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**The Impact of Students' Native Language Use on their
Foreign Language Speaking Skill
Case Study of First year LMD English Students of BISKRA
University**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirement for Master Degree in
English: Sciences of the Language**

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Dedication

To the memory of my beloved uncle MOHAMMED and my grandfather AHMED .

To my sympathetic father and thoughtful mother whose love always strengthens my will.

To my precious fiancée for I owe all the love.

To all my brothers and sisters.

To all the members of my family.

To all my friends.

To all my teachers.

To all those who love me.

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the effect of mother language use on the foreign language learners' speaking skill. EFL learners think in Arabic when they use English that is why their English sounds like Arabic. Since speaking a foreign language is the students' aim in EFL classrooms, the importance is given to eliminating the problem of Arabic interference in speaking English as a foreign language. Therefore, we hypothesize that if Arab learners are aware of the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic differences between the mother tongue and the target language, this will reduce the interference that they generally exhibit. Throughout this study, we want to investigate how far does the native language effect the student's speaking achievement in EFL classrooms in Algeria and thereby propose solutions to this phenomenon. To accomplish this study, we designed a questionnaire which was administered to first year LMD students at the branch of the English language at Biskra University. After the analysis of the data collected and the results obtained from the questionnaire, we arrived to confirm the hypothesis of this research and we tried to put forward some pedagogical recommendations, as how to find appropriate remedies that would eventually help learners to cope with the interference of their native language while using the target language.

List of Abbreviations

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

MT: Mother Tongue

NL: Native Language

SL: Second Language

TL: Target Language

List of Tables

Table 01: Differences between Written Grammar and Spoken Grammar (Thornbury, 2005, p. 21)	6
Table 02: Students' Age Distribution	28
Table 03: Students' Gender	28
Table 04: Students' Choice to Study English	29
Table 05: Students' Self Evaluation of Their English level	29
Table 06: The Influence of Mother Language on the Use of Target Language	30
Table 07: Resources of students' oral tasks	31
Table 08: The students' Self Evaluation of the Amount of the TL Culture that They Have Learned	32
Table 09: EFL Students' Awareness of the Cultural Differences between the NL and the TL	33
Table 10: The Students' Ability to Understand and to Use English without Difficulties	33
Table 11: Students' Skills Difficulties	34
Table 12: What Students Do When Facing Difficulties in Speaking English	35
Table 13: The Students' Arabic equivalent Idioms	36
Table 14: The Equivalentents of the Idioms	37

LIST OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
1. Statement of the Problem	1
2. Aims of the study	2
3. Research Questions	2
4. Research Hypothesis	2
5. Research method	3
6. Structure of the Study	3
CHAPTER ONE: THE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL	4
Introduction	4
1. Speaking skill definition	5
2. Aspects of the Spoken Language	6
a- Connected speech	6
b- Expressive devices	6
c- Lexis	6
d- Grammar	6
e- Negotiation language	7
f- Pronunciation	7
3. Speaking processing skill	7

a- Language processing:	8
b-Interacting with others	8
c-Information Processing	8
3. The importance of the speaking skill	8
4.Oral Communicative Strategies	9
* Achievement Strategies	10
a- Guessing Strategies	10
b- Paraphrasing Strategies	10
c- Co-operative Strategies	11
d. Reduction Strategies	11
e- Avoidance Strategies	11
5. Practicing the speaking skill in classroom	11
a.Communication games	13
b.Drama	13
c. Discussion activities	13
d. Presentations and Talks	14
6. Speaking Difficulties in Foreign Language Learning	14
a. Inhibition	15
b. Nothing to Say	15
c. Uneven Participation	16
	17

d. Mother Tongue	17
CHAPTER TWO:	18
INTRODUCTION:	18
1. Mother Language definition:	18
2. Transfer:	19
2.1 Types of Transfer:	20
2.2 Theories of Transfer:	20
2.3 Factors Affecting Transfer:	22
3. Behaviorist Learning Theory:	23
3.1 Habits:	23
3.2 Errors:	24
4. Foreign Language and Mother Tongue Transfer:	25
Conclusion:	26
CHAPTER THREE:	27
Introduction	27
1. Student's Sample:	27
2. Description of the Questionnaire	28
3. Data Analysis	29
Conclusion	38
Recommendations:	39
References	40

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Since the beginnings of the 20th century linguists shown huge interest to develop foreign language teaching methods, the common aim of these strategies is to limit the negative impact of issues that might face learners in order to achieve better acquirement of the target language at the level of the three linguistic skills; reading, writing and especially speaking.

The present study investigates one of the major issues that faces foreign language students and affects their learning process; it is the use of native language and its impact on the speaking skill; in order to understand the relationship between both native and foreign languages, and how to deal with this phenomenon.

1. Statement of the Problem

Code switching is a systematic behavior that reveals the learner's mastery of English speaking skill. But it has been obvious that the 1st year LMD English students have the tendency to use their first language; to what extent does this issue influence the learners speaking skill achievement and how should teachers consider the phenomenon in order to facilitate the English speaking learning?

2. Aims of the study

This study investigates the impact of mother language use on the students' speaking skill enhancement, the investigation aims to take the responsible causes into consideration while teaching,

3. Research Questions

The questions we ask are:

1. To what extent may the first language use affect the second language speaking skill acquirement?
2. What are the causes that lead students to use the mother tongue?
3. How can teachers help students to overcome the code switching issue and improve their speaking skill?

4. Research Hypothesis

We hypothesis that the factors leading students speak in Arabic during English oral expression class are basically relied on social and cultural norms due to the distance between target language and their daily life.

5. Research method

In this study, we are looking for the correlation between two variables which is the impact of students' native language use on their foreign language speaking skill. The study adopts a descriptive method assessed by questionnaire for students. The constraint of time is the main reason for not adopting the experimental design. The population of our research is the 1st year LMD oral expression students.

The data collected in this piece of research is carried out through the result of the questionnaire with oral expression teachers. The questionnaire intend to find out the causes of the concerned issue from the students perspectives. After collecting the required data for the research, we will analyze in order to understand set and define the relation between first and second language and then suggest methods that should lead the process of learning to be more effective.

