NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING

EFL STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

MASTER THESIS

ISMAEL BILAL HUSSEIN

NICOSIA 2015

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Educational Sciences

Department of English Language Teaching

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions Regarding

EFL Students' Difficulties in Speaking English

Master Thesis

Ismeal Bilal Hussein

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mohammad H. Keshavarz

Nicosia

2015

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Ismael Bilal Hussein titled " Teachers' and Students' Perceptions Regarding EFL Students' Difficulties in Speaking English" and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

………………………………………………………….

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nurdan Atamtürk

Committee Member

………………………………………………………….

Assist. Prof. Dr. Hanife Bensen

Committee Member

………………………………………………………….

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Hossein Keshavarz

Supervisor

Approved for the

Graduate School of Educational Sciences

………………………………………………………….

Prof. Dr. Orhan Çiftçi

Director of Graduate School of Educational Sciences

i

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this study.

Name, Middle name and Last name: Ismael Bilal Hussein

Signature: …………………….

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and above all, praises and thanks to God, Almighty, and for His blessings all the way through my research to complete this work successfully.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my thesis supervisor Prof. Dr. Mohammad H. Keshavarz for his meritorious comments, encouragement, patience, and remarkable guidance during the writing process of this thesis. Without his support, this study would not have been achievable.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the head of ELT Department, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kurt, who has always been supportive and helpful, and I would like to thank all the instructors of ELT Department who have taught me and helped me with their valuable knowledge throughout my MA studies.

I am also extremely grateful to all the respondents who helped me by filling out the questionnaires during the data collection process. Without their contribution my study could not have been conducted.

I am heartily thankful to all my friends who supported me in different respects throughout the completion of this study.

Last, but not least, I would like to express my profound thanks to my parents, my brothers and my sisters who always supported me and inspired me with their best wishes. Without their support and love, none of this would have been possible.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my thesis to:

My great parents, who have always supported me with their best wishes.

My beloved brothers and sisters, who have continuously encouraged me with their endless love.

My dear friends, who have been so supportive during the writing process of this thesis.

ABSTRACT

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING

EFL STUDNETS' DIFFICULTIES IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

Ismael Bilal Hussein

MA Program in English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mohammad H. Keshavarz

2015,   pages, 98

This study was conducted to investigate the difficulties encountered by Kurdish EFL students in speaking English and factors that affect such difficulties. In order to find out the answers to the research questions, two written questionnaires were used as a tool for data collection, one for teachers and the other one for students. The participants of this study comprised 30 instructors and 184 sophomores from English departments of the faculty of education and the faculty of languages at Salahaddin University- Hawler. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics through SPSS program version 20.0, to obtain the frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations of the participants. The findings showed that Kurdish EFL students have various difficulties in speaking English. It was found that these difficulties are mainly related to lack of sufficient knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The findings also revealed factors that affect these difficulties, as follows: students' willingness to speak Kurdish in the classroom, shyness to speak English and being afraid of making mistakes, lack of speaking activities in the students' textbooks and lack of sufficient time in the classroom to improve speaking skills. Moreover, the study discovered some similarities and differences between teachers and students' perceptions about EFL students' difficulties in speaking English. Based on the findings of the study, a number of recommendations were made to overcome such difficulties.

Key Words: *speaking difficulties, teachers' perception, students' perception, EFL context*

ÖZ

YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN İNGİLİZCE KONUŞMA ZORLUKLARI HAKKINDA ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİLERİN ALGISI

Ismael Bilal Hussein

İngilizce Öğretmenliği Yüksek Lisans Programı

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Mohammad H. Keshavarz

2015,   sayfa, 98

Bu çalışmanın amacı Kürt YDİ öğrencilerinin İngilizce konuşma zorluklarını ve bu zorlukları etkileyen etkenleri araştırmaktır. Araştırma sorularına cevap bulmak için, biri öğretmenler biri öğrenciler için olmak üzere iki yazılı anket veri toplamak için kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın katılımcılarını Salahaddin Üniversitesi - Hawler Eğitim Fakültesi ve Dil Fakültesinden 30 öğretim görevlisi ve 184 ikinci sınıf öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Sıklıkları, yüzdelikleri, ortalamaları ve katılımcıların standart sapmalarını bulmak için veriler SPSS programı sürüm 20.0 ile tanımlayıcı istatistikler kullanılarak analiz edildi. Bulgular, Kürt YDİ öğrencilerinin İngilizce konuşmada çeşitli zorlukları olduğunu gösterdi. Bu zorlukların genellikle gramer, kelime ve telaffuz bilgisinde eksikliklerden kaynaklandığı bulunmuştur. Bulguların aynı zamanda gösterdiği bu zorlukları etkileyen etkenler aşağıdaki gibidir: öğrencilerin sınıfta Kürtçe konuşma istekliliği, İngilizce konuşmaya utanma ve hata yapmaktan korkma, öğrenci kitaplarında konuşma etkinliklerinin eksikliği ve sınıfta konuşma becerilerinin geliştirilmesi için zaman yetersizliği. Ayrıca, çalışma öğretmen ve öğrencilerin YDİ konusunda İngilizce konuşmadaki zorluklar hakkındaki algıları arasındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar da tespit etti. Çalışmanın bulgularına dayanarak, bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için bir dizi öneriler yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *konuşma zorlukları, öğretmenlerin algısı, öğrencilerin algısı, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce bağlamı*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

ABBREVIATIONS

A	**:**	Agree
D	**:**	Disagree
EFL	**:**	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	**:**	English Language Teaching
L1	**:**	First Language
L2	**:**	Second Language
M	**:**	Mean
N	**:**	Number
SD	**:**	Strongly Disagree
SD	**:**	Standard Deviation
SPSS	**:**	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This chapter provides an introduction about the importance of English as a foreign language and language skills, in particular the speaking skill. It also includes statement of the problem, aim of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and the scope and limitations of the study.

Background of the Study

In terms of globalization it is vital to become skilled in a foreign language as through learning a new language, learners' self-confidence and intellectual skills increase rapidly. Learning English, as the worlds' lingua franca, provides students with better opportunities in real life and learning outcome in the educational system. In addition, it can prepare learners for international relations and global awareness. As a result, learning an additional language becomes a universal goal for students.

The significance of English as a foreign language (EFL) is perceived all over the world because it is the most widely spoken language in the world. Crystal (1997) argues that English is the most common language in the world and is more broadly spoken than any other foreign language. Therefore, it has a crucial role in many fields such as education, technology, business, and transport. Harmer (2001) expresses a similar view and says, "Although English is not the language with the largest number of native or first language speakers, it has become a lingua

franca" (p. 28). He defines a lingua franca as "a language widely adopted for communication between two speakers whose native languages are different from each other and where one or both speakers are using it as a second language" (p.2). Thus, it can be concluded that the use of English has increased in many parts of the world and people around the globe try to learn this language to communicate with others from different countries.

In the Kurdish educational system, English as a foreign language (EFL) is regarded as the most important subject in schools and institutions. In Northern Iraq, like other parts of the world, the demand for learning English has increased in recent years. The Northern Iraqi Kurdistan Region has taken significant steps to improve the educational system implemented in the region. Accordingly, English language classes were integrated into school curricula right from the first grade of primary school in order to teach English from an early age because of its significance as a global language. In Iraqi Kurdistan region, first year students of all colleges and universities are expected to take English as a compulsory subject in all departments (Hasan, 2013).

Foreign language learning is not an effortless task. Therefore, EFL learners are expected to face various difficulties mainly because the structure, rules and system of the new language are different from their native language. Nejad (2011) stated that:

Foreign language learners, despite spending years developing their semantic and syntactic competences, have all probably, at some point, experience the frustrating feeling of not being able to participate effectively in L2 oral

communication. They often struggle with lack of the very resources needed to communicate their intended meaning. (p. 04).

Moreover, Al Hosni (2014) observes that most English learners do not practice speaking English outside the classroom and the only place where they can be exposed to English is through their course books. This kind of problem is widely seen among Kurdish EFL learners as they do not use English outside the class in order to enhance their language skills. For that reason, students may face difficulties in mastering the oral communication skills.

In order to communicate successfully in the target language, learners must improve the four language skills namely writing, reading, listening and speaking, in order to advance their level of fluency and accuracy. According to Darsini (2013), language elements such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling are very important to enhance the four language skills. Richards (2008) argues that speaking skills are the most essential productive skills for the second-language or foreign-language learners by which the learners evaluate the improvement of their language skills as well as the effectiveness of the English course they have taken through assessing to what extent they have developed their oral language proficiency.

Morozova (2013) asserts that speaking is one of the most crucial skills which is required for effective communication. Of course, development of all four language skills is necessary, since the integration of these language skills can increase learners' ability to become successful language users. It is obvious that the four language skills together can support learners' consciousness and promote their mental capacity to develop their oral skills. Chastain (1988) asserts that listening and reading skills

play a vital role in improving the speaking skills in order to allow learners to learn new words and new forms of language through listening and reading. Moreover, he argues that the students should learn to understand oral and written messages before they can develop their own speaking skills. Therefore, the educational system of Iraqi Kurdistan requires all EFL teachers to integrate the four language skills into their language classes so as to provide learners with awareness of all elements of English. According to Sherkawey (2012), most English teachers of Northern Iraq neglect certain language skills in their teaching activities due to lack of their knowledge in some language skills. As a result, they do not give language learners any opportunity to practice the primary language skills, especially the productive ones.

Statement of the Problem

The present study aims to investigate Kurdish EFL learners' perceptions concerning the difficulties they face in speaking skills. Considering the significance of speaking skills in EFL programs, it is very important to realize and use the most appropriate and effective educational methods and materials that improve learners' ability to master the oral skills. Nazara (2011) claimed that many EFL learners assume that speaking is the most difficult skill to master. Similarly, according to Harmer (2001) "speaking in a new language is harder than reading, writing or listening for two reasons. First, unlike reading or writing, speaking happens in real time. Second, when you speak, you cannot edit or revise what you wish to say" (p.48).

The difficulties of speaking English as a foreign language are not restricted to secondary and high school students; they can also be seen among university students who study English as their major field of study. According to Sabir (as cited in Hasan, 2013), Kurdish students studying in English departments are not successful in mastering the productive and receptive skills. The main reasons for this may be the fact that teaching methods in Kurdistan region heavily rely on the old literature programs instead of the study of language elements in order to improve the students' ability to speak fluently and accurately. Riasati (2012) says that students are not given enough opportunities to practice their foreign language and their practice is limited to classroom environment. Additionally, Riasati states that if the learners do not take the opportunity to speak in the classroom, they will lose the chance to improve their oral skills.

Despite the essential role of speaking skills in the teaching and learning process, learners still have difficulties in practicing this language skill. The reason may be due to the lack of interaction and inappropriate teaching methods used in the classroom (Mubarak, as cited in Hasan, 2013).

Aim of the Study

Due to the significance of speaking skill in language learning and communication, this study aims to investigate the perceptions of Kurdish EFL teachers and students regarding EFL students' difficulties in speaking English.

In order to achieve the goal of this study, the researcher will attempt to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are Kurdish EFL students' attitudes towards speaking skills?

2. From students' perspectives, what factors affect their difficulties in speaking English?

3. What are the perceptions of Kurdish EFL teachers about the difficulties that their students face while speaking English?

4. From teachers' perspectives, what factors affect students' performance in speaking English?

5. What are the similarities and differences between teachers and students' perceptions about Kurdish EFL students' difficulties in speaking skills?

Significance of the Study

The current study provides teachers and students with better understanding of English language difficulties encountered by Kurdish learners in speaking skills. Essentially, it is hoped that the findings of the study can contribute to the improvement of learners' knowledge in foreign language skills and to decrease their difficulties in speaking skills. In addition, it can increase teachers' awareness about problems that English major students face in oral communication. It is also hoped that this study will lead to further research in other parts of Iraqi- Kurdistan.

Definitions of key terms

Foreign Language: "a language which is not the native language of large numbers of people in a particular country or region" (Richards & Schmidt, 210, p. 331).

Target Language: "also L2 in language teaching, the language which a person is learning, in contrast to a first language or mother tongue" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 583).

Speaking Skill: "is one of the four macro skills necessary for effective communication in any language, particularly when speakers are not using their mother tongue" (Boonkit, 2010, p. 1306).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners and Teachers: "are those who are learning or teaching English while living in a community where English is not spoken as a first language" (Tavneer, 2007, p. 04).

Fluency: "is the ability to talk fairly freely, without too much stopping or hesitating" (Riddle, 2003, p. 118).

Accuracy: "the emphasis is on 'correct English'- the right grammar, the right vocabulary" (Riddle, 2003, p. 118).

Communication Strategy: "communication strategies are ways that learners get round the fact that they may not know how to say something" (Thornbury, 2006, p. 35).

Limitations of the Study

The context of the present study is limited to Kurdish EFL students and their teachers at Salahaddin University in North/Iraq. The study investigates only those difficulties that reflect challenges in speaking skills. This research is also restricted to the exploration of the perceptions of second year university students and their instructors of English departments of the College of Languages and the College of Education at Salahaddin University in the academic year 2013-2014. It is worth mentioning that the small participant size will denote that the findings of this study cannot be generalized and may not apply to other universities of the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE RIVEW

Overview

This chapter aims to review the previous studies related to the subject of this study. It covers the theoretical and empirical studies that focus on EFL speaking skills. The review intends to provide the literature regarding the main reasons of difficulties that language learners face in practicing speaking skills, and it also attempts to review the literature about learners' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards speaking English as a Foreign Language.

General Review

Listening and reading skills are defined as the receptive skills in language learning while speaking and writing skills are the productive skills one needs in order to make progress in real communication. According to Thornbury (2006), speaking is generally considered as the most important of the four language skills. Moreover, Richards (2008) states that "the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners" (p.19). Learners are expected to be successful in mastering speaking skills by developing it through other language skills such as listening, reading and writing. Chastain (1988) points out that the development of speaking skills depends upon input from reading and listening, and increased speaking skills can improve learners' proficiency in reading, listening and writing in return.

Similarly, Boonkit (2010) claims that "English speaking skills should be developed along with the other skills so that these integrated skills will enhance communication achievement both with native speakers of English and other members of the international community" (p.1320).

According to Brown (1994), the following skills should be noted when speaking a language:

1. Pronouncing the sounds, intonations, stress patterns and rhythmic structures of the language correctly and clearly.

2. Using the grammar correctly.

3. Taking into account the power and status relations among the interlocutors, interest levels, and differences in perspectives.

4. Opting for appropriate vocabulary that listener can easily understand.

5. Adopting different methods including rephrasing and emphasizing key words so as to assess the listener's comprehension.

6. Change the elements of speech such as the rate of speech, vocabulary, and complex grammatical structures to improve the comprehension and encourage the participation of the listener. (as cited in Al-ma'shy, 2011).

It can be concluded that the speaking skills should be mastered by improving the grammar and the pronunciation in order to achieve a better understanding between the speaker and the listener. Speaking skills require the consideration of other elements of language learning, especially the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. English language learners are expected to face various difficulties while acquiring oral skills. According to Wang (2014), learners can hardly use the correct grammar, vocabulary

and pronunciation while speaking English. Also as Thornbury (2005) states, "Speaking represents a real challenge to most language learners" (p.4).

Most foreign language students usually feel afraid of speaking in the target language and sometimes behave in an inactive manner in the classroom. Hue (2010) argues that "EFL learners' reluctance to speak English in the classroom is a problem commonly found in EFL contexts" (p.1). This may be due to their lack of self- confidence to convey their messages to others. Thornbury (2005) believes that some psychological problems such as shyness or anxiety, lack of encouragement, lack of sufficient confidence, and fear of making mistakes are considered as the main factors that prevent learners from speaking. In fact, learners are expected to communicate confidently while participating in class discussions and learn how to interact actively with others outside the class. In addition, Sawri (2005) stated:

> Traditional EFL pedagogies in East and Southeast Asian nations are not fully adequate to meet the need for an expanded emphasis on oral communications. These traditional pedagogies take a scholastic approach in that they tend to treat English as if it is outside the national or local linguistic environment. Thus they focus almost exclusively on learning to read English-language documents, and to prepare English language essays and letters, with little attention to the skills of conversation in English, let alone the ultimate communicative goal of native speaker-level proficiency .(p. 567)

Learning a foreign language in a non-native speaking country requires additional effort from both instructors and learners. Besides, awareness of the importance of target language skills is necessary for learners in order to achieve language proficiency.

Ghrib (2004) suggests that language teachers should render language tasks look more like 'social activities' and less like language exercises, and they should seriously try to improve students' interest in the target language culture, promote their awareness, and boost their motivation to learn the target language. Furthermore, Kayi (2006) has made the following recommendations for EFL teachers teaching oral language skills:

- Allowing the English language learners to speak in English to the maximum extent through useful exercises, informative materials and team-work practices.

- Intend to include all the target language learners in a variety of speaking activities so that they practice more.

- Dedicate more time for oral language practice by students rather than speaking yourself all the time in the class.

- Comment on the student's response with positive feedback.

- Ask questions such as "What do you mean? How did you reach that conclusion?" so as to encourage students to participate more in speaking practices.

- Provide the students with written positive feedback stating your appreciation about their work in terms of work in which speaking skills have been used.

- Avoid correcting the pronunciation of students very frequently during their speaking practice, or the language learners would be distracted by the corrections.

- Continue practicing speaking by different activities both inside and outside the classroom or seek help from people who might help.

- Take into account the needs of the language learners in order to keep them on the right path in the language learning experience and in order to find out if they require your assistance during group studies.

- Provide the vocabulary that learners may need in a speaking activity in advance.

- Identify problems encountered by learners who have difficulties in communicating in the target language and provide more opportunities to practice the oral speech.

Furthermore, Wang (20014) suggests a four-step pedagogical method for EFL classes in order to assist learners and teachers in providing effective speaking activities. The four stages that Wang suggested are: pre-speaking- while-speaking- post-speaking and extension practice. He says that at pre- speaking stage, learners must receive assistance in learning vocabulary and they must be provided with strategies to minimize their anxiety and stress, whereas at while- speaking stage, learners should be given enough time to develop their fluency. At post- speaking stage, learners should be given the chance to observe the real use of language in order to increase their speaking accuracy. Finally, learners should reinforce their language use along with extension practice which should be done through task repetition. Bygate and Samuda (2005) defined task repetition as "the repetition of the same or slightly altered tasks whether whole tasks, or parts of a task" (as cited in Wang, 2014, p. 115).

It is important that the teachers provide students with different speaking activities in order to help them to cope with various real situations. Harmer (2008) recommends some categories for classroom speaking activities as follows:

- Acting from a script: Ask the students to act scenes in the class from plays or course books by carrying out role-plays. Most of the time, students will be acting the dialogues they have written themselves.

- Playscripts: This consists of an important aspect that requires the language learners to approach the act of plays or playscripts as if they are really acting. In other words, we should help them to understand and act the scripts acting like theatre directors, where we highlight the points how appropriate stress and intonation and speed should be performed and modified. Acting is a practice of both knowledge and language in which students practice a wide variety of knowledge in a language until their final performances.

- Acting dialogues: The choice of students that will come to the front of the class should not be made by initially choosing the shyest student. Students should be given time to rehearse their dialogues before coming to the stage in order to carry out the performance. Giving this time to work on their dialogues will also contribute to their learning from the whole acting experience.

- Simulation and role play: They are used in the classrooms in order to encourage general fluency in oral communication and so as to train students for particular situations, for example when they study English for specific purposes. In these cases, students should be trained on the exact situation of simulations and role plays and they should be given the necessary background information in order to achieve the most out of the exercises.

- Communication games: The main aim of the communication games is to enable students to talk in a quicker and more fluent way in the target language such as information-gap games, television and radio games.

- Instant comment: This is another way used in training the student to respond fluently and immediately in the target language by inserting small 'instant comment' activities in the class. These activities contain the involvement of different photographs on the topic or the introduction of topics by nominating students to start talking about it instantly during the class.

- Unplanned discussion: This element involves discussions that instantly happen during the lessons without any prior preparation in which students carry out productive speaking activities.

- Reaching a consensus: This is another best technique to encourage students to participate in the discussion by giving activities in which students reach a decision or a consensus between specific alternatives.

- Formal debate: Students prepare arguments and discuss in favor or against different ideas in this type of activities. Students who are appointed as panel speakers produce well-prepared formal arguments during the debate while the debate progresses when the contrary side present their own (less scripted) opposite formal views on the argument.

Review of related empirical studies

Many researchers have different understanding towards the problems and difficulties experienced by EFL learners when improving their speaking skills.

Al- Hosni (2014) conducted a study to explore speaking difficulties experienced by young EFL learners in Oman. The researcher collected the data via interviews, classroom observation and curriculum analysis. The results of the study showed that the speaking challenges faced by the students include the use of mother tongue; lack of grammar proficiency and lack of necessary vocabulary items. The study showed that students also have a lack of skills of sentence formation, which resulted in resorting to their mother tongue. The students who took part in this study believed that making mistakes while speaking English inside the classroom was very embarrassing, and therefore they preferred to stay silent. Consequently, the researcher highlighted four factors leading to those speaking difficulties, namely: teaching strategies, curriculum, assessment regulations, and extracurricular activities.

Aylan (2013) carried out a study on Palestinian English major students' oral communication problems. The data were collected through interviews. The respondents included 6 teachers and 20 students from a university in Gaza Strip. The findings revealed that limited exposure to English, incorrect pronunciation, lack of vocabulary knowledge, absence of self-confidence, and L1 use were the main problems in oral communication. The researcher also demonstrated that the students did not develop the practice of extensive reading and listening in L2, and they could not express their ideas in a coherent way.

Juhana (2012) investigated the linguistic factors that become obstacle while speaking English in the class. In this study, the data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. According to the findings of the study, the students confirmed that linguistic factors such as incorrect pronunciation, lack of understanding of grammatical rules and lack of vocabulary lead to difficulties in speaking in English. The researcher suggests that such problems arise because students do not read sufficient English texts and do not look up words in dictionaries, or because teachers use inappropriate teaching methods. The researcher also suggests some possible solutions to the problems of students including teaching these linguistic components explicitly in order to improve students' pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary proficiency.

Boonkit (2010) conducted a study to investigate the factors that improve speaking skills of Thai EFL undergraduate students. In the research, some skills were regularly practiced for 15 weeks during a listening and speaking course. A task-based design gave the participants opportunity to speak in various situations which helped them to convert 'passive' vocabulary into 'active' and extended the English lexicon they derived from different speaking topics. Creativity of topics led to an improvement in speaking skills, but the weak point of the learning design was that the students still had errors in pronunciation and grammar after taking the course. Suggestions for EFL learners mainly covered listening skills. The task-based learning design in this research could be applied to encourage a particular skill or integrated-skill pedagogy in EFL/ESL and other language learning contexts.

Jdetawy (2011) investigated the difficulties faced by Arab EFL students, the problems in English language learning, and the reasons that cause these problems. The

study showed that Arab EFL learners face serious problems in all skills of language learning. In the study, he mentioned some reasons that lie behind the problems, such as: English as a non-native language for Arab EFL learners, the lack of interaction with native speakers, the use of Arabic language in EFL classrooms for teaching, and the weaknesses of the curricula adopted by some academic institutions.

In Indonesia, Nazara (2011) conducted a research to investigate the perceptions of the students on the effect of English teaching study programs on their English speaking skills development. The results of the study showed that all participants were eager to improve and master their speaking skills. At the same time, some of respondents wanted to refrain from speaking because of their fear of teachers scolding and classmates' laughing. The research recommended that the teachers should create a friendly environment in classrooms.

Gan (2012) carried out a study in a tertiary teacher training institution in Hong Kong with 20 Chinese students in order to investigate the perceived speaking problem of ESL students. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main tool for gathering the data. The researcher asked each interviewee to explain their speaking experience as English learners. The interviews aimed to discuss the difficulties in speaking English that students had faced as undergraduate English majors. The result showed that the learners' difficulties in their oral English were mostly grammatical, lexical and phonological problems. The reasons behind these issues were related to the limited opportunities to speak English in the classroom, the absence of a focus on language perfection in the curriculum, and poor motivational environment for oral communication in English outside the class.

Al-jumah (2011) studied the problems of EFL university students' unwillingness to speak and take part in class discussions. Five hundred students from Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia took part in the study. The researcher suggested an integrative approach to deal with the oral difficulties by combining all the four communication skills and taking into account the sociolinguistic factor. According to the findings, the students demonstrated a great interest in oral skills. The integrative approach procedure was generally helpful in solving these obstacles that prevent students from speaking, participating in class debate and interacting with each other.

Rababah (2005) examined the problems that Arab learners in English Department of Jordan University experienced in the communication process. The researcher stated that the problems that Arab learners of English faced in communication may be due to the teaching methods or due to the inappropriate language learning environment. In his study, the researcher examined students' contribution levels through observations and interviews. The outcomes showed that the level of students' achievement and interaction in oral communication in English was not high. The researcher suggested that the teachers should make sure that all students communicate orally with one another inside and outside the classroom.

Hamad (2013) conducted a study in Saudi colleges for girls to investigate the factors that affect the English language speaking skills of students negatively. The participants of the study comprised of 150 students studying in English languages department of King Khalid University (KKU) and 10 female instructors. The data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The findings revealed that these factors

affected the English language speaking skills of the students negatively which were as follows: Use of mother tongue, fear of students of speaking in English, unsuccessful strategies used by instructors that could not improve the speaking skills and lack of listening and speaking activities in the curriculum.

Hol and Paker (2012) carried out a research to look at the attitudes of students and instructors towards a speaking test at a School of Foreign Languages. The data came from questionnaires which were distributed to two different groups of participants. The first group consisted of 210 learners who were asked to evaluate their perceptions and attitudes towards the speaking test. The second group consisted of 32 teachers who were given a questionnaire to express their attitudes and perceptions regarding the test materials, the test procedure and the assessment time. The participants were pre- intermediate and intermediate level students from different faculties. Hol and Paker discovered that the majority of the students had not been familiar with any speaking tests before; therefore, they experienced high anxiety throughout the test. From the students' point of view, the speaking test was the most difficult one when compared to the testing of other language skills. Students stated that they were unable to express themselves successfully during the test time, and they focused on having extra oral practice in the classroom. Furthermore, the instructors highlighted that the speaking test was the most difficult one to apply and assess. However, the scale and rubrics were enough to assess the students' oral performance.

Research Gap

According to the researcher's knowledge, Kurdish researchers in Northern Iraq have not given due attention to EFL students' difficulties in speaking English. Hence conducting this study can be helpful in investigating Kurdish EFL learners' perspectives in learning speaking skills. In addition, the study can help teachers to find out about various EFL teaching techniques.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter gives information about the research methods of the study. Initially, the research design will be introduced, then detailed information about the participants and instruments used for data collection will be presented. Finally, information about the reliability and validity of the instruments, procedures of data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration will be provided.

Research Design

As it was pointed out in Chapter one, the main purpose of this research was to investigate Kurdish EFL teachers' and students' perceptions concerning speaking skill difficulties. Therefore, the study was designed as a quantitative study by using a descriptive survey approach, more specifically, questionnaire survey.

Participants

The sample in this study was selected from Salahaddin University. The University of Salahaddin is the oldest and biggest university in Iraqi Kurdistan region which is located in Erbil governorate (Hasan, 2013). The participants of this study comprised 30 university English instructors and 184 second year English major undergraduate students from two English departments in two different Faculties: the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of languages.

Due to the restricted number of the instructors in both colleges, the data were gathered from the entire population. The instructors of both Faculties had Master's Degrees or PhDs in English language. The Table 1 below illustrates background information of the instructors according to their gender, degree, and teaching experience.

Table 1

Background information of the instructors

Gender	Frequency	%
Males	18	60.0
Female	12	40.0
Total	30	100.0
Degree		
Master's Degrees	11	36.7
PhDs	19	63.3
Total	30	100.0
Number of Years of English Teaching Experience		
1year	6	20.0
2-5 years	9	30.0
6-10 years	7	23.3
More than 10	8	26.7
Total	30	100.0

As shown in Table one, 18 male and 12 female instructors took part in this study. 11 of the instructors had Masters' degree and 19 of them had PhD. 6 of these instructors had 1 year of

teaching experience, 9 of them had 2 to 5 years of teaching experience, 7 of the instructors had 6 to 10 years of teaching experience, and 8 of them had over 10years of experience.

One hundred and eighty four (96 male and 88 female) students (See Table 2) participated in the present study. They were all second year English majors at the faculty of languages and the faculty of education at Salahaddin University during the academic year 2013-2014. The main reason for choosing second year students is that conversation skills are included in their curricula in both Faculties. They were all Kurdish learners of English and their age ranged from 20 to 30.

Table 2

Number and Percentages of Students' Gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Males	96	52.2
Female	88	47.8
Total	184	100.0

Instruments

Two written questionnaires were used to collect the data namely teachers' and students' questionnaires (See Appendices A and B). Both questionnaires were designed and developed by Al- Ma'shy (2011) and after obtaining his permission (See Appendix C) some modifications were made in some items of both questionnaires with the help of my supervisor to suit the aim of the study.

The teachers' questionnaire was composed of two parts. In part one, the teachers were asked to provide some demographic information including their gender, their highest degree and

their teaching experience. Part two of the teachers' questionnaire included 24 items. Each item consisted of a four- point Likert- scale with the options, "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree" and "strongly agree". In this part, the first eight items were to do with the teachers' perceptions about their students' difficulties in speaking English, and items 9 to 24 dealt with factors that affect students' performance in speaking English.

The second questionnaire was distributed among students in order to find out about their perceptions regarding speaking kills in English. The questionnaire was only in English because all the respondents were English majors and all of them were anticipated to have adequate language capabilities to understand the items. This questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part was aimed at gathering background information about the students such as gender, age and their English language proficiency level and the second part consisted of 33 items. Similar to the teachers' questionnaire, each item of this questionnaire comprised a four- point Likert- scale with the options, "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree" and "strongly agree". The first 9 items of this questionnaire were about students' attitudes towards the skills of speaking English. Items 10 to 33 focused on factors which affect students' difficulties in speaking English.

Reliability and Validity

To check the reliability of both questionnaires, a pilot study was carried out with 15 teachers and 30 undergraduate students from the English department of the faculty of education at Soran University. After the researcher collected the questionnaires from both teachers and students, the data were entered into SPSS program, version 20.0, in order to calculate the reliability scale by using the Cronbachs' Alpha Model.

According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), Alpha is a significant model in the calculation of assessments and questionnaires. They also stated that the acceptable values of alpha ranged from 0.70 to 0.95. The results of the pilot study indicated that the Cronbach's Alpha reliability was .80 for the teachers' questionnaire, and.83 for the students' questionnaire. Therefore, both questionnaires used for gathering the data were considered to be reliable.

In the case of validity, both questionnaires were given to two university English instructors in Soran University in order to evaluate the content of the questionnaires as well as the comprehension of the items. They stated that the items were comprehensible and useful for the aim of the study.

Procedures

Before starting data collection process, the researcher received permission from each of the English departments of both the faculties of Education and Languages in Salahaddin University (See Appendices D and E).Then, two different questionnaires were distributed to 30 university EFL teachers and 184 second grade EFL Kurdish Students in both Faculties, in May 2014. After the participants filled out the questionnaires, the researcher gathered all the distributed copies from them. Finally, the data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, V. 20).

Data Analysis

After the data were collected, the researcher entered all the results of the questionnaires into SPSS, V. 20. The data were analyzed quantitatively. The descriptive statistics was applied to obtain the frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations for the teachers and students' perceptions about EFL speaking skills.

Ethical consideration

Before commencing the data collection process, all the participants were informed about the nature of this study, and the researcher indicated that the participants could decide whether or not they want to take part in this study. In addition, the respondents were also assured that the information they provide would be treated strictly confidential, and would be used only for research purposes.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Overview

In this chapter, the research questions posed in chapter one will be answered by the results obtained from the data analyses. First, Kurdish EFL students' attitudes towards speaking English will be explained. Then, the students' perceptions on the factors that affect their difficulties in speaking English will be discussed. Next, perceptions of Kurdish EFL teachers about their students' speaking difficulties will be presented. After that, teachers' perceptions on factors that affect students' performance in speaking English will be discussed. Finally, similarities and differences between teachers and students' perceptions about Kurdish EFL students' difficulties in speaking skills will be elaborated on.

Kurdish EFL students' Attitudes towards Speaking Skills

Table 3 below illustrates students' responses regarding their perceptions about the skill of speaking in English. As displayed in this table, responses to item 1 shows that most of the students (83.7%) agreed or strongly agreed (M=3.22, SD=98) that speaking English is an important skill for them because it enables them to communicate successfully with native English speakers. "Students of second/foreign language education programs are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in the language" (Riggenback & Lazaraton, 1991 as cited in Nejad,2010, p.9). It was found that (82%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Item4 "I like speaking English" with a mean score of 3.21 (SD= 1.03). Thus, it can be claimed that the majority of the students have a positive attitude toward speaking English.

This may be due to the fact that "In ESL/EFL contexts, speaking is perhaps the most important

of the four language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing" (Al-jumah, 2011, p.84).

Table 3

Students' attitudes towards English speaking skills

Item N	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
1	Speaking English is important for me because it enables me to communicate successfully with native speakers of English.	184	SD D A SA	11.4% 4.9% 33.2% 50.5%	3.22	0.98
4	I like speaking English.	184	SD D A SA	13.6% 4.3% 29.3% 52.7%	3.21	1.03
5	Speaking English is very interesting and useful.	184	SD D A SA	10.3% 8.2% 39.1% 42.4%	3.13	.95
2	Speaking English is important for me because it enables me to get a good job in the future.	184	SD D A SA	16.8% 9.2% 33.7% 40.2%	2.97	1.08
6	Speaking English is an important skill at the university level.	184	SD D A SA	17.9% 11.4% 29.3% 41.3%	2.94	1.11
9	I cannot speak English fluently.	184	SD D A SA	20.1% 14.7% 39.1% 26.1%	2.71	1.06
8	Speaking English is difficult for me	184	SD D A SA	22.3% 21.7% 29.3% 26.6%	2.60	1.10
3	Speaking English is important for me because other people will respect me if I speak English fluently.	184	SD D A SA	27.2% 22.8% 33.2% 16.8%	2.39	1.06
7	Speaking English is tedious.	184	SD D A SA	38.6% 27.2% 16.3% 17.9%	2.13	1.12

Concerning the findings of Item 5 "Speaking English is very interesting and useful" it was found that (81.5%) of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this Item (M= 3.13, SD=.95). The reason for this is probably that the students may have a desire to speak in the target language in order to interact with native speakers and people around the world.

Responses to Item 2, whether speaking English is important for students to get a good job in the future, indicated that almost three quarters of the students (73.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that speaking English can provide a good job opportunity for them in the future (M= 2.97, SD=1.08). This may due to the fact that the function of English as an important asset to get a good job, particularly in international organizations has encouraged people to acquire English as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL) in order to have the ability to speak in it (Nazara, 2011).

Responses to Item 6, i.e., "speaking English is an important skill at the university level" indicated that (70.6%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed on this Item with a mean score of 2.49 (SD=1.11). This seems to be due to the fact that university students have a stronger desire to speak in the target language because most of the university courses are taught in English.

With regards to Item 9, which sought to find out whether the students can speak English fluently, the majority of the participants (65.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they cannot speak English fluently (M=2.71, SD=1.06). This may be due to the fact that students lack sufficient practice in speaking English inside and outside the classroom. Wang (2014) claimed that "extensive practice is significant to reinforce learners' language use, for task repetition helps learners to develop fluent and accurate spoken English" (p.115).

In Item 8, 55.9% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that speaking English is difficult for them (M=2.60, SD=1.10). Al-jumah (2011) stated that most EFL learners are expected to have difficulties in speaking because while speaking they have to consider several elements such as morphology, pronunciation, grammar, discourse, semantics, pragmatics and fluency.

In Item 3, it was found that 50% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the Item "speaking English is important for me because other people will respect me if I speak fluently" with a mean score of 2.39 (SD=1.06). In other words, fifty percent of the respondents considered English as being prestigious in Kurdish society because they think if they speak fluent English they will have a higher status in their society.

Finally, the majority of the students (65.8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with Item7 "speaking English is tedious" (M=2.13, SD=1.12). This may be due to the fact that English students feel free to express themselves in different ways while speaking and it is unlike a test where they are expected to express what they have already memorized. For this reason, students do not feel bored when speaking English.

Students' Perceptions on the Factors that Affect Their Difficulties in Speaking English

The first question in this section was: What factors affect students' difficulties in speaking English? This question included 24 items (item 10-33) in the students' questionnaire. To find out the most and the least frequent items that affected students' difficulties in speaking English, five of the highest and five of the lowest mean scored items were selected among other items. The percentage, mean scores and standard deviation for the 24 items are shown in

(Appendix F). Table 4 displays the percentages, means and standard deviations for the five of the highest mean score items that affected students' difficulties in speaking English.

Table 4

Items with highest mean scores that affected students' difficulties in speaking English

Item N	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
19	I feel shy when I speak English in the classroom.	184	SD	14.1%	3.15	1.04
			D	4.9%		
			A	32.1%		
			SA	48.9%		
17	I sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.	184	SD	15.2%	2.98	1.05
			D	10.3%		
			A	34.8%		
			SA	39.7%		
12	When speaking English, grammar becomes difficult for me.	184	SD	17.4%	2.81	1.07
			D	16.3%		
			A	33.7%		
			SA	32.6%		
10	Pronunciation causes difficulty for me when speaking English.	184	SD	21.2%	2.79	1.13
			D	12.5%		
			A	32.1%		
			SA	34.2%		
11	Lack of adequate vocabulary makes Speaking English difficult for me.	184	SD	22.3%	2.60	1.11
			D	21.7%		
			A	28.8%		
			SA	27.2%		

As shown in Table 4, Item number 19 "I feel shy when I speak English in the classroom" with a mean score of 3.15 (SD=1.04) was the first highest frequent factor that created difficulties for students in speaking English, as students claimed. The majority (81%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the Item. This finding is similar to the study of Juhana (2012) which indicated that learners are affected by some psychological factors such as shyness, fear of

making mistakes and anxiety which can hinder them from practicing their speaking English in class. The researcher also suggests that teachers must create a friendly environment in class to accommodate the needs of shy students which in turn will allow them to minimize their shyness and feel less worried of making mistakes. Similarly, Bashir, Azeem, and Dogar (2011) investigated the factors affecting students' English speaking skills. The findings of their research revealed that the students may feel a level of shyness towards speaking English in the classroom. They also indicated that students may be affected by the classroom climate while speaking in English.

The second highest frequent factor as to why students face difficulty in speaking English was Item number 17 "I sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom" with a mean score of 2.98 (SD=1.05). Almost three quarters (74.5%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they use their mother tongue in the classroom. This finding asserts that using mother tongue in an EFL classroom can delay the achievement of improving the English speaking skills. Muriungi and Mbui (2013) claimed that "since mother tongue maintenance hinders the advancement of English language among students, teachers should enforce rules to ensure that mother-tongue is not used in class" (p.304).

Another factor that created difficulties for Kurdish EFL students in English speaking skills was Item 12 "when speaking English grammar becomes difficult for me" (M= 2.81, SD=1.07). The majority (66.3%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they have grammatical difficulties while expressing themselves in English. This may be due to the fact that the Kurdish students are more influenced by grammatical rules of their native language while speaking in English because the rules of Kurdish grammar are different from grammar rules of English. The sentence construction in Kurdish is composed of Subject + Object+ Verb, whereas

English sentence is constructed from Subject + Verb + Object. For this reason, the students may be expected to make mistakes when forming correct sentences in English. This finding is in line with the study of Sulaiman and Muhammad (2013) which revealed that Kurdish students from English departments faced many problems in using and constructing English tenses, and their errors relate to the lack of sufficient practice by the students, inefficient teaching by the teachers and intra-lingual factors which include over- generalization of certain rules of English language without considering the tense of the sentences.

The results in Table 4, displayed that Item 10 "pronunciation causes difficulty for me when speaking English" (M=2.79, SD=1.13), indicated that most of the respondents (66.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that they face problems in pronouncing English words correctly. The reason behind this is probably that some of the English consonants do not exist in Kurdish language; for example /Ө/ and / ð/ cannot be found in Kurdish. Therefore, some Kurdish students still pronounce /Ө/ as /ʃ/ and / ð/ as /z/. Harmer (2001) suggests that teachers should show learners how English sounds are formed through diagrams, demonstrations and explanation. He also says that teachers can draw the sounds to the learners' attention when they appear in conversation or on a tape, by doing this the teachers gradually train the ears of learners which leads to the correct pronunciation of the students. Similar to this finding of the present study, Saigh and Schmitt (2012) conducted a study to explore the problems of Arabic EEL students with vocabulary word form. Their findings showed that Arabic students also have phonological problems especially in terms of confusing between long and short vowels of English in a similar way with their mother tongue.

The last result in Table 4 showed that Item 11 has got a mean score of 2.60 (SD=1.11) "lack of adequate vocabulary makes speaking English difficult for me". More than fifty percent

56% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that lack of sufficient vocabulary caused them to face difficulties while speaking in English. The reason for this seems to be that the students do not use an appropriate strategy in acquiring new words. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) are used to discover how learners learn new vocabulary and which strategy must be used by learners in the acquisition of new items. "There are numbers of strategies which are used by students to learn new vocabulary items, however, they seem to lack the distinguishing criteria about which strategy to choose and which one to exclude" (Rahimy & Shams, 2012. p.141). In addition, Alhaysony (2012) claimed that "English language teachers should have a vital role in helping the students explore vocabulary discovery strategies and methods so as to develop autonomous learners in vocabulary learning" (p.530).

In Table 5 below, the five items with the lowest mean scores that affected difficulties for students in speaking English will be discussed. As showed in Table 5, the first least frequent item was Item 24 "our English text books help me improve my English speaking skills" with a mean score of 1.95 (SD=1.02). In this Item the majority (71.8%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their course books improve their English speaking skills. The reason behind this may be due to the fact that the course books do not include enough activities which are mainly designed for improving speaking skills. Therefore, it seems that the students may not be encouraged by the text books to frequently practice the oral language. This finding is consistent with the study of Al Hosni (2014) which investigated Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners in Oman. The researcher reported that the participants did not agree with the English curriculum for developing oral skills because their text books were used to emphasize the reading and writing skills more than the speaking skills. Hamza and

Hassan (2009) claimed that "Authentic materials are required in conversation skills so as to help EFL undergraduates develop their target language use appropriately" (p.15).

Table 5

Items with the lowest mean scores that affected students' difficulties in speaking English

Item N	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
28	I usually speak English in the Classroom.	184	SD	35.9%	2.26	1.16
			D	23.9%		
			A	18.5%		
			SA	21.7%		
32	I feel shy when I speak English Outside the classroom.	184	SD	32.6%	2.22	1.08
			D	29.9%		
			A	20.1%		
			SA	17.4%		
18	Our English teachers encourage us To speak English in the classroom.	184	SD	38.6%	2.18	1.16
			D	25.5%		
			A	14.7%		
			SA	21.2%		
25	The duration of conversation classes Is sufficient to improve my English speaking skills.	184	SD	31.5%	2.16	1.01
			D	33.2%		
			A	22.3%		
			SA	13.0%		
24	Our English text books help me Improve my English speaking skills.	184	SD	43.5%	1.95	1.02
			D	28.3%		
			A	17. 4%		
			SA	10.9%		

The second least frequent Item which is shown in Table 5 was Item 25 "the duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve my English speaking skills" with a mean score of 2.16 (SD= 1.01). The majority (64.7%) of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the Item. This finding demonstrates that the duration of practicing oral skills in class and the time allocated for this purpose must be lengthened for the students. One of the reasons for this may

be large amount of students in classes because most of the classrooms of English departments in Kurdistan region include more than 30students. As a result, the allocated time for practicing speaking cannot be sufficient for each student's need in classroom participation. In EFL situations, learners need to have a greater amount of exposure in developing the skill of speaking in the classroom. According to Febriyanti (n.d), in large classrooms, every student cannot be given the chance to practice the oral language skills, as it is difficult for each student to ask and obtain individual consideration they need.

The third least frequent Item in Table 5 is Item 18 "our English teachers encourage us to speak English in the classroom" with a mean score of 2.18 (SD=1.16). Approximately (64.1%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item. The result shows that the students are not encouraged by their instructors to participate in speaking English in the classroom. This may be due to the fact that some of the Kurdish EFL teachers are not aware of the motivational strategies used in the EFL classroom. "Even those who are aware of these strategies are sometimes unsure which ones to choose" (Al-mahrooqi, Abrar-ul-Hassan & Asante, 2012. p.65). In addition, Alshehri (2012) says "it is important for English as foreign language (EFL) teachers to use motivational strategies to promote their students' motivation in the L2 classroom as this might lead to better second language (L2) learning" (p.26).

The findings in Table 5 showed that Item 32 "I feel shy when I speak English outside the classroom" as the fourth least frequent item with a mean score of 2.22 (SD=1.08). It was found that (62.5%) of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item. This means that most Kurdish EFL students stated that they do not feel shy when they speak English outside the classroom. This finding contrasts with the findings of Item 19 above where they stated that they feel shy inside the classroom while speaking in English. This contrast between these two

findings is perhaps linked to some psychological factors that influenced the students' performance in speaking English inside and outside the classroom. Anxiety level and shyness may be regarded as the two influential factors. It can be claimed that both shyness and anxiety level of most of Kurdish students increase to higher levels in front of their teachers in class which results in losing their self-confidence and their positive attitude towards speaking in English. On the contrary, the level of anxiety and shyness of those students decreases to a lower level outside their class. A possible reason for this is probably that the relationship between teachers and students is not friendly enough in the classroom. Furthermore, Kurdish EFL teachers seem to be unsuccessful in classroom management and in creating a friendly environment inside the class to make the students reduce their level of stress, anxiety and shyness. A sufficient personal relationship with teachers can reduce the level of shyness and anxiety of students to a lower level during communication in English (Wörde, 2003, as cited in Sharif, 2014).

Finally, Item 28 "I usually speak English in the classroom" with a mean score of 2.26 (SD=1.16) is the fifth least frequent item that students considered as one of the factors of their difficulties in English speaking skills. It was indicated that (59.8%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this Item. It is clear that the majority of the students do not generally use English in the classroom. This may be related to the fact that Kurdish EFL second year classes are run by novice language teachers who have not been trained well in teaching English as a foreign language. Therefore, they cannot enable the students practice and use English more in the classroom. According to Ura (2013), institutions of higher education should help novice teachers by encouraging them to participate in training sessions, conferences and seminars in order to raise their knowledge in language teaching.

Perceptions of Kurdish EFL Teachers about Their Students' Difficulties in Speaking English

Table 6 illustrates the first 8 items in the teachers' questionnaire which are about teachers' perceptions about their students' difficulties in speaking English.

Table 6

Perceptions of Kurdish EFL teachers about their students' speaking difficulties

Item NN	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
7	Lack of adequate vocabulary makes Speaking English difficult for my students.	30	SD D A SA	3.3% 6.7% 46.7% 43.3%	3.30	.74
6	Students have grammatical difficulties while speaking English.	30	SD D A SA	6.7% 13.3% 53.3% 26.7%	3. 00	0.83
2	Students are weak in English speaking.	30	SD D A SA	13.3% 20.0% 26.7% 40.0%	2.93	1.08
4	Students have difficulties in Speaking English.	30	SD D A SA	16.7% 16.7% 36.7% 30.0%	2.80	1.06
5	Students have English pronunciation difficulties when they speak English.	30	SD D A SA	20.0% 20.0% 23.3% 36.7%	2.76	1.16
1	Students in my department cannot speak English fluently.	30	SD D A SA	20.0% 26.7% 23.3% 30.0%	2.63	1.12
8	Differences between Kurdish and English sound systems make speaking English difficult for the students.	30	SD D A SA	30.0% 20.0% 23.3% 26.7%	2.46	1.19
3	Teaching English speaking skills to Kurdish students is a difficult task.	30	SD D A SA	36.7% 16.7% 16.7% 30.0%	2.40	1.27

As it is shown in Table 6, most of the teachers (90.0%) agreed or strongly agreed with Item 7 "lack of adequate vocabulary makes speaking English difficult for my students" with a mean score of 3.30 (SD= .74). This finding is supported by Brown and Nations' (1997) opinion that due to the inadequate knowledge of vocabulary, students are unable to speak in English. They also emphasize the significance of vocabulary acquisition in learners' communication in English. Likewise, "lack of vocabulary knowledge could lead to students' difficulties in language reception and production and becomes an obstacle for them to express their ideas in English" (Smith, 2011, as cited in Juhana, 2012, p.65).

In Item 6, the majority of the teachers (80%) agreed or strongly agreed with a mean score of 3.00 (SD=.83) with item 6 that their students face grammatical difficulties while speaking in English. This finding is similar to the study of Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011) which they found that lack of instruction on grammar makes their students fail during communication in English. The researchers also argue that teachers believe that EFL learners face challenges in using the rules of grammar which are taught in the classroom. Furthermore, they explained that even though the learners know all the grammatical rules perfectly, they are unable to apply these rules in their oral practice in the target language.

Responses to Item 2 "students are weak in English speaking" with a mean score of 2.93 (SD= 1.08), indicated that (66.7%) of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the Item. According to Bagheri and Pourgharib (2013), learning to speak in the target language needs more experience in semantics and grammatical rules of this language. For that reason, the speaking skills are challenging mainly for the new learners of the language because effective verbal communication requires more effort to improve the language in daily interaction. The

main reason for the weaknesses of speaking probably "the little time that students spend in actually speaking English in a typical day" (Jdetawy, 2011, p.23).

The majority of the teachers (66.7%) with a mean score of 2.80 (SD=1.06) agreed or strongly agreed that their students have difficulties in speaking English. This finding is similar to the findings of other previous studies (Rabab'ah, 2005 &Aylan, 2013). Pathan, Aldersi and Alsout (2014) claim "the skill of speaking does not go so easily with the EFL learners due to many factors, including the mother tongue interference which hinder and influence the process of learning and mastering this crucial foreign language skill"(p.96).

In Item 5 "students have English pronunciation difficulties when they speak English" with a mean score of 2.76 (SD=1.16), indicated that the majority (60%) of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their students face pronunciation problems while expressing themselves in English. This finding is in harmony with Lin's (2014) study which found that having problems in pronunciation can weaken learners' communicative skills in the EFL context. Moreover, Ahmadi (2011) noted that "pronunciation can be one of the most difficult parts for a language learner to master and one of the least favorite topics for teachers to address in the classroom"(p.81)

The findings of Table 6 show that Item 1 "students in my department cannot speak English fluently" has got a mean score of 2.63 (SD=1.12). It was found that more than fifty percent of the teachers 53.3% agreed or strongly agreed with this item. Yingjie (2014) says that the term fluency is almost neglected in EFL classrooms since there is an absence of speaking activities for improving the fluency in the class, syllabus supporting, of less curriculum and instructed procedure for managing the fluency development. Filmore (1979) also suggested that fluency involves the ability to:

1. Fill time with talk [i.e., to talk without awkward pauses for a relatively long time].

2. Talk in coherent, reasoned, and "semantically dense" sentences.

3. Have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts.

4. Be creative and imaginative in using the language (as cited in Brown, 2003, p.2).

The response to Item 8, showed that 50% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that differences between Kurdish and English sound systems make speaking English difficult for their students (M=2.46, SD=1.19). In other words, fifty percent of the Kurdish teachers are more aware of the differences between the target language and their native language, for instance, stress placement of the two languages are quite different. Rahimpour and Dovaise (2011) clarify that stress placement in both languages shows some essential differences. They say that stress is made generally by tone in English, whereas it is formed through loudness in Kurdish. They also say, in English, there is a tendency to fall stress on the first syllable unlike Kurdish where it usually falls at the end of the word. For that reason, Kurdish students would face difficulties when they utter a stressed syllable in English because they are not competent enough in stress placement of English language.

The last Item in Table 6 is: "teaching English speaking skills to Kurdish students is a difficult task" (M = 2.40, SD = 1.27). The results of data analysis show that more than fifty percent of the teachers (53.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this Item. This finding is in contrast with Boskany's (2002) research in which he has declared that "teaching of English to speakers of Kurdish poses problems which can be attributed to the nature of both languages" (as cited in Rahimpour & Dovaise, 2011, p.81).

Teachers' Perceptions on the Factors that Affect Students' Performance in Speaking English

The question of this section was: From teachers' perspectives, what factors affect students' performance in speaking English? This question included 16 items (item 9-24) in the teachers' questionnaire. To find out the most and least frequent items that affected students' performance in speaking English, five highest and five lowest mean scored items were selected among other items. The percentage, mean scores and standard deviation for the 16 items are shown in (Appendix G). Table 7 displays the percentages, means and standard deviations for the five highest mean scores that affected students' performance in speaking English.

Table 7

Items with the highest mean scores from teachers' perspectives that affected students' performance in speaking English

Item N	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
12	I encourage my students to speak English in the classroom.	30	SD	0.0%	3.43	.62
			D	6.7%		
			A	43.3%		
			SA	50.0%		
21	My students sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.	30	SD	23.3%	2.90	1.21
			D	6.7%		
			A	26.7%		
			SA	43.3%		
9	Students don not speak English in the classroom because their classmates may laugh at them if they make mistakes	30	SD	3.3%	2.76	.56
			D	20.0%		
			A	73.3%		
			SA	3.3%		
17	My students' English text books do not Include enough speaking activities.	30	SD	23.3%	2.70	1. 14
			D	13.3%		
			A	33.3%		
			SA	30.0%		
10	Students prefer to speak Kurdish in the English language classroom.	30	SD	23.3%	2.56	1.16
			D	26.7%		
			A	20.0%		
			SA	30.0%		

As displayed in Table 7, most of the teachers (93.3%) agreed or strongly agreed with Item 12 "I encourage my students to speak English in the classroom" (M=3.43, SD=.62). This is contrasting with the students' responses in Item 18 in table 5 where they stated that their teachers do not encourage them to speak English in the classroom. This contradiction might have resulted from the inappropriate strategies that teachers used to motivate their students to speak in the classroom. Alyan (2013) noted that teachers play a significant role in encouraging learners to develop their self-confidence, and reducing their fear and anxiety in oral communication. He also states that techniques and strategies of teaching must emphasize the needs to encourage and empower the students to take part in class discussion and interaction through helpful reinforcement and affective filter.

The second highest mean scored Item in Table 7 was Item 21 "my students sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom" with a mean score of 2.90 (SD=1.21), indicated that the majority of the teachers (70%) agreed or strongly agreed with the Item. Similar to the students' opinion, teachers also stated that using native language in an EFL classroom is one of the reasons why students face difficulties in speaking in English. According to Auerbach (1993) "the more learners are exposed to the target language, the more quickly they will acquire; as they hear and use English, they will internalize it to begin to think in English; the only way they will learn it is if they are forced to use it" (as cited in Mahmutoglu & Kicir, 2013, p. 50).

Another highest mean score in Table 7 is of Item 9 "students do not speak English in the classroom because their classmates may laugh at them if they make mistakes" which received a mean score of 2.76 (SD= .56). This shows that more than three quarters of the teachers (76.6%) agreed or strongly agreed with the Item. Teachers believe that their students are afraid of making mistakes while they are speaking in English. The reason behind this may be due to the classroom

atmosphere. When students try to speak English correctly and to express themselves, they become more aware of negative reaction by their peers when speaking in English. Their awareness of negative evaluation may lead them to be silent in the class. For this reason, teachers should minimize any negative evaluation that is made by other students and make the students understand that making a mistake is very natural in the process of learning. Furthermore, mistakes can be considered as a step for better achievement of learning how to speak successfully. Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014) found in their study that evaluation of other learners plays a main role on the students' anxiety while speaking, i.e. when they are afraid of being laughed by their friends. They also pointed out that reducing this negative effect in an EFL classroom can help learners to lower the level of anxiety when speaking; therefore, learners could be more willing and eager to take part in oral activities.

As shown in Table 7, the majority (63.3%) of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with Item 17 "my students' English text books do not include enough speaking activities" with a mean score of 2.70 (SD=1.14) . The reason for this may be due to the fact that the text books emphasize literature programs and grammatical rules rather than the communicative competence. Al-Jamal and Al-Jamal (2014) claimed that English departments should evaluate their curricula and programs in order to ensure that such program and curricula are appropriate for the communicate needs of the language learners.

Finally, 50% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with Item10 "students prefer to speak Kurdish in the English language classroom" with a mean score 2.56 (SD= 1.16). This finding indicates that students do not use English to the maximum extent in the classroom. This may be related to the low proficiency level of the students in speaking English; therefore they are not able to express their thoughts correctly. Accordingly, they are willing to speak in their native

language rather than using the target language. Hence, willingness to communicate in the first language (L1) has a negative effect on the acquisition of the target language. Cook (2001) stated that learners should only use the target language in order to reach a linguistic competency level which is close to the level of their native language. He also concluded by giving examples of some teaching situations in which the L1 can be used positively. For example, teachers and students are allowed to use the first language for some reasons such as checking and explaining meaning, teaching and explaining grammar, classroom management, explaining activities and tasks in the classroom and maintaining interaction with the learners.

In Table 8 below, five lowest mean scored items from teachers' perspectives that affected students' performance in speaking English will be illustrated. As displayed in Table 8, the first least frequent Item is "the duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve students' English speaking skills" (item 19, M= 2.03, SD= 0.92). Most (70%) of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with item. This means, Kurdish EFL teachers believe that lack of appropriate time for developing and improving speaking skills in the class has a negative impact on students' performance in speaking English. This finding was also verified by the students' responses in Item 25 in Table 5. The reason behind the need of extra time for speaking classes is possibly because the teachers and students see the classroom environment as the only place to improve or drill English speaking skills.

Table 8

Items with the lowest mean scores from teachers' perspectives that affected students' performance in speaking English

Item N	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
18	The English text books help my students improve their speaking skills	30	SD	23.3%	2.46	1.13
			D	23.3%		
			A	16.7%		
			SA	26.7%		
11	Students enjoy speaking English in the classroom.	30	SD	6.7%	2. 40	0.72
			D	53.3%		
			A	33.3%		
			SA	6.7%		
15	Students ask me about the correct pronunciation of English words	30	SD	10.0%	2.26	.69
			D	56.7%		
			A	30.0%		
			SA	3.3%		
14	Students speak English with me outside the classroom.	30	SD	36.7%	2.20	1.15
			D	26.7%		
			A	16.7%		
			SA	20.0%		
19	The duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve students' English speaking skills.	30	SD	33.3%	2.03	0.92
			D	36.7%		
			A	23.3%		
			SA	6.7%		

From teachers' responses, Item 14 "students speak English with me outside the classroom" was considered as the second least frequent Item that affected students' performance in speaking English (M=2.20, SD= 1.15). It was found that (63.4%) of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that their students speak to them in English outside the classroom. This means that students need more exposure to the target language even outside their classroom because using English only in the class cannot be sufficient to enhance their communicative competence. Hence, exposure to English is considered as the key element of success in acquisition of the target language. Zhang (2009) stated that the EFL learners usually do not speak English outside

the classroom and they also cannot find an opportunity to speak to the native speakers of English. For that reason, he claims that teachers need to provide further activities and situations for learners to reinforce their speaking skills in English.

In Table 8, the majority (66.7%) of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with Item 15 "students ask me about the correct pronunciation of English words" with a mean score of 2.26 (SD= .69). According to this finding, teachers view pronunciation as an important part of the oral skills that students need to improve while speaking in English. This is because speaking by poorly pronouncing cannot convey the speakers' message to the listener. Gilakjani (2011) claimed that "with good and intelligible pronunciation, the students' self-confidence will be increased and this enables them to better understand their instructors, follow the news on TV or the radio more easily, or join in English conversations, class discussions, role-plays" (p. 7).

The findings in Table 8 indicated that Item 11 is the fourth least frequent Item which got a mean score of 2.40 (SD= 072) "students enjoy speaking English in the classroom". Most (60%) of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed on the item. According to the teachers' view, students have negative attitudes towards speaking English in the classroom. Thus, this finding is regarded as a negative factor in speaking performance that made Kurdish EFL students unsuccessful while speaking in English. Furthermore, this finding is in line with the study of Savasci (2014) which was conducted among 22 Turkish EFL students in an English Language Teaching (ELT) department and it was found that the participants were reluctant to speak in English. The researcher also pointed out the reasons that negatively affected the willingness of the students to speak in English which include the fear of making mistakes, the lack of confidence, the effect of teachers and cultural factors.

Finally, 56.6% of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with Item 18 "the English text books help my students improve their speaking skills" with a mean score of 2.46 (SD= 1.13). The reason behind this may be due to the fact that the teachers were influenced by the earlier finding where they reported that the English text books do not include sufficient speaking activities. As a result, the lack of speaking activities in the course books resulted in the low proficiency of students in speaking English. This finding is similar to the research of Hamad (2013) which investigated the factors that negatively affect the speaking skills in Saudi Colleges for Girls in the South. He found that "there are not enough speaking exercises in the text book to be practiced inside and outside the class" (p.94).

Similarities and Differences between Teachers and Students' Perceptions about Kurdish EFL Students' Difficulties in Speaking Skills

Eight items (1, 7, 6, 5, 12, 21, 18 and 19) from teachers' questionnaire which were related to eight items (9, 11, 12, 10, 18, 17, 24 and 25) in the students' questionnaire were compared to show similarities and differences between teachers and students' perceptions about EFL students' difficulties in speaking skills. After presenting the results of data analysis in the previous sections, it was found that there are some similarities and there is only one difference between teachers and students' responses regarding the above items. Although these items in both questionnaires have been discussed in the previous sections, they will be further explained below for the sake of comparison.

Teachers' responses to Item 1 in Table 6 "students in my department cannot speak English fluently" are similar to the students' responses to Item 9 in Table 3 "I cannot speak English fluently". This is because both teachers and students agreed or strongly agreed about the

two items. This may be due to the fact that teachers and students neglected the development of fluency in the classroom. According to Yang (2014) "the EFL learners are strongly required to put their efforts on fluency development" (P. 229).

From teachers' responses to item 7 in Table 6 "lack of adequate vocabulary makes speaking English difficult for my students" it was found that most teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement in this item. Therefore, it can be said that this finding is similar with the students' perceptions regarding item 11 in Table 4 "lack of adequate vocabulary makes speaking English difficult for me" because most students agreed or strongly agreed with the item.

Another similarity between teachers and students' responses concerns difficulties in grammar while speaking English. A great number of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement in item 6 of Table 6, namely "students have grammatical difficulties while speaking English. Likewise, the majority of the students agreed or strongly agreed with item 12 of Table 4 "when speaking English grammar becomes difficult for me".

Both teachers and students have the same perception about the difficulties in pronunciation of speaking English. Teachers agreed or strongly agreed with item 5 of Table 6 "students have English pronunciation difficulties when they speak English". Likewise, students' responses to item 10 in Table 4 "pronunciation causes difficulty for me when speaking English" showed that most students also agreed or strongly agreed with the item. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a clear match between teachers' and students' views on the difficulties related to grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary in peaking English. This finding is in line with

the results of previous studies (Al- ma'shy, 2011 & Aylan, 2013) who also found similarities between teachers and students views on such difficulties in oral communication skills.

The majority of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with item 21 in Table 7 "my students sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom". So, this finding is similar to the students' responses to item 17 in Table 4 "I sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom". In other words, teachers and students believed that using mother tongue in classroom negatively contributed to the students' performance in speaking English. This finding goes against with Nofaie's(2011) study about the attitudes of teachers and students towards using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Saudi public schools. The findings of her study showed that both teachers' and students' attitudes about using Arabic in the classroom were generally positive.

Teachers' responses to item 18 in Table 8 "The English text books help my students improve their speaking skills" indicated that the majority of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item. Similar to this, most students also disagreed or strongly disagreed with item 24 in Table 5 "our English text books help me improve my English speaking skills".

Finally, it was found that both teachers and students have the same response about the duration of conversation classes. Most of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with item 19 in table 8 "the duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve students' English speaking skills". The majority of the students also disagreed or strongly disagreed with item 25 in Table 5 "the duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve my English speaking skills". Therefore, teachers and students' views about English text books and the time allocated for conversation classes go in line with Hamad's (2011) research about factors negatively

affecting speaking skills at Saudi colleges for Girls in the South which found that teachers and students did not agree with curriculum and the time devoted to speaking English.

Despite the above similarities, the views of students and teachers with regard to encouragement for speaking English differed. That is, almost all the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with item 12 of Table 7 "I encourage my students to speak English in the classroom". While, the majority of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with item 18 of Table 5 "our English teachers encourage us to speak English in the classroom". Therefore, as can be seen, that there is a mismatch between teachers and students' perceptions on the encouragement regarding speaking English in the classroom. This finding goes against with Al- ma'shy's (2011) study who found similar responses from teachers' and students' opinions towards encouragement for speaking English in the classroom.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This chapter will give a summary about the findings and results of the study. It will then present recommendations for teachers and students to enhance the learning and teaching process regarding EFL speaking skills. Finally, some suggestions will be made for future studies.

Summary of the Findings

As it was mentioned in chapter one, the study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of both teachers and students with regards to EFL students' difficulties in speaking English. Therefore, the following research questions were asked to achieve the objective of the study.

1. What are Kurdish EFL students' attitudes towards speaking skills?

2. From students' perspectives, what factors affect their difficulties in speaking English?

3. What are the perceptions of Kurdish EFL teachers about their students' speaking difficulties?

4. From teachers' perspectives, what factors affect students' performance in speaking English?

5. What are the similarities and differences between teachers' and students' perceptions about Kurdish EFL students' difficulties in speaking skills?

Kurdish EFL Students' Attitudes towards Speaking Skills

With regards to the first research question, the findings revealed that the students have positive attitudes towards English speaking skills. Most of the students who took part in this study stated that they like speaking English. Moreover, they indicated that speaking English is very useful and they did not believe that speaking English is tedious for them. The findings also revealed that the majority of the students view English speaking as an important skill at the university level. In addition, the students believe that speaking English is important for them because it enables them to interact successfully with native speakers of English, to get a good job opportunity in the future, and to have a higher status in the society. These findings are in line with Al-Ma'shy's (2011) study, who found that Saudi students have a positive attitude towards speaking English. Similarly, the findings of Kabir's (2014) research have confirmed that Bangladeshi students showed their willingness to learn to speak English. However, the students in the study declared that speaking English is difficult for them and they cannot speak English fluently.

Students' Perceptions on the Factors that Affect Their Difficulties in Speaking English

Based on the findings of this study presented in chapter four, the students highlighted the following factors that speaking English difficult for them.

- Most of the students considered their shyness as a major factor in making speaking English difficult for them.
- Using their mother tongue in the classroom was another factor that hinders Kurdish students in practicing their speaking English.

- Having lack of sufficient knowledge in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary caused a great challenge to the Kurdish EFL students while speaking.

- The students pointed out that teachers do not encourage them enough to speak in English. Therefore, this finding is regarded as an influential factor for the students' difficulty in speaking English.

- Students confirmed that having a lack of sufficient time for improving speaking skills in the classroom made them face difficulty in speaking English.

- The students declared that their course books do not help them improve their English speaking skills.

Perceptions of Kurdish EFL Teachers about Their Students' Speaking Difficulties

The findings obtained for the third research question which was designed to identify teachers' perceptions about their students' difficulties in speaking English, showed that Kurdish EFL teachers believed that their students are weak in speaking English. The teachers also believed that the students cannot speak English fluently. Similar to the students' perceptions, the teachers' responses identified some difficulties that their students face during speaking in English. The difficulties that teachers highlighted were:

- Students' difficulties in vocabulary knowledge while speaking English.

- Students' difficulties in English grammar.

- Students' difficulties in English pronunciation, in particular difficulties caused by the differences between Kurdish and English sound systems.

Hence, there are some similarities between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding EFL students' difficulties in speaking skills.

Teachers' Perceptions about the Factors that Affect Students' Performance in Speaking English

The results of fourth research question dealt with teachers' perceptions about the factors that affect students' performance in speaking English. The findings of the study showed that teachers believed that students' willingness to speak Kurdish and sometimes using mother tongue in the classroom affected their performance in speaking English. In other words, using mother tongue in the classroom can hinder improvement in the target language. The teachers also presented that fear to speak in English because of making mistakes negatively affected students' performance in speaking English. Similar to the students' perspectives, the teachers identified that lack of speaking activity in the students' textbooks and insufficient time to improve speaking skills caused students' difficulties in speaking English.

The teachers also stated that students' reluctance to speak English inside and outside the classroom as well as their reluctance to ask about the correct pronunciation of English words are other factors that affect the students' performance in speaking English.

Similarities and Differences between Teachers and Students' Perceptions about Kurdish EFL Students' Difficulties in Speaking Skills

The results of the similar items in both questionnaires showed that there were some similarities and there was only one difference between teachers' and students' responses. Most teachers and students have the same perceptions about the difficulties in fluency of speaking skills .The Findings of the study indicated that both teachers' and students' responses are similar about those difficulties of speaking skills which are created by lack of sufficient Knowledge in

vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Furthermore, teachers' and students' perceptions are also similar with regard to using Kurdish in the classroom, text books, and the duration of conversational classes.

On the other hand, the difference between teachers' and students' perceptions was about encouragement for speaking English in the classroom. Almost all the teachers agreed that they encourage their students to speak English in the classroom, while the majority of the students disagreed with the teachers' responses regarding encouragement for speaking English in the classroom.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the present study, the following recommendations can be made:

- The findings revealed that Kurdish EFL students have positive attitudes towards speaking skill. Therefore, teachers should motivate the students to speak in English both inside and outside the classroom.

- Decreasing the feeling of shyness and fear of making mistakes among students by teachers can effectively raise their students' awareness and confidence in enhancing their English speaking skill .Thus, shyness as a psychological factor, should be taken into consideration by teachers in order to help the students feel more comfortable while speaking English. In other words, Kurdish EFL teachers need to create a friendly environment in the classroom in order to reduce the feeling of shyness and anxiety among their students.

- To improve students' ability in speaking English, teachers should not allow their students to use their mother tongue in the classroom. As Muriungi and Mbui (2013) stated that

using mother tongue in classrooms can hinder the progress of learning the target language. They also say that teachers should conduct rules and regulations to make learners avoid speaking in their mother-tongue in the classroom.

- As the teachers and students stated that the course books do not provide any improvement in English speaking skills, the programs and curricula should be revised by the English departments to ensure that teaching materials would meet the students' needs in communicative competence.

- Based on the teachers' and students' perceptions about their difficulties of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in English speaking skills, teachers should adopt methods of teaching that would enhance students' linguistic knowledge.

- As teachers and students reported that the duration of conversation classes is not sufficient to improve English speaking skills, the English departments should increase the time allocated to their English speaking classes in order to provide more opportunity for the students to practice their oral skills.

Suggestions for Further Studies

- Since the present study was only limited to the second year English majors, the same study can be conducted with other grades so as to compare the findings of this study with other study. Then there might be a more comprehensive perception about Kurdish EFL students' difficulties in speaking English

- Because this study used only the questionnaire survey, a future study can be conducted by using qualitative methods including interview and classroom

observation to obtain further data on the difficulties of speaking skills among Kurdish EFL students.

- Since this study has only investigated the difficulties of Kurdish EFL learners in speaking skills, future studies can be done to explore the challenges encountered by Kurdish learners of English in other language skills such as listening, reading and writing.

- Factors such as gender, age and language proficiency level were not considered in this study. Therefore future studies can investigate the effect of such factors on Kurdish EFL students' difficulties in speaking skills.

REFERENCES

Ahmadi, M. R. (2011). Why is pronunciation so difficult to learn? *English Language Teaching, 4*(3), 74-83.

Al Hosni, S. (2014). Speaking difficulties encountered by young EFL learners. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL), 2*(6), 22-30.

Al-Haysony , M. (2012). Vocabulary discovery strategy used by saudi EFL students in an intensive English language learning context. *International Journal of Linguistics, 4*(2), 518-535.

Al-Jamal, D. A., & Al-Jamal, G. A. (2014). An investigation of the difficulties faced by EFL undergraduates in speaking skills. *English Language Teaching, 7*(1), 19-27.

Al-jumah, F. H. (2011). Developing Saudi EFL students' oral skills: an integrative approach. *English Language Teaching, 4*(3), 84-89.

Al-ma'shy, A. A. (2011). *Cases of EFL speaking weakness in Saudi secondary schools in Al-Gunfuthah city.*Unpublished MA thesis.King Saud University, Riyadh.

Al-Mahrooqi, R., Abrar-ul-Hassan, S., & Asante, C. (2012). Analyzing the use of motivational strategies by EFL teachers in Oman. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research, 8*(1), 36-76.

Al-Mekhlafi , A. M., & Nagaratnam, R. P. (2011). Difficulties in teaching and learning garmmar in an EFL context. *International Journal of Instruction, 4*(2), 70-92.

Alshehri, E. (2012). Saudi EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of motivational strategies . *Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 26-54.

Aylan, A. A. (2013). Oral communication problems encountering English major students:perspectives of learners and teachers in Palestinian EFL university context. *Arab World English, 4*, 226-238.

Bagheri, S., & Pourgharