed that the teacher paid attention to all the interventions and questions raised by the participants. She acted as a facilitator to help learners get back on track and keep the discussion focused on the text when she felt that they diverged from the aim of the seminar or moved to a debate. However, at a certain point in the discussion, the teacher dominated the talk because the seminar leader who was supposed to lead the discussion and urge her colleagues to participate did not ask good questions and she had a poor vocabulary. So, the teacher was obliged to intervene to help her especially that this session was the first formal application of the seminar for all of them. In fact, we expected that certain things might happen since students are not used to interact with each other without the teacher's involvement. Nevertheless, the intervention of the teacher was implicit. For instance, whenever the question of the leader was incorrect in terms of structure or a bit ambiguous, the teacher let the student finish then tried to re-ask the question in a clearer and correct way. Moreover, she was a great co-learner. In other words, it was observed that the teacher through her participation tried to share with learners her own ideas, personal experiences and stories that were related to the subject matter. The purpose was to offer them a relaxing, engaging, comfortable, and friendly atmosphere to learn. Nevertheless, while sharing and narrating her personal experiences, she preferred to use the Arabic language, so everyone could understand. Furthermore, during her participation, she did not provide any kind of feedback or showed authority on "right or wrong" answers; instead, she only possessed good listening skills and a caring soul by listening to the learners' thoughts and prior experiences.

In the remaining three seminars sessions (11/02/2020- 03/03/2020), we noted down the exact same things except for some changes related to the teacher's interventions and talk. In other words, it was observed that in contrast to the first seminar, the teacher totally adhered to the seminar rules and principles: She kept her role limited to being a facilitator who only intervenes when it is

necessary; hence, her time of talk diminished to equalize an average seminar participant. Moreover, we noted that she minimized her use of the Arabic language during the seminars.

Section Three: Socratic Seminar Technique

Before launching the beginning of any seminar session and asking the opening question, we observed that the learners first tried to organize themselves and form the 'circle' to show that they are ready to start the discussion. Moreover, we noted that the teacher moved around the class to check if all learners had read the text (marking the text) and prepared questions. Then, she passed the talk to the leader to go over a few ground rules to remind the learners with the seminar major principles so as to have a successful and fruitful seminar.

In the first seminar (04/02/2020), it was observed that the seminar leader did not prepare herself well for the seminar. Indeed, the majority of the prepared questions (core questions) were not at a good level; some of them were quite superficial. Therefore, we noticed the teacher's numerous interventions to cover the leader's role in leading the discussion. However, the opening and the closing questions were powerful questions that directed the participants to the objective of the seminar and encouraged them to participate and share their ideas and experiences among the group. Additionally, we observed that she was an active listener; she listened carefully to every participant's interventions, questions, and thoughts without any judgment. We also noted down that the leader at certain point of the discussion acted more as a participant rather than a leader: She was answering the questions of others participants more than trying to focus on leading the discussion; thus, we observed talk's dominances from the side of the teacher and excellent learners.

Concerning the seminar participants, we observed that the majority of them were well prepared for the seminar. However, we noted few learners who did not read the text or prepared questions. They were three or four of the learners' total number that was sixteen that day because it was the second session after the examination. In the beginning of the seminar, we noticed that only excellent learners participated and answered the opening question then asked few core questions. Thus, we observed some talk dominance from their side. Nevertheless, after a while, we noted that some of the learners who were silent and passive started to participate and answer the questions because the atmosphere started to become friendly and relaxing. This made them feel comfortable to share their own ideas and experiences about cyber bullying (the topic).

Furthermore, we noticed that not all ideas and concepts discussed were related to the subject matter; thus, we noted the teacher's many interventions. In addition, we observed little side conversation from the part of learners who did not read the text. It was distracting behavior and it had even affected the flow of the discussion at a certain point, but it did not last for long because after the teacher directed the talk to them to participate, they kept quiet and focused on the discussion. Additionally, when the teacher shared her own experience with cyberbullying as co-learner, students became more interested and engaged in the discussion. Moreover, along the discussion, when learners participated, we noticed that they spoke making eye contact with the teacher, which made the conversation between learners diminish because in Socratic seminar the eye contact should be made with peers to increase and facilitate the interaction among them. Also, we noted the use of mother tongue during the discussion especially when the teacher used it to talk about her personal experience with cyberbullying. Lastly, by the end of the seminar, we observed that all learners were engaged and the majority of them raised their hands to answer the closing questions. This was an indicator that they enjoyed their times.

In the second and the third seminar (11/02/2020-18/02/2020), we noticed that the leaders of seminar were more prepared to lead the discussions. Both of them prepared a series of open-ended questions that were very powerful and intelligent. It was obvious that they have done some further research about the topic of the discussion. Thus, during the seminar, they were able to lead their colleagues to explore the ideas in the text as well as to listen carefully to their interventions and questions in order to provide a well-crafted and sufficient explanation when necessary. Moreover, it was observed that they tried to encourage reluctant participants to engage in the dialogue using following up questions. Moreover, they encouraged the participants to comment on each other's interventions before they speak in a respectful manner to keep their attention and ensure that the discussed ideas were related to each other as well as to the seminar text. Lastly, it was noticed that they were good at managing and maintaining the group talk: They tried to prevent excellent learners from dominating the discussion to guarantee that by the end of the seminar all participants participate.

Regarding the seminar participants in these two sessions, we noted, initially, that the number of participants was larger comparing to the first session: They were twenty-two learners. Also, all participants were well prepared for the discussion. In other words, we noticed that they were well

knowledgeable about the subject matter, which indicates that they had carefully read the seminar texts and even expanded their readings about 'Generation Gap and Organ Donation', also they had prepared a series of questions that were very powerful and very relevant to the texts. In addition, we noticed that too many more spontaneous questions had emerged during the dialogue. Moreover, when the leaders asked the opening question in both sessions, it was remarkable that the majority of learners raised their hand to answer the question; it was not limited to excellent and active learners. This indicates that learners were excited and interested to engage in the discussion. Furthermore, it was observed that the majority of the ideas discussed and personal experiences shared were totally related to the subject matter because whenever they diverged, the seminar leaders asked them a new question to get them back to the main idea. Therefore, we noticed the smooth flow of the discussion.

Additionally, we observed that few learners tried to cite reasons and evidence for their statements that were not mentioned in the handed texts. Moreover, along both discussions when learners participated we noticed that they spoke making eye contact with one another not with the teacher. This kept the learners focused on what their peers are saying, and hence, encouraging the interaction and the conversation between them; yet there were few who when they spoke they looked directly and directed the talk to the teacher. Moreover, it was observed that they enjoyed working in collaboration and build on each other's thoughts to construct mutual and deep understanding of the texts. In addition, whenever a participant felt confused or did not understand an idea, all peers tried to help him/her to clarify things. Additionally, participants were listening carefully and commenting respectfully on each other's answers and interventions to create a comfortable and encouraging environment for reluctant and introverted learners to express their points of view with confidence. It was also observed that the seminar participants and even leader had used only the English language to communicate. In the end of both sessions, we observed that the majority of learners participated in the discussion at least one time either by asking or answering a question. Also, we did not notice any side conversation that might affect the discussions, which indicates that learners were totally engaged in the discussion and they enjoyed it.

In the last session (03/03/2020), it was observed that the seminar leader did not prepare himself for the in-class discussion because the teacher forgot to distribute the seminar text to the learners

a day before the seminar. Nevertheless, he tried to read the text carefully prior to the seminar in a half an hour to effectively engage himself in the text's exploration in order to deepen his comprehension and be able to lead the discussion. It was observed that when the seminar started, he was able to lead the discussion because he prepared good questions that caught the participants' attention and encouraged them to participate. Besides, he was able to manage the talk and help the participants move the discussion forward. The situation was the same for the seminar participants. They spend 30 minutes prior to the discussion reading the text as well trying to prepare core questions in order to explore the text ideas. The text was about 'Brain Drain' and we observed that the topic was new for some learners because we noted that when the teacher gave them the copy, they started to wonder what does 'Brain Drain' stands for. Thus, they started to use their phones to search for the definitions of new and complex words.

Moreover, we noticed that the time given was not sufficient for students to prepare themselves. Thus, when the discussion started, we observed only six learners who raised their hands to answer. Furthermore, we observed that the majority of the ideas and concepts discussed were related to the subject and they were mentioned in the text. Along the discussion, it was observed that the same participants were asking and answering the questions which resulted in a kind of talk dominance from the side of ten learners. At the certain point of the discussion, we observed the teacher's interventions to explain for learners some words such "Nepotism and Elite" or when the leader directed to her the talk to know her opinion about 'Immigration'. Moreover, we observed that the discussion was slow because learners were answering the questions then they kept quiet for a minute to think of the next question. Additionally, we observed that learners did not participate much during the seminar; they were silent, listening carefully to their colleagues' interventions. We had even observed some of them who were taking notes. This indicates that they were mentally engaged in the discussion, but they were not ready to participate. However, when the leader asked the closing question to recapitulate all what they have discussed, we noticed that the majority of learners raised their hands and shared their thoughts and opinions.

Section Four: Learners' Oral Performance (Fluency, Accuracy, Vocabulary)

During the first seminar session, it was noticed that the majority of learners have a lack of fluency. In other words, when they were speaking, there was always pauses and cuts between their words and utterances that affected the flow of their ideas. Moreover, we noted that their oral

productions were full of interjection marks such as “uh, um, and hmm”. Additionally, the majority of learners were speaking quietly, which made the other participants incapable to hear their answers, questions, and interventions. In addition, we noted that their utterance was too slow with some hesitations. However, throughout the remaining Socratic seminar sessions, it was observed that there was an improvement in learners’ speaking fluency. In other words, learners, while participating in the discussion to share their ideas or ask questions, were speaking without frequent pauses or overuse of interjections. In addition, we noticed that they were more confident and engaged in the conversation; hence, they were producing complete and meaningful sentences with clear ideas. Finally, they were speaking aloud with a suitable speed so that all the seminar participants could hear and understand their utterances.

Concerning accuracy, it was noticed that throughout the first seminar session, the majority of learners’ discourses were full of grammatical mistakes such as incorrect application of tenses: Learners had a problem in conjugating verbs properly according to the required time. Also, we observed that they had a problem with forming correct sentences besides the lack and sometimes the misuse of transitional words and coordinating conjunctions. Nevertheless, along the other three observational sessions, it was observed that there was a kind of enhancement in learners’ accuracy. Initially, we noticed that learners, while uttering, they started to implement correct grammar rules and use them in their appropriate contexts. Moreover, they became aware of their grammatical mistakes and they either self-corrected or waited for the teacher’s or peers’ correction. Furthermore, we noted that learners’ utterances were more connected and coherent due to the proper use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Lastly, we observed that they became capable of constructing sentences using accurate grammatical structures; i.e., they became able to form simple, correct, and complete sentences.

A third criterion we focused on was vocabulary. It is one of the main pillars of speaking proficiency language speakers should have to communicate and verbalize their emotions in a meaningful and understandable way. From the first seminar session, it was observed that the majority of learners had a shortage of lexical knowledge except for 4 to 5 learners who displayed an advanced level in English with a huge amount of vocabulary at their disposal. In other words, we noticed that the majority of learners’ utterances were limited to the usage of simple words and vocabularies, which they have generally learned previously from their teacher. Additionally, we

noted that few learners were struggling to recall words to convey accurate meaning due to the lack of practice. Nevertheless, throughout the Socratic circle sessions, we were able to witness the shift in terms of vocabulary usage. In other words, we observed that the vocabularies used were no more limited to the ones presented to them by their teacher, but new vocabularies and even advanced words in comparison to learners' level, which they have learned and grasped in the process of exploring and analyzing the seminar text prior to the in-class discussion. Furthermore, we observed betterment in the speed of producing their thoughts due to the consistent practice of the target language.

Section Five: Learners' Participation

During the four Socratic seminar sessions, it was observed that learners showed a high willingness to participate in the seminar. In other words, the majority of participants were raising their hands either to answer or ask questions to effectively explore the text's ideas. Although the prior preparation of the seminar text is obligatory to join the discussion, we noted that few learners did not read or prepared themselves because they were careless and lazy (i.e., learners' differences). However, they were engaged in the discussion because the selected topics especially "Generation Gap", "Organ Donation", and "Brain Drain" created a sense of curiosity in them to learn more about the topics and discover their peers' opinions and points of view. Also, the interaction and collaboration between learners were motivating and engaging because the focus was not on answering the questions correctly but rather on helping and supporting each other to reach and develop a mutual understanding of the discussed ideas. Besides, learners paid attention to keep the discussion move forward using follow-up and core questions and willingness to encourage silent learners to participate and speak their voices. Thus, we witnessed a shift in some passive and receivers participants who became active and producers: They became open and enthusiastic about the idea of sharing their ideas and experiences with the other participants as well as with their teacher who acted as facilitator without being afraid of judgment or scoffs.

3.1.4. Synthesis of the Findings

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar Technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. Therefore, we opted for a semi-structured questionnaire for learners and classroom observation to elicit learners' attitudes and perceptions towards the presented technique. The aim was also to investigate the impact of Socratic seminar in enhancing learners'

speaking skill. The obtained results from the analysis of both tools showed a gradual progression to the final synthesis because they led us to similar results, but the only difference is in the way they dealt with this study.

The findings that have been drawn from the analysis of both tools led us to the deduction of positive relevant results in many aspects in which they confirm the research hypothesis and answer the research questions. Initially, the results obtained from learners' questionnaire conclude that learners consider Socratic seminar as an effective technique that can help them develop their speaking skill. As they asserted, it provided them with equal and plenty of opportunities to practice their language through increasing their talk time in class and fostering the interaction between them. Additionally, it offered them the necessary conditions such as topical and lexical knowledge, interaction, collaboration, and that no responses and interventions along the conversation will be estimated as right or wrong answers to overcome the major difficulties they encounter when speaking such as lack of vocabulary and fear of making mistakes. This reflects learners' positive attitudes towards the implementation of Socratic seminar in oral sessions to improve their speaking performance.

Furthermore, the results obtained from the classroom observation revealed that the majority of EFL learners welcomed and were pleased with the use of Socratic seminar technique in oral sessions to improve their speaking skill. As we noticed, learners' participation, motivation, and interest were increased along the seminars sessions. Moreover, before the introduction of this technique, it was observed that learners' oral production regarding fluency and accuracy contained too many pauses, interjections, incorrect application of tenses, etc. which prevented them from being fluent and accurate speakers. Besides, there was a shortage of vocabulary that inhibited their smooth and effective delivery of thoughts and conveying meanings. However, after introducing the Socratic seminar technique and implementing it in EFL oral sessions, students' rate of practicing their language was higher. There was also a remarkable improvement in terms of fluency, accuracy and vocabulary; indeed, students appeared more able to communicate freely.

To conclude, the findings of our study revealed that implementing Socratic seminar technique in EFL classes is useful and effective to develop learners' speaking skill. Accordingly, the majority of learners showed positive attitudes and reactions towards being taught with Socratic circles in oral sessions. As a result, the hypothesis of our study that 'If the teacher uses the Socratic Seminar

Technique, his/her learners' speaking skill would be improved' is confirmed and all the research questions are answered.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented the field work of this research study that aimed to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. Primarily, we provided a review of the research methodology underlying this study. Besides, we presented the analysis and interpretation of the collected data followed by a synthesis of the major findings to confirm or refuse the hypothesis proposed at the beginning of this research work.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Speaking skill has been always considered as vital element in learning and mastering any foreign language because the success in learning a FL is based on the capacity of success within the conversation in this target language. Nevertheless, it has been observed that the majority of EFL learners have weak level when performing in English. This is mainly resulted from the numerous problems and difficulties that learners often encounter in speaking, which are of equal weight highly resulted from the lack of practice and use of the TL. Hence, the current study attempted to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar Technique in developing EFL learners' speaking skill. In addition, it attempted to determine the learners' perceptions, attitudes, and reactions towards the Socratic Seminar Technique and its impacts on learners' oral performance and participation.

The present study consists of three chapters. The first two chapters were devoted to the theoretical part whereas the third chapter was for the practical part. The first chapter tackled the dependent variable by providing a general overview of speaking skill. The second chapter dealt with the independent variable 'Socratic Seminar technique' by providing a deep understanding and thorough explanation of the technique, its procedures, and its significance in enhancing EFL learners' speaking skill. The third chapter was devoted to the field work and data analysis by providing a review of the research methodology as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered then the synthesis of the findings to confirm or reject the hypothesis of the study.

In order to accomplish this research work and achieve its aims, a qualitative approach has been adopted. In addition, two data collection methods were employed to gather data, which are a semi-structured questionnaire administered to one group of first year EFL students at MKU of Biskra to elicit their opinions and perceptions. A classroom observation was also conducted to investigate the implementation of this technique and its impact on learners' oral performances and participation.

The present study tackled one main hypothesis stating that "If the teacher uses the Socratic Seminar Technique, his/her learners' speaking skill would be improved". Throughout the observational sessions using Socratic Seminar Technique, it has been noted that learners had limitless chances to practice their language. In addition, a significant improvement in their utterances in terms of fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary has been witnessed. Furthermore, during

the Socratic Seminar, students were more motivated and interested in the learning process comparing to other sessions. Additionally, learners asserted in their answers of the questionnaire that adopting this technique in oral sessions helped in eliminating major difficulties such as lack of lexical knowledge and fear of making mistakes that used to affect their oral development. It was thanks to its components and major principals that offered them a suitable and risk-free environment to learn and develop their speaking skill.

As a conclusion, the obtained results of this study showed that learners have positive reactions and attitudes towards the role of Socratic Seminar technique in developing their speaking skills. Besides, it proved to a great extent that this technique is an effective and very helpful for EFL learners to develop their speaking skill primarily by offering a thoughtful and a meaningful practice of the target language as well as overcoming the main and the most obstacles they encounter in the learning process. Consequently, we can say that all research questions were well answered, the hypothesis validated, and all the aims attained.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the different theoretical and empirical findings that revealed the significance of putting Socratic Seminar Technique into practice to help EFL learners' develop their speaking skill in oral sessions, some suggestions and recommendations are stated as follows:

For Teachers and Educators

✓ Course designers are recommended to consider the integration of Socratic Seminar Technique in teaching the speaking skill in order to enhance learners' oral performance to become good language communicators as well help them overcome their speaking difficulties.

✓ Teachers of oral expression are advised to adopt the Socratic Seminar Technique in their syllabus to teach the speaking skill because it offers for learners' a plenty of opportunities to practice their FL in a relaxed and enjoyable environment through shifting the classroom from teacher-centered to student-centered and eliminating the major obstacles that affect their oral performance.

✓ Teachers are recommended to ameliorate their learners' critical reading and thinking skills through teaching it implicitly and explicitly to facilitate the process of Socratic Seminar technique.

For Students

✓ Learners should follow the instructions provided by the teacher to have a thoughtful discussion and be able to attain the objectives of the practice to develop their speaking skill in a suitable and enjoyable learning environment.

✓ Learners should be committed and take seriously the prior preparation as well active reading of the seminar text at home to go deep in what they are reading to succeed in developing their topical and lexical knowledge to have a meaningful practice of the TL during the discussion to develop their speaking skill.

For Future researchers

✓ For further researches, we recommend to use this technique with other variables and implement it in other modules because throughout the literature review of the Socratic Seminar and the analysis of the obtained results we were able to conclude that this technique includes the capacities and the characteristic to evolve and develop other skills such as writing skill, reading comprehension, communicative skills and critical thinking.

Limitations of the Study

This research work aimed mainly to investigate the role of Socratic Seminar technique in helping EFL learners develop their speaking skill. Although the obtained results revealed the effectiveness and helpfulness of this technique in developing their speaking skill and even achieve other specific aims, we faced some difficulties and obstacles.

First, the lack of sources and prior research studies that tackled the Socratic Seminar Technique; precisely, finding books and articles were the main obstacles that affected our research progress because they were rare on the internet and even if they are available they cost a large amount of money.

Second, in this study we intended to use the interview for teachers as a third data collection tool to explore their perceptions about using this teaching technique as well as their views on integrating it to develop learners' speaking skill. However, due to the current circumstances of the country 'covid-19 pandemic', which impeded our excess to them, we decided to omit it and rely only on the results obtained from the questionnaire and classroom observation to validate our hypothesis.

Third, the four sessions of classroom observation in which the teacher used the Socratic Seminar Technique as a teaching method were not sufficient to observe a huge development in learners' speaking skill because to do so, it requires a long time, yet we were able to witness some enhancement and improvement in their oral performance and participation which reflects the existences of a progress.

Fourth, due to the covid-19 pandemic, the university has been closed; thus, we were not able to have access to all the learners who participated in our research work. The questionnaire was submitted online, but we did not have contact with all of them to send them the link to answer it.

Finally, the study was conducted with a representative sample of first year LMD learners (group 04) of English at MKU of Biskra. It is limited to a restricted number and not to all the population; therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Learners' Questionnaire

Learners' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly invited to fill in this questionnaire, which is about "Investigating the Role of Socratic Seminars in Developing EFL Learners' Speaking Skill". We would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions. Your cooperation will be of a great importance for our research.

Please, respond to the questions by ticking (√) the appropriate box (es) and provide full statements whenever it is necessary.

N.B. Be sure that your answers will be kept anonymous, strictly confidential and they will be used exclusively for research purposes.

Section One: Background information

1. Would you specify your gender, please:

a. Male

b. Female

2. Why do you study English for (purpose)?

a. For an Academic Reasons

b. For a Communicative Reasons

c. Others

If others, please specify _____

Section Two: Speaking Skill

3. Do you agree that in order to learn the language, you have to speak it?

a. Agree

b. Disagree

4. How do you evaluate your level in speaking?

a. Poor- I definitely need some help

b. Ok (average)- but I know I could improve

c. Good- I could improve more with some advanced tips

d. Excellent- I do not think I could improve much

5. Do you think that Oral Expression course is?

a. Very interesting

b. Interesting

c. Less interesting

d. uninteresting

-Whatever your answer, please explain

6. How often do you do you participate in oral sessions?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Sometimes

d. Never

7. Do you face difficulties when speaking?

a. Yes

b. No

- If yes, what kind of difficulties?

a. Lack of vocabulary

b. Lack of grammar mastery

c. Anxiety / Shyness

d. Fear of making mistakes

e. Lack of motivation

f. Interference of the mother tongue

Other difficulties, please specify _____

8. Do you learn speaking better when?

a. The teacher talks the most

b. The teacher lets you talk

c. The teacher and you both join together in the lesson

9. Which of these speaking activities is the most used in your class?

a. Role plays

b. Oral presentations

c. Listening Activities

d. Classroom Discussion

10. Which one the previous mentioned activities do you prefer most? Please justify.

11. Do you think that participating and interacting with peers in class are essential to improve your speaking skill?

a. Yes

b. No

- Whatever your answer, please justify

Section Three: Learners' Attitude towards Socratic Seminars

12. After attending Socratic seminar sessions, do you think that it offered you the chance to practice your English in the classroom more comparing to other activities?

a. Yes

b. No

13. Do you believe that the classroom arrangement in Socratic seminars helped you to interact and participate more?

a. Yes

b. No

- Whatever your answer is, please explain

14. Do you believe that preparing yourself and reading the text critically helped you to have more topical and lexical knowledge to use it during the seminar?

a. Yes

b. No

- Whatever your answer is, please explain:

15. Were the topics discussed during Socratic seminars interesting and engaging in learning?

a. Yes

b. No

- If "yes", which topic interested you more? Please explain:

16. In which of the following stages of Socratic seminar you found difficulties with?

a. Pre- Seminar

b. During Seminar

c. Both

- Please explain why:_____

17. To what extent do you agree/disagree that Socratic seminar is a suitable way to learn English?

a. Agree b. Neutral c. Disagree

- Whatever your answer is, Please explain:

18. Do you believe that because the teacher's role was equal to the role of the learners this gave you more opportunities to speak and interact with the teacher and other participants?

a. Yes b. No

Please explain _____

19. To what extent do you agree/disagree that using Socratic seminar helped in reducing some difficulties you face while speaking

a. Agree b. Neutral c. Disagree

20. Has Socratic seminars technique helped you improve your speaking skill?

a. Yes b. No

Whatever your answer, please justify

21. Form the following aspects, which one (s) do you think they have ameliorated through Socratic seminar?

a. Speaking skill b. Reading comprehension

c. Leadership and Responsibility d. Communicative skill

e. Critical reading and thinking f. Collaboration/ Teamwork

Others, please specify _____

Thank you for your effort, time and collaboration.

Appendix B: Classroom Observation Checklist

Course:

Teacher:

Observer:

Group:

Number of Students:

Date:

Rating Scales: A-Well Observed B-Fairly Observed C-Not Observed

Classroom Elements			
Section One: General Classroom Atmosphere	A	B	C
1. The physical setting is clean and large Enough, so that it allows the success of the Socratic Seminar			
2. The seating arrangement favors effective interaction.			
3. The teacher provides a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for students to participate naturally in the discussion			
Comments:			
.....			
.....			
Section Two: Teacher's Roles	A	B	C
1. Teacher is a co-learner, he has no authority on "right" answers.			
2. Takes the role of facilitator when s/he feels that students are out of the topic of discussion			
3. The teacher dominates the talk			
Comments:			
.....			
.....			
Section Three: Socratic Seminars	A	B	C

1. Technique instructions are clear enough for learners			
2. The selected texts were interesting and difficult enough to encourage discuss			
3. The seminar text handed is to the learners' a day before the seminar			
4. Seminar leader have carefully read and annotated the selected text			
5. The seminar leader gets participants engaged in the discussion			
6. The seminar leader asks questions that lead to further questions			
7. The seminar leader keeps attention on ideas in the text being discussed			
8. The seminar leader listens carefully to participants' statements			
9. The seminar leader accepts participants' answers without judgment			
10. The seminar leader helps the participants get back on track if they strayed from the text or moved to debate.			
11. Participants are prepared for the discussion series of questions			
12. During the discussion participants speak loudly and clearly			
13. Participants have carefully read and annotated the selected text			
14. Participants encourage each other's involvement and listen to each other's respectfully			
15. Participants ask for help to clear up confusion			
16. Participants ask higher level core questions to move the dialogue forward			
17. The discussion in not dominate by one learner			
18. There is no side conversation during the discussion or any distracting Behavior.			
19. Participants work in collaboration to reach a mutual understating.			
Comments:			
.....			
.....			
Section Five: learners' Oral Performance	A	B	C

A. Fluency			
1. Speaking with little pauses and hesitations.			
2. Speaking slowly with some hesitations.			
3. Lack of fluency: not able to construct a sentence.			
B. Accuracy			
1. Speaking with very few grammatical mistakes: able to use self-correction.			
2. Speaking with some mistakes.			
3. Speaking with a lot of mistakes			
C. Vocabulary			
1. Rich vocabulary store: able to use new words appropriately.			
2. Simple vocabulary, but able to convey meaning.			
3. Very limited vocabulary: struggling to recall words.			
Comments:			
.....			
.....			
Section Five: learners' participation			A
			B
			C
1. Learners are attentive during the all stages of Socratic seminar			
2. Learners show commitment to keep the discussion going (interaction).			
3. Learners are interested and motivated.			
4. Learners show readiness and feel comfortable to work in collaboration			
Comments:			
.....			
.....			

Appendix C: Socratic Seminar Text N° 1

Cyberbullying

In today's world which has been made smaller by technology, new age problems have been born. No doubt technology has a lot of benefits; however, it also comes with a negative side. It has given birth to cyberbullying. To put it simply, cyberbullying refers to the misuse of information technology with the intention to harass others. Subsequently, cyberbullying comes in various forms. It doesn't necessarily mean hacking someone's profiles or posing to be someone else. It also includes posting negative comments about somebody or spreading rumors to defame someone. As everyone is caught up on the social network, it makes it very easy for anyone to misuse this access.

Cyberbullying includes actions to manipulate, harass and defame any person. These hostile actions are seriously damaging and can affect anyone easily and gravely. They take place on social media, public forums, and other online information websites. A cyberbully is not necessarily a stranger; it may also be someone you know.

Cyberbullying is a multi-faced issue. However, the intention of this activity is one and the same. To hurt people and bring them harm. Cyberbullying is not a light matter. It needs to be taken seriously as it does have a lot of dangerous effects on the victim. Moreover, it disturbs the peace of mind of a person. Many people are known to experience depression after they are cyberbullied. In addition, they indulge in self-harm. All the derogatory comments made about them makes them feel inferior. It also results in a lot of insecurities and complexes. The victim which suffers cyberbullying in the form of harassing starts having self-doubt. When someone points at your insecurities, they only tend to enhance. Similarly, the victims worry and lose their inner peace. Other than that, cyberbullying also tarnishes the image of a person. It hampers their reputation with the false rumors spread about them. Everything on social media spreads like wildfire. Moreover, people often question the credibility. Thus, one false rumor destroys people's lives.

Cyberbullying prevention is the need of the hour. It needs to be monitored and put an end to. There are various ways to tackle cyberbullying. We can implement them at individual levels as well as authoritative levels. Firstly, always teach your children to never share personal information online. For instance, if you list your home address or phone number there, it will make you a potential target of cyberbullying easily. Secondly, avoid posting explicit photos of yourself online. Also, never discuss personal matters on social media. In other words, keep the information limited within your group of friends and family.

In conclusion, awareness is the key to prevent online harassment. We should make the children aware from an early age so they are always cautious. Moreover, parents must monitor their children's online activities and limit their usage. Most importantly, cyberbullying must be reported instantly without delay. This can prevent further incidents from taking place.

Appendix D: Socratic Seminar Text N° 2

Generation Gap

During a quarrel with his parents, young Michael cried, “I want excitement, adventure, money, beautiful women. I’ll never find it here at home, so I’m leaving. Don’t try to stop me.”

With that he headed toward the door. His father rose and followed close behind. “Didn’t you hear what I said? I don’t want you to stop me.”

“Who’s trying to stop you?” replied his father. “If you wait a minute, I’ll go with you.”

The term “generation gap” was coined by sociologists and anthropologists in the 1960’s and is often still used today. One concept of the generation gap is that parents and offspring have different values and beliefs. As a result, many parents fear that they will lose influence with their children when peer pressure becomes too highly valued.

It is always nice to have fresh ideas and points of view. It is a clear indication of how we are advancing and developing at a great level. However, when this clash of ideas and viewpoints gets too much, it becomes a matter of worry.

As we all know there is no stronger bond than that of a kid and his parents. Thus, we must understand its importance and handle it with care. Generally, a generation gap shows that parents fail to understand their kids and vice versa. Parents expect their children to conform to the societal norms as they have. But the kids are of the modern age with a broad outlook. They refuse to accept these traditional ways.

This is one of the main reasons why the conflict begins. They do not reach a solution and thus distance themselves because of misunderstandings. This is a mistake at both ends. The parents must try not to impose the same expectations which their parents had from them. Similarly, the kids must not outright wrong their parents but try to understand where this is coming from.

In other words, just because there is a difference of opinion does not mean that people give up on relationships. It is high time both parties understand that no one is completely right or wrong. They can both reach a middle ground and sort it out. Acceptance and understanding are the keys here.

Moreover, there must be a friendly relationship between parents and kids. The kids must be given the space to express themselves freely without the fear of traditional thinking. Likewise, the children must trust their parents enough to indulge them in their lives.

In short, a generation gap happens due to the constant changes in the world. While we may not stop the evolvement of the world, we can strengthen the bond and bridge the gap it creates. Each person must respect everyone for their individuality rather than fitting them into a box they believe to be right.

Appendix E: Socratic Seminar Text N° 3

Organ Donation

Organ donation is the process when a person allows an organ of their own to be removed and transplanted to another person, legally, either by consent while the donor is alive or dead with the assent of the next of kin. Needless to say, saving a human life is one of the most righteous that one can ever consider in his/her lifetime. Your eyes can make a person see the world and certain organs can make a person breathe and so on. For that, Organ donation is considered as one of the great advances in modern medicine.

Organ donating is a very charitable act. The fact that the donated organ can potentially save human being from the clutches of death is one the biggest plus involved with organ donation. But unfortunately, the need for organ donors is much greater than the number of people who actually donate. Here there are some statistics and facts concerning organ Donation:

- Every day in the United States, 21 people die waiting for an organ and more than 120,048 (www.unos.org, Nov. 1, 2016) men, women, and children await life-saving organ transplants.

-In 2010, 62% of living donors were women.

-Matching organs must be done quickly- not for the health of the recipient, but some organs must be transplanted in a matter of hours, for instance: Heart: 4-6 hours / Lungs: 4-6 hours / Kidneys: 36-48 hours / Liver: 12-15 hours.

However, the decision to be an organ donor may seem easy for some: you sign an agreement that will let your heart, kidneys, liver, pancreas and other organ be used after your death in a way that helps the recipients lead fuller, healthier lives. But for the other people, the choice is harder. Some fear that a doctor may not work as hard to save them because s/he wants their organs for other patients, or that their organs might be removed prematurely. There may also be a psychological cost of having to think about your own death at a time when you are still relatively healthy. Other people may simply not want to bother with program that does not directly benefit them.

Appendix F: Socratic Seminar Text N° 4

Brain drain

Brain drain, which is the action of having highly skilled and educated people leaving their country to work abroad, has become one of the developing countries concern. Brain drain is also referred to as human capital flight. More and more third world science and technology educated people are heading for more prosperous countries seeking higher wages and better working conditions. This has of course serious consequences on the sending countries.

While many people believe that immigration is a personal choice that must be understood and respected, others look at the phenomenon from a different perspective. What makes those educated people leave their countries should be seriously considered and a distinction between push and pull factors must be made. The push factors include low wages and lack of satisfactory working and living conditions. Social unrest, political conflicts and wars may also be determining causes. The pull factors, however, include intellectual freedom and substantial funds for research.

Brain drain has negative impact on the sending countries economic prospects and competitiveness. It reduces the number of dynamic and creative people who can contribute to the development of their country. Likewise, with more entrepreneurs taking their investments abroad, developing countries are missing an opportunity of wealth creation. This has also negative consequences on tax revenue and employment.

Most of the measures taken so far have not had any success in alleviating the effects of brain drain. A more global view must take into consideration the provision of adequate working and living conditions in the sending countries. Another option should involve encouraging the expatriates to contribute their skill to the development of their countries without necessarily physically relocating.

الملخص

الهدف من هذه المذكرة هو ابراز دور وأهمية تقنية الندوة السقراطية في تطوير مهارة التحدث عند طلاب سنة أولى ليسانس لغة انجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة -الجزائر-. حيث لوحظ ان قدرة الطلاب الكلامية ومستواهم في التعبير عن أنفسهم وأفكارهم متدني. وهذا يرجع الى سبب نقص الممارسة المستمرة للغة في القسم والذي ترتب عليه ظهور كثير من المعوقات والصعبات حين رغبتهم في استخدام اللغة للتواصل او تعبير عن رأيهم. هذا بدوره يعود بشكل كبير الى نوعية التقنيات والنشاطات التي يعتمد عليها الأساتذة في تدريس وتطوير مهارة التحدث عند طلابهم. لذلك تم اقتراح تقنية الندوة السقراطية كبديل لتقنيات التدريس التقليدية حتى تتيح للمتعلمين الكثير من الفرص المتساوية لممارسة اللغة المستهدفة وتساعدهم على تخطي كل العوائق والمشاكل التي تؤثر على تواصلهم باللغة الإنجليزية بهدف تطوير مهارتهم في التحدث. وللتأكد من صحة الفرضية المقترحة لهذه الدراسة التي تنص على انه إذا تم اعتماد تقنية الندوة السقراطية من طرف الأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية في حصص التعبير الشفوي سيتم تطور مهارة التحدث لدى المتعلمين، تم استعمال المنهج النوعي. ولجمع البيانات استعمل الباحث وسيلتين مختلفتين: الملاحظة الصفية لشهر كامل باستخدام تقنية الندوة السقراطية للتدريس لتحقيق من كيفية تنفيذ هذه التقنية مع متعلمي السنة الأولى وتأثيرها في تعزيز مهارة المتعلمين في سياق واقعي وأيضاً لمقارنة أداء المتعلمين ومشاركتهم في الدوائر السقراطية بأدائهم في الأنشطة الشفوية الأخرى لملاحظة تطوير مهارتهم في التحدث. استبيان تم ايداعه عبر الأنترنت مخصص للطلبة أولى ليسانس الذي طبق معهم استاذهم تقنية الندوة السقراطية 'فوج 04' لاستنباط آرائهم ومواقفهم تجاه دور تقنية الندوة السقراطية في تطوير مهاراتهم في التحدث. وقد اسفرت النتائج المتحصل عليها بعد تحليل المعطيات ان التقنية الندوة السقراطية لها أثر إيجابي على تحسن مهارة التحدث للطلاب بالإضافة ان غالبية الطالب اظهروا موقف إيجابي حول اثارها عليهم واستخدامها في حصص التعبير الشفهي لتدريس. ومنه فإن النتائج المتحصل عليها قد أثبتت صحة الفرضية المطروحة.