6. Structure of the Study

This research is basically divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to define the first variable which is mother tongue, the second chapter focuses on the second language speaking skill of the 1st year students and the third chapter focuses on the field work where hypotheses are tested, and then the analysis of the obtained results.

CHAPTER ONE: THE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL

Introduction

Krashen stated that people learning foreign languages follow generally the same steps as they acquired their native language, hence the use of mother tongue in the learning process should be minimized.

Algerian researches pay very little attention to this issue, this suggests either the use of mother tongue in foreign language teaching classrooms does not exist or this phenomenon does not affect the process of learning. However many linguists conducted multiple researches to discuss the impact of using native language by students during second language learning classes on the speaking skill mastery, and there seems to be a wide range of opinions about first language use. Few educators (Ahmed Fakhri, 1994; Cole, 1998; La Van, 2001; Nazary, 2008; Mona. M. Hamed, 2013) suggested several ways of limitations of mother tongue's use and proposed solutions that might lead to such decision; these solutions are based on social and cultural norms, student's motivation, age and proficiency and the implication of target language in the environment external means of communication. While others (Reineman, 2002; Connick, 2002; Plich, 2002) permit the first language use by teachers especially with novice foreign language learners, explanations and introducing new vocabulary. They also think that students' mother tongue use can help and motivate them to practice and speak during foreign language classes.

This research takes into consideration the 1st year English LMD students which are supposed to be of high proficiency, however; the debate is still obvious at this level

especially when it comes to oral expression classes. The present study aims to understand the tendency of both teachers and students of oral expression to use mother tongue during the courses, investigate the responsible factors and analyze its impact on the student's speaking skill achievement to finally suggest some methods to limit first language use and improve the students' English speaking skill.

1. Speaking skill definition:

Speaking is a basic competence that L2 Learners should master besides other language skills. It is regarded as a complex process of sending and receiving information through the use of both verbal expressions and nonverbal signs such as gestures, mimics and facial expressions. Hedge (2000: 261) defines speaking as “a skill by which people are judged while first impressions are being formed.”. In other words the speaking skill is a major reflect not only of the speaker's level of language mastery but also his personality.

Mc Namara (2000) went further by assuming that “ the speaking skill is the ability to use a language. It comprises two points: First, being knowledgeable of the aspects of the language; second, being able to practise these aspects in real-life communication successfully”. Aiming that being mastering the speaking skill requires: knowledge of the linguistic aspect of TL such as grammar, lexis and pronunciation and also the know how to consider these aspects to communicate via TL.

2. Aspects of the Spoken Language:

a- Connected speech:

This ability needs from the speaker of English to produce more connected sounds not only separated phonemes. These sounds may be modified, omitted, added or weakened in the connected speech.

b- Expressive devices

English native speakers use effectively the phonological rules which refer to the pitch, stress, volume, speed with the use of non-verbal means. These devices help them to convey their intended meaning. Students, then need to have this ability of employing such devices if they want to be effective communicators.

c- Lexis

When learners produce some language functions, they often use the same lexical structures. The teacher's role then, is to provide them with different phrases which carry different functions so that they can use them in the different stages of communication with others.

d- Grammar

Spoken language grammar is characterized by specific rules and structure compared to the spoken form. Thornbury (2005) mentioned these grammatical differences throughout the following table:

Written grammar	Spoken grammar
- Sentence is the basic unit of construction	-Clause is the basic unit of construction
-Clauses are often embedded	-Clauses are usually added (co-
-Subject +verb + object construction	-Head + body + tail construction

-Reported speech favoured	-Direct speech favoured
-Precision favoured	-Vagueness tolerated
-Little ellipsis	-A lot of ellipsis
-No question tags	-Many question tags
-No performance effects	-Performance effects, including: hesitations, repeats, false starts,

Table 01: Differences between Written Grammar and Spoken Grammar (Thornbury, 2005, p. 21)

e- Negotiation language

learners benefit a lot from the use of negotiation language; they often ask clarification when they are listening to others talk. So, the teachers have to provide them with the necessary expressions they need when they ask clarification from other speakers. Learners also need to well perform their utterances if they seek to be understood and clear especially when they can see that the other interlocutors did not understand them.

f- Pronunciation

Phonology plays an important role in the speech performance, especially in English foreign language learning. Much more the speaker's pronunciation is correct, very easily he/she will be understood. According to Thornbury (2005), it is very easy for native speakers to distinguish foreigners. Foreigners fail to perform certain aspects at the level of speech; such as, stress, rhythm, and intonation.

3. Speaking processing skills

The necessary processing skills of speaking are the following:

a- Language processing: this refers to the ability of the learners/ speakers to process the language in their minds through putting it in a coherent order so that the other interlocutors can understand it and get the intended messages. Speakers also should be able to retrieve words and phrases from their memories to use them when they are interacting with others.

b-Interacting with others: most of the speaking situations involve interaction between two or more interlocutors, that is to say an effective speaker needs to be able to listen and understand others' talk then reacts through taking turns or keeping the others to do so.

c-Information Processing: this relates to the ability of processing the information in the mind rapidly, i.e. the time speakers get information, they should be ready to response to the others' talk.

3. The importance of the speaking skill

The speaking skill was not expected to be as important as reading and writing with the traditional EFL teaching methods. But with the rising of the communicative approach speaking and oral communication become the most important aim and method of teaching foreign languages. Nowadays, most of second language learners privilege the speaking skill in their learning because if they master this skill then they will be considered as if they have mastered all of the other skills. Furthermore, the main question often given to foreign language learners is “do you speak English?”, but not “do you write English?”. Celce-Murcia (2001: 103) argues that for most people “the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication.”

The importance of speaking is more revealed with the integration of the other language skills. For instance, speaking can help students to develop their vocabulary and grammar and then improving their writing skill. With speaking, learners can express their personal feeling, opinions or ideas; tell stories; inform or explain; request; converse and discuss, i.e. through speaking, we can display the different functions of language. Ur (2002) stated: “of all the four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing; speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as speaker of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing.”.

4.Oral Communicative Strategies

The ultimate aim of learning a second language in classrooms should be the acquisition of the oral communicative competence, i.e. the ability to speak appropriately and confidently. However, learners may find difficulties in taking parts in interactions. So, the best way to overcome these problems of communication is through using communicative strategies. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005:170-71) define communicative strategies as “Speakers-oriented; that is they are used by learners to compensate for lack of L2 knowledge or their inability to access the L2 knowledge they have.” These strategies help learners to avoid the breakdown of the oral communication. Hughes (2002) also defines this term as the ability of the learners to manipulate a conversation and negotiate interaction in an effective way. Such strategies are particularly important where there are problems of expression and communication.

Bygate (1987) classifies two main types of communicative strategies. First, achievement strategies which include: guessing strategies, paraphrase strategies and cooperative strategies. Second, reduction strategies which involve avoidance strategies.

*** Achievement Strategies**

Learners use such strategies to compensate for language gap by using a substitute; they try to find a way to convey their messages without losing or changing it. Achievement strategies involve the following sub strategies.

a- Guessing Strategies

There are different types of guessing strategies the speaker might use. He can foreignize his mother tongue word and pronounce it as it belongs to the target language like a Frenchman who is speaking English and who uses the word “manoeuvre” as it is an English word. The speaker might also use a word from his mother tongue without changing it hoping that the interlocutors will understand them. For example, an English speaker says “il y a deux candles sur la cheminée.” A last guessing strategy can be used to coin a word, i.e. a learner creates a new target language word on the basis of his knowledge of the language, such as using „air ball“ for balloon.

b- Paraphrasing Strategies

This mainly involves looking for an alternative to the word or the expression that the speaker needs in the target language. He might use a synonym or a more general word; this is called a lexical substitution strategy. The speaker can explain a concept or a word by making some sort of phrases to express his meaning, this is also called circumlocution. For example, a mixing of beige and brown: light brown.

c- Co-operative Strategies

These are used when the speaker gets help from the other interlocutors. He may ask for the word through using it in the mother tongue and the interlocutors help him to find it in the target language, or through indicating the object that he means.

d. Reduction Strategies

Learners reduce their communicative objectives through giving up the topic or abandoning a specific message.

e- Avoidance Strategies

The learners often use such strategies to avoid various kinds of trouble they can have. They may want to avoid some particular sound sequence, for example, “th” in English. Some learners wish to avoid the conditional in English, and others like to avoid words whose gender is unknown or unsure for them. In using this kind of strategies, the learners may sacrifice part of their intended meaning. Finally, students may avoid some difficulties in expressing opinions too, because of the lack of vocabulary, so, they avoid some of the message content and look for something else to talk about or simply they keep silent.

5. Practicing the speaking skill in classroom

Practicing the speaking skill outside the classroom is the role of listening. In a foreign country, the students will hear the spoken language regularly and then without any

conscious efforts they will imitate and perform their own utterances on the basis of what they have heard. Progressively, they will come at a stage where they can speak like people around them.

In the mother country, SL students need to practise the language regularly inside the classroom through performing different activities. O'Malley and Pierce (1996: 59) assert the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) suggests that "different kinds of speaking activities (and consequently assessment task) are appropriate at different levels of proficiency." So, learners should be given sample practice in classroom at all levels to express themselves in situations where they can use spontaneous language.

Practice activities may serve the learning/teaching goal of speaking proficiency. Richards and Lockhart (1996) define practice activities as tasks used to perform or learn a particular item or involve the use of a given model. For example, dialogues may be used to perform sentence patterns. Richards, Platt and Weber (1985: 289) add that "the use of variety of different tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative[...]since it provides a purpose for classroom activity" (cited in Lee, 2000:31). Tasks, then, are also used to achieve communication beyond that of practicing the language itself.

If we assume that speaking the SL is an essential part of language learning, teachers must provide activities that involve interaction between learners. Scriver (2005: 152) makes the important point that: "the aim of communicative activity in class is to get learners to use the language they are learning to interact in realistic and meaningful ways; usually involving exchanges of information or opinion." Among these activities are the following:

a. Communication games

Teachers design such games to encourage and involve the students in a verbal interaction. According to Bygate (1987) such activities include first, “Describe and Draw” in which one student describes a given picture and the other one draws it. Second, “Describe and Arrange”; one student describes a particular structure using oral language and the other reconstructs it without seeing the original one. Third, “Find the difference”, two students have two similar pictures but with some differences, they must extract these differences through describing their pictures, i.e. without seeing each other’s pictures. O’Malley and Pierce (1996) call these activities “information gap activities”; they define them as “the ability of one person to give information to another. An information gap is an activity where one student is provided with information that is kept from a partner.”

b. Drama

Simulations and role-plays: These three types of oral activities are very important – according to Bygate (1987) - they are not performed for audiences, the participants work together within an imaginary setting. O’Malley and Pierce (1996) say that such activities are more authentic because they provide a format for using the real life conversation such as repetitions, interruptions, recitations, facial expressions and gestures. Students often engage in another identity in role-plays, drama and simulations activities, where their anxiety is reduced, motivation is increased and their language acquisition enhanced.

c. Discussion activities

These activities are often employed for advanced language learners; they can serve as the basis of spontaneous interaction. Lindsay and Knight (2006) point out that in such activities, students are supposed to give their opinions or receive others’ opinions, they can

speak freely without being told what to say or not by the teacher, the students should be only informed what to talk about and given the enough time to structure what they wish to say. However, Thornbury (2005) says that many teachers agree that the best discussions are those that arise spontaneously either because one learner reports something personal or because the topic of the course book arises discussion.

d. Presentations and Talks

The best way to make students gain their self-confidence is through making them present oral works in front of their classmates. Thornbury (2005) asserts that the students act of standing up in front of their colleagues and speaking is an excellent preparation for authentic speaking. A prepared talk is when students make the presentation on a given topic of their choice, and this talk is not planned for an informal spontaneous conversation; it is more writing- like.

6. Speaking Difficulties in Foreign Language Learning

Practicing the speaking skill of the foreign language is not as knowing about this language. Echevarria et al. (2008) support that the difference between the knowledge of how things must be done and the ability to do these things is crucial in the learning process. Learners often find some difficulties when practising the speaking skill, even those who know about the system of the foreign language. Parrott (1993) asserts that teachers must perform a series of tasks that aim at providing learners with the confidence and the skills required to take advantages of the classroom opportunities in order to speak English effectively. According to Ur (2000) there are four main problems in getting students speak in the foreign language in the classroom.

a. Inhibition

This problem is more observable when learners try to participate in the classroom but many factors stop them to do so. Littlewood (1999: 93) argues that “it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety.” Such factors refer to the feeling of shyness and fear of making mistakes and these are due to the ill development of communicative skills and the feeling of linguistic inferiority. Students fear to make mistakes especially if they will speak to critical audience. Ur (2000:111) states that “Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Worried about, making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.”

This view is supported also by Bowman et al. (1989) who argue that in teaching speaking you are asking your learners to express themselves in front of the whole class, so this leads many of them to experience the stress when doing speaking activities. To end, stress and anxiety are two factors that also can stop the students from speaking confidently in front of their classmates.

b. Nothing to Say

The common expressions SL Learners use when they are imposed to participate in a given topic is “I have nothing to talk about”, “I don’t know”, “no comment” or they keep silent. These expressions are due to the lack of motivation in expressing themselves or the chosen topic they should discuss or talk about. Rivers (1968: 192) says that: “The teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him [the learner] or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express, whether in the native language or the foreign language.”

Moreover, the poor practice of the SL can contribute to create this problem. Backer and Westrup (2003) support that many students find it difficult to answer when teachers ask them to say anything in the target language. The learners may have only some ideas to talk about; they may not know how to use some vocabulary or they are not sure of the grammatical correctness. Also, students could not carry out the discussion on topics that are not interesting for them.

c. Uneven Participation

This problem refers to the amount of each student's time of talking. Rivers (1968) claims that some personality factors can affect participation in a FL and teachers then should recognize them. There are some students who tend to be dominant and take almost the whole students' talk time. However, others prefer to speak only if they ensure that what they will say is correct, and some others keep silent, show no interest or participation all along the course. Harmer (2001) suggests streaming weak participators in groups and letting them work together. In such cases they will not hide behind the strong participators, and the teacher can achieve a high level of participation. Another factor that can create problem of participation is the classroom arrangement that may not help students to perform some speaking activities. Bowman et al. (1989: 40) support the idea by saying that "traditional classroom seating arrangements often work against you in your interactive teaching."

Low participation is due to the ignorance of teacher's motivation too. If the teacher does not motivate his learners, the talkative ones also will show no interest. So, increasing and directing student motivation is one of the teacher's responsibilities.

d. Mother Tongue Use

Second language students of the same mother tongue tend to use it outside and even inside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. According to Baker and Westrup (2003: 12) “barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language.” Therefore, the learners will not be able to use the foreign language correctly if they keep on being influenced by the use of their mother tongue. Lack of the vocabulary of the target language usually leads learners to borrow words from their native language.

CHAPTER TWO:

Mother language and language interference

INTRODUCTION:

When confronted with something new, whether it is a new food, a different kind of music, or just new information, it is natural instinct to look for similarities with things that are familiar, to try to draw some comparison with what we know already. Consciously or unconsciously, we bring what we know to what we do not, making it impossible to learn anything entirely from scratch.

This is certainly not less important when we set about learning a foreign language. It is not possible to learn a foreign language without relying to some extent on our mother tongue, and the impulse to look for similarities and to draw conclusions based on them is a strong here as in any other learning context. In this context we can see that the most noticeable hurdle that students face is mother interference. So, what is the impact of mother tongue and stimuli/response in learning a foreign language speaking skill?"

1.Mother Language definition:

According to Ashworth (1992), mother tongue or native language is the language which the person acquires in early years and which normally becomes her natural instrument of thought and communication. An online article, entitled "Mother Tongue", defines mother tongue (first language, native language or vernacular) as the language a person learns first. And correspondingly the person is called a native speaker of the language (n.p). The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Skiba, 2000) defines mother tongue as one's native language; the language learned by children and passed from one generation to the next; it is received by birth or from ancestors.

Basing on that we conclude that mother language is not only a mean of communication with the primordial understanding of the phenomenon but it goes far beyond that since it functions as an intrinsic system that allows the native speaker to interpret, develop and process all what is logical, in other words all what we receive as information is evaluated and understood by referring to our native language.

2. Transfer:

According to Ellis (1999) transfer is the process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language, it is negative transfer.

Ormrod (1990) has a different point of view. He agrees that transfer is a part of everyday life: individuals encounter new situations and draw on their previously acquired knowledge and skills to deal with them. In fact, transfer is an essential component of human functioning, so it becomes positive transfer.

For the purpose of this work transfer will be considered the same as interference. Interference may be viewed as the transference of elements of one language to another (Berthold cited in Ormrod, 1990).

The idea that interference from the foreign language is the major obstacle to foreign language learning was dominant in applied linguistics from the 1940s through the late 1960s. Here is a classic statement of the position:

The basic problem of the foreign language learning arise not out of any essential difficulty in the features of the new language themselves, but primarily out of the special “set” created

by the foreign language habits (Labo cited in Ellis, 1999, p. 124).

Berthold defines grammatical interference as the first language influencing the second in terms of word order, use of pronouns, articles and so on. Labo cited in Ellis (1999) claims that the grammatical structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign language and it is the major problem in learning the foreign language and

there are three interacting factors in the determination of language transfer: a learner's psycho typology, how a learner organizes his NL; perception of NL-TL distance; actual knowledge of the TL.

Theorists distinguish two types of transfer: positive vs. negative.

2.1 Types of Transfer:

Positive vs. negative transfer

When learning in one situation facilitates learning or performance in another situation, we say that positive transfer has occurred. For example learning basic mathematics procedures should facilitate one's ability to balance a checkbook. Learning principles of reinforcement should improve a teacher's ability to modify student behavior.

On the other hand, when something learned in one situation hinders one's ability to learn or perform in a second situation, then negative transfer has occurred. Individuals accustomed to driving a standard transmission who then find themselves behind the wheel of an automatic transmission often step on a clutch hat isn't there. People who learn a foreign language typically apply patterns of speech production characteristic of their native tongue, thus giving them a foreign accent (Schmidt & Young, 1987).

As long as there is a "common something" among tasks, the possibility of transfer between

one task to another exists (Gray & Orasanu, 1987). Let's look at some theories of transfer.

2.2 Theories of Transfer:

How does transfer occur? Below I am going to present a brief overview of theory of transfer before twentieth-century learning theories according to Ormrod's book entitled "Human Learning –Theories, Principles, and Educational Applications".

An Early Behaviorist Theory: Thorndike's Identical Elements:

Edward Thorndike cited in Ormrod (1990) proposed a theory of transfer that emphasized specific transfer: transfer occurs only to the extent that the original and transfer tasks have identical elements. In a later study, Thorndike examined the interrelationships of high school students' academic achievement in different curricular

areas. Achievement in one subject matter appeared to facilitate students' achievement in another only when there was some commonality between the two subject matters.

A Later Behaviorist Perspective: Similarity of Stimuli and Response:

Since Thorndike's work, behaviorist views of transfer have focused on how transfer is affected by stimulus and response characteristics in the original and transfer situations. In general, principles of transfer which have emerged from behaviorist literature (Osgood, cited in Ormrod, 1990) include the following:

- When stimuli and responses are similar in the two situations, maximal positive transfer will occur.
- When stimuli are different and responses are similar, some positive transfer will occur.
- When stimuli are similar and responses are different, negative transfer will occur.

As an example of this last point, Ormrod remembered when he was a high school student when his class schedule included second-period Latin and third-period French. The word for "and" is spelled the same in both languages, but 'et' in French and Latin is pronounced very differently (/et/ in Latin /ay/ in French), hence meeting the conditions for negative transfer (similar stimuli, different responses). On several occasions he uttered the word "et" in French class, he was severely disapproved by his teacher (Ormrod, 1990).

Human Information Processing Theory: cognitive psychologists - Brooks cited in Ormrod (1990) are now beginning to develop their own views of how and when transfer occurs. A currently prominent view of transfer is this one: relevant information and skills are transferred to a new situation only when they are retrieved from short-term memory within the context of that new situation. Given the low probability that any particular piece of information will be retrieved, as well as the limited capacity of short-term memory, many potentially relevant pieces of information may very well not be transferred in situations in which they would be helpful.

The presence or absence of retrieval cues in the transfer situation determines what relevant information, if any, is retrieved from long-term memory. A new situation is more likely to

call to mind previously learned information if the situation and the relevant information are closely associated in memory. This will happen, for instance, if the new situation was previously anticipated when the new information was stored, so that the situation and information relevant to it were stored in association with each other.

To make it clear I am going to show it in an appropriate Capeverdean context. A Capeverdean English student everyday uses Creole to communicate, it is her long-term memory, and when he tries to communicate in English he uses his first language to tell words that dos not know in the foreign language that is her short-term memory, a language he is not accustomed to. He transfers what he knows from the long-term (Creole) to the short-term (English); the old into the new language.

Current Views on General Transfer: current views concerning general transfer are somewhere in between: general transfer is not as common as specific transfer (Gray cited in Ormrod, 1990), but learning occurring at one time can facilitate learning at another time if, in the process, the individual learns how to learn. Now, let's present some factors that affect the process of transfer.

2.3 Factors Affecting Transfer:

A number of variables are related to the occurrence of transfer. I will consider three of them.

- **The more thoroughly something is learned, the more likely it is to be transferred to a new situation:** there is often a trade-off between instructional time and transfer; the more quickly a topic is covered, the less likely it is to be transferred (Cormier 1987; Ellis, 1999; Gick & Holyoak, 1987). The implications of this finding for educational practice are clear: students should demonstrate thorough mastery of material if they will be expected to apply that information in future situations.
- **The more similar two situations are, the more likely it is that what is learned in one situation will be applied to the other situation:** behaviorists have argued that similarity of either stimuli or responses is necessary for transfer to occur. Cognitivists have proposed instead that because transfer depends on retrieval of relevant information at the

appropriate time, the perceived similarity rather than actual similarity of the two situations is important (Gick & Holyoak, 1987). Either way, one thing is clear: similarity between two situations affects transfer.

- **Numerous and varied examples and opportunities for practice increase the extent to which information and skills will be applied in new situations:** individuals are more likely to transfer something they have learned if they have encountered a wide of examples and practice situations (Cheng at al.,1986; Cormier 1987 cited in Ormrod, 1990). Individuals trained in this fashion store what they have learned in association with many different contexts and will therefore be more likely to retrieve information when they again encounter one of those contexts.

3. Behaviorist Learning Theory:

In order to understand the importance of mother tongue, it is necessary to understand the main tenets of behaviorist learning theory. According to Ellis (1999) up to the end of the 1960s, views of language learning were derived from a theory of learning in general. The dominant school in psychology, which informed most discussions of language learning, was behaviorism and two key notions can be identified in these discussions: ‘habits’ and ‘errors’. The theory of transfer is linked to a particular view of language learning as a series of habits and errors as a consequence of habits.

3.1 Habits:

Behaviorist psychology set out to explain behavior by observing the responses that took place when particular stimuli were present. Different stimuli produced different responses from a learner. These responses could be haphazard, or they can be regular.

The association of a particular response with a particular stimulus constituted a habit. Behaviorists argued that habits were automatic. That is, they were performed spontaneously without awareness and were difficult to eradicate unless environmental changes led to the extinction of the stimuli upon they were built According to Behaviorism, a habit was formed when a particular stimulus became regularly linked with a particular response, and the stimulus was said to ‘elicit’ the response. That is, the presence of stimulus called forth

a response. If the stimulus occurred sufficiently frequently, the response became practiced and therefore automatic. In the neo-behaviorism of Skinner a rather different account of how habits developed can be found. He played down the importance of stimulus, on the grounds that it was not always possible to state what stimulus was responsible for a particular response. He argued that it was the behaviour that followed a response which reinforced it and thus helped to strengthen the association. The learning of a habit, then, could occur through imitation (i.e. the learner copies the stimulus behavior sufficiently often for it to become automatic) or through reinforcement (i.e. the response of the learner is rewarded or punished depending on whether it is appropriate or otherwise, until only appropriate responses are given).

It was also believed that learning a foreign language could proceed in a similar way. Imitation and reinforcement were the means by which the learner identified the stimulus-response associations that constituted the habits of the FL (Ellis, 1999).

In other words, in addition to offering a general picture of FL as habit-formation, I will also explain why the FL learners make errors.

3.2 Errors:

The interference errors are those caused by the influence of the learner's mother tongue on his production of the target language in presumably those areas where the languages clearly differ.

According to behaviorist learning theory, old habits get in the way of learning new habits. It is interference. The notion of interference has a central place in behaviorist theory.

According to Ellis (1999) interference was the result of what was called proactive inhibition. This is concerned with the way in which previous learning prevents or inhibits the learning of new habits. Where the first language and foreign language share a meaning but express it in different ways (similar stimuli, different response), an error is likely to arise in the FL because the learner will transfer the realization device from her first language into the foreign. For example, a French speaker may express the idea of being cold (= meaning common to first and foreign language) as 'I have cold' in FL English, as a result of the way this meaning is expressed in L1 French, 'j'ai froid'. Learning a FL involves developing new habits whether the stimulus-response links of the FL differ from those of the L1. In order to develop these new habits, the learner has to overcome proactive inhibition.

Behaviorist learning theory predicts that transfer will take place from the first to the foreign language. Transfer will be negative when there is proactive inhibition. In this case errors will result. Thus, differences between the first and foreign language create learning difficulty which results in errors.

In behaviorist accounts of FL, errors were considered undesirable. They were evidence of non-learning, of the failure to overcome proactive inhibition. Some language teaching theorists believe that these challenges (errors and habits) are the principal challenges for foreign language learners.

4. Foreign Language and Mother Tongue Transfer:

It is popular belief that foreign language is strongly influenced by the learner's first language (L1). It is also popular belief that the role of the L1 is a negative one. That is, the L1 gets in the way or interferes with the learning of foreign language (FL) such that features of the L1 are transferred into the FL (Ellis, 1999).

If in popular opinion the L1 interferes with the learning of the new language, what is the impact of native language in learning an FL? I will reveals considerable disagreement about how pervasive the L1 is in FL. On the one hand the popular belief is given support:

Taking a psychological point of view, we can say there is never peaceful co-existence between two language systems in the learner, but rather constant warfare, and that warfare is not limited to the moment of cognition, but continues during the period of storing newly learnt ideas in memory. (Marton, cited in Ellis 1999, p.150).

On the other hand, the popular belief is rejected and the impact of the L1, if not denied totally, is at least minimized:

... Our data on FL acquisition of syntactic structures in a natural environment suggest that interference does not constitute a major strategy in this area...it seems necessary to me to abandon the notion of interference as a natural and inevitable phenomenon in FL learning. (Felix cited in Ellis 1999, p.107).

Krashen cited in Ellis (1999) rejects the view that the first language interferes with FL. Rather, he sees the use of the first language as a performance strategy. The learner

falls back on his first language using his first language when he lacks a rule in the FL. He initiates an utterance using his first language (instead of 'acquired' FL knowledge) and then substitute FL lexical items, also making small repairs to the resulting string by means of the Monitor.

Conclusion:

This chapter showed that transfer is the process of applying what has been learned in one situation to one's learning or performance in another situation. Several theories of transfer have been proposed. Cognitivists argued that transfer depends on retrieval of relevant information. However, Behaviorists argued, that for transfer to occur it needs to have a stimuli or response.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

The major aim of this research is to investigate how to what extent does the learner’s first language use affect his English speaking skill achievement and the linguistic interference from Arabic into English and to make Arab students aware of the differences between Arabic and English. For this research, a questionnaire was held for 1st year LMD students in the branch of English at Biskra University. The objective beyond this questionnaire is to reveal the impact and the difficulties derived from the use of the Arabic language during English oral expression classes . This chapter includes a description of the sample chosen and the questionnaire, the analysis of the students’ opinions and the results obtained.

1. Student’s Sample:

In order to collect data we’ve chosen a group of fifty 1st year LMD English students because of the small period of time during which the research was held. These students were selected randomly and without any specific feature so that the results can be as significant as possible.

2. Description of the Questionnaire

Section I: General Information

This section deals with the students' general information; such as their age and gender.

Section II: Language Learning

In this section, we attempt to know the students' reasons behind their choice of studying English at university and their own evaluation of their level at English.

Section III: Socio-Cultural Awareness

This section is concerned with the students' awareness of the importance of culture in FL learning and its influence on the use of language, the students' evaluation of the amount of the TL culture that they have learned up to now, and the importance of cultural difference in EFL learning.

Section IV: Difficulties in speaking English

Here, we are interested in the students' difficulties in English and the strategies that they use when they face these difficulties in speaking.

Section V: Checking the effect of the Arabic use in english speaking learning

Here, we are interested in the amount of mother language influence on the students' spoken english.

3. Data Analysis

- Students' age

The following table shows the learners age distribution.

Age	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	26<	NA	Average
Respondents	22	10	06	03	01	01	01	01	01	03	01	50
Percentage	44.00	20.00	12.00	6.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	6.00	2.00	100%

Table 02: Students' Age Distribution

- Students' gender

The table below demonstrates the students' gender

Gender	Male	Female	Average
Respondents	12	38	50
Percentage	24.00%	76.00%	100%

**Table 03:
Students'
Gender**

What characterizes these students is that most of them are girls (76.00%), whereas only twenty-four percent are boys.

Question 01: did you choose to study English because

- a) It was your only choice.
- b) You need it for a job
- c) You need it to travel abroad
- d) You like it

This question is intended to see the reasons that motivated students to study English (more than one answer are possible). The results are shown in the following table:

Responses	a	b	C	d	Average
Respondents	04	11	08	39	62
Percentage	06.45%	17.74%	12.90%	62.90%	100%

Table 4: Students' Choice to Study English

The table shows that sixty-two point nine percent of the students like the English language. This means that they are highly motivated to study English. It means that they are intrinsically motivated. Low rates are recorded for those who need it for job requirement (17.74%) and those who are going to travel abroad (12.90%). If we consider the sum of these low rates, we find out that students are instrumentally motivated, what indicates that they are not only motivated to learn English but also to master it. The lowest rate is for those who are imposed to study English (06.45%). These few students are not motivated to learn it.

Question 02: How would you evaluate your present level at English?

- a) Good
- b) Average
- c) Low

Our purpose of this question is to check what do students think of their English level. Based on the following results, we can deduce if they are satisfied or not.

Responses	a	B	c	Average
Respondents	16	33	01	50
Percentage	32.00%	66.00%	2.00%	100%

Table 5: Students' Self Evaluation of Their English level

Most of the students (66.00%) consider themselves as medium level English users. Whereas (32.00%) see that their level is good while only one student consider his english level as a low one.

Question 03: In your opinion, does the first language influence the use of target language?

a) Yes

b) No

- If “yes”, how

The purpose of this question is to see whether students are aware of this relationship and of the influence of mother language on the use of language and vice-versa. The answers are included in the following table:

Responses	Yes	No	Average
Respondents	47	03	50
Percentage	94.00%	06.00%	100%

Table 6: The Influence of Mother Language on the Use of Target Language

What we notice through the results is that nearly all the students (94.00%) are aware of the impact of the first language on a foreign Language learning.

Concerning the second part of the question; students didn't answer adequately almost all of them think that this impact can only be seen through the difficulty of adopting the native English accent and the fluency of speaking and listening as an English native speaker.

Question 04: when having role-play tasks; do you :

a) Perform an English or an American play.

- b) Translate an Arabic play into English.
- c) Elaborate your own piece of work.

This question aims to find out to what students refer as a source of their English knowledge.

Responses	A	B	C	Average
Respondents	09	19	22	50
Percentage	18.00%	38.00%	44.00%	100%

Table 7: Resources of students' oral tasks.

The table shows that (82.00%) of students rely on Arabic or first language material in order to perform their oral expression tasks meaning that this latter directly influence their English speaking learning.

Question 05: What do you think of the amount of the target language culture you have learned up to now?

- a) Satisfactory
- b) Unsatisfactory

Normally, the amount of the TL culture that EFL students receive may serve in the appearance/ disappearance of language interference from Arabic into English, hence we expect that most of the students will see that what they have learned as a culture will be unsatisfactory. By asking this question, we attempted to know how students evaluate the amount of the TL culture that they have learned.

Responses	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Average
Respondents	08	42	50
Percentage	16.00%	84.00%	100%

Table 8: The students' Self Evaluation of the Amount of the TL Culture that They Have Learned

The data shown in the table reflect what has been expected above. The majority of students (84.00%) see that the amount of the target language culture they have learned up to now is unsatisfactory.

- There is a lack of courses that deal with the English culture;
- They did not have enough time to build some kind of cultural competence in English;

This lack of teaching the TL culture is certainly going to increase the negative impact of mother language use; in other words this is going to lead the students to build their linguistic skills on their native language structure and culture.

Question 06: Should EFL learners be aware of the cultural differences between their mother tongue and the target language?

- a) Yes
- b) No

This question aims to see if the students are aware of the importance of cultural differences in EFL learning.

Responses	Yes	No	Average
Respondents	47	03	50
Percentage	94.00%	06.00%	100%

Table 9: EFL Students' Awareness of the Cultural Differences between the NL and the TL

A quick look at the table leads us to say that most of the students (94.00%) are aware of the importance of cultural differences in EFL learning. Therefore, the question that has to be asked here is: If EFL students are aware of the importance of cultural differences, are they aware of these differences?

Question 07: Do you think that you are able now to understand and use the English language without difficulties?

- a) Yes
- b) No

The purpose of this question is to discover students' ability to understand and use English without difficulties. The following table represents students' responses.

Responses	Yes	No	Average
Respondents	11	39	50
Percentage	22.00%	78.00%	100%

Table 10: The Students' Ability to Understand and to Use English without Difficulties

The above table shows that only eleven students (22.00%) were able to understand and use English without difficulties (hence the rate is not 100% reliable), while the remaining thirty-nine students could not; that could be caused by a lack of

exposure to the English language or lack of practice, whether inside or outside the classroom. As one might expect from these students is the reverse of these results since they have studied English for eight years.

Question 08: If “no”, in which skill do you face most of your difficulties?

- a) Listening
- b) Speaking
- c) Reading
- d) Writing

This question is related to the previous one. Students who are not able to understand and use English without difficulties are asked to identify the skill in which they face the most difficulties. The results are in the following table:

Responses	a	B	c	d	Average
Respondents	07	20	03	09	39
Percentage	14.00%	40.00%	06.00%	18.00%	100%

Table 11: Students’ Skills Difficulties

The answers shown that most of these students (40.00%) face difficulties with the speaking skill which is the most important among the four; this can be resulted to the unsatisfactory exposure to the target language and also to the lack of communication inside and outside the classroom.

Question 9: What do you do when you face difficulties in speaking English?

- a) Stop in the middle of the conversation
- b) Try to continue the conversation

c) Continue the conversation using Arabic

The aim of this question is to know about the students' reactions when they encounter difficulties in speaking English.

Responses	A	b	C	Average
Respondents	06	20	24	50
Percentage	12.00%	40.00%	28.00%	100%

Table 12: What Students Do When Facing Difficulties in Speaking English

From the results that displayed in the table above, we observe that the majority of students try to continue the conversation. Few of them (12%) chose to stop in the middle of the conversation and (28.00%) tend to use Arabic to overcome the difficulties. Despite the constraints that students are faced with while speaking in English, they do not give up and try to continue the conversation at any cost. This insistence indicates that students are motivated to learning English and they really want to communicate using it.

Question 10: Give the equivalent idioms in Arabic to the following. (Using dialect is also possible)

- a) An English man's home is his castle.
- b) Forbidden fruit is sweetest.
- c) A wolf in a sheep's skin.
- d) Better late than never.

This question takes the form of an activity. Students were asked arabic idioms which are equivalent to the ones given in english bearing in mind that all of them are semantically familiar in arabic language.

Responses	Correct	Wrong	No trial	Average
a	17	25	8	50
Percentage	34.00%	50.00%	16.00%	100%
b	07	32	11	50
Percentage	14.00%	64.00%	22.00%	100%
c	38	05	07	50
Percentage	76.00%	10.00%	14.00%	100%
d	06	22	22	50
Percentage	12.00%	44.00%	44.00%	100%

Table 13: The Students' Arabic equivalent Idioms

this question aims to find whether the students are able to think separately of the semantic meaning of the idiomatic expressions in both native and target languages without reference to the word-by-word translation of the idiom. The data analysis revealed that except for the 3rd question most of the students (at least 67.00%) failed to figure out the appropriate idiom in their own native language; meaning that either:

- Students are unable to understand semantically the idiom in English.
- They tend to the word-by-word translation.
- Or students are not sufficiently exposed to English language as it exists in an English socio-cultural environment.

Question 11: What are the equivalents of the following idioms in English?

- الوقت من ذهب
- العبرة بالخواتيم
-

This question resembles the previous question in its form. Students were given idioms in Arabic and they were asked to give their equivalents in English. The four idioms were selected for particular purposes.

Responses	Correct	Wrong	No trial	Average
a	13	31	06	50
Percentage	26.00%	62.00%	12.00%	100%
b	01	33	16	50
Percentage	02.00%	66.00%	32.00%	100%
c	00	37	13	50
Percentage	00.00%	74.00%	16.00%	100%

Table 14: The Equivalents of the Idioms

Despite the fact that the idioms are simple and repeatedly used in English but the results show that the 1st year LMD students are incapable to think of the equivalent idioms. The analysis has also shown that students are unable to differentiate between english and arabic language structure while trying to translate the expressions.

Conclusion

After having analyzed the data collected concerning 1st year LMD students' responses to the questionnaire, we reached the following conclusions:

First, although 1st year students are highly motivated to learn and to speak English, they are not satisfied with their level. They have difficulties in understanding and using it; especially in speaking. Students make challenges when they face difficulties in speaking English like using paralinguistic features or the native language. This means that students rely on their knowledge of the native language.

Secondly, they are aware of the influence of socio-cultural and language interference in using the language and also of the importance of knowing the foreign language culture. What is important is that they appreciate/ respect the target language

culture and they are aware of the importance of knowing the cultural differences between their native language and the target language.

Thirdly, students think in Arabic when they speak English and they interpret meanings based on their cultural background knowledge.

Recommendations:

Basing the observation of data collected throughout the questionnaire we must consider the following:

- Students should never be allowed to improvise or translate from other than target language during tasks and homeworks; these latter should always and under all circumstances be attached to the English socio-cultural environment.
- Native language; when used in teaching English speaking; must only be a tool to describe, explain or simplify English concepts as they do exist in an English speaking society. And it should never be allowed to be considered as a starting point to structure or to form English expressions.
- Beside the oral expression and English civilization classes; students must take classes on communicative and idiomatic expressions module in order to keep them much more involved in a pure English cultural environment.

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RESUME

L'amélioration de l'apprentissage de l'expression orale d'une langue étrangère comme étant la plus importante entre les quatre compétences linguistiques est une mission un peu délicate qui nécessite de l'expérience et de la pratique afin de former l'apprenant d'être capable de s'exprimer d'une manière adéquate via la langue ciblée. La langue maternelle comme étant le premier référent sur lequel l'apprenant se base pour élaborer ses productions orales et aussi l'usage de cette langue sont considérés comme des facteurs majeurs qui ont un effet direct et immense sur le processus de l'apprentissage.

La présente étude a pour objectif d'investiguer l'impact de l'usage de la langue maternelle sur l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère au niveau de la production orale. La recherche a pris lieu au niveau des étudiants de la 1^{ère} année LMD langue anglaise.

Après l'analyse des informations collectées à travers un questionnaire destiné aux étudiants susmentionnés les résultats obtenus sont :

- Les apprenants sont au courant de l'impact et son de l'usage et de l'interférence linguistique entre leur langue maternelle et la langue Anglaise et son aspect négatif sur leur achèvement sur le plan de l'apprentissage.
- Malgré leur conscience les productions orales des étudiants nous indique que le problème évoqué demeure en existence.
- Les activités proposées ne sont pas proprement dédactisées et donne lieu à l'émergence de cette interférence négative

La recherche a été finalement conclue par les recommandations suivantes :

- Durant les classes de l'expression orale les activités destinées aux étudiants ne doivent en aucun cas leur donner lieu à improviser ; c'est-à-dire que l'étudiant doit être toujours lié à l'environnement socio-culturel de la langue ciblée
- La langue maternelle même si utiliser ne doit pas dépasser le fait d'être un outil descriptif ou bien explicatif pour clarifier les points linguistique de la langue Anglaise, et ne doit jamais être un référent ou bien un point de départ.
- Ainsi que les cours tenus en matière de l'expression orale d'autres modules de nature socio-culturel et d'expressions idiomatiques de la langue cible doivent être établies en parallèle afin de garder les étudiants un peu plus impliqués dans l'environnement social de la langue étrangère.

Appendix

Students' questionnaire

As a partial fulfillment of my master degree, I am researching the impact of mother tongue on teaching English as a foreign language at beginner levels and this research includes this questionnaire.

This questionnaire aims to find out your attitude toward transfer of mother tongue into learning English as a foreign language. Your answers will be used for research purposes only, and they will be very useful for me to answer my thesis question.

Question 01: did you choose to study English because

- a) It was your only choice.
- b) You need it for a job
- c) You need it to travel

Question 02: How would you evaluate your present level at English?

- a) Good
- b) Average
- c) Low

Question 03: In your opinion, does the first language influence the use of target language?

a) Yes

b) No

Question 04: when having role-play tasks; do you :

a) Perform an English or an American play.

b) Translate an Arabic play into English.

c) Elaborate your own piece of work.

Question 05: What do you think of the amount of the target language culture you have learned up to now?

a) Satisfactory

b) Unsatisfactory

Question 06: Should EFL learners be aware of the cultural differences between their mother tongue and the target language?

a) Yes

b) No

Question 07: Do you think that you are able now to understand and use the English language without difficulties?

a) Yes

b) No

Question 08: If “no”, in which skill do you face most of your difficulties?

a) Listening

b) Speaking

c) Reading

d) Writing

Question 9: What do you do when you face difficulties in speaking English?

a) Stop in the middle of the conversation

b) Try to continue the conversation

c) Continue the conversation using Arabic

Question 10: Give the equivalent idioms in Arabic to the following. (Using dialect is also possible)

a) An English man’s home is his castle.

b) Forbidden fruit is sweetest.

c) A wolf in a sheep’s skin.

d) Better late than never.

Question 11: What are the equivalents of the following idioms in English?

a) الوقت من ذهب

b) العبرة بالخواتيم

c)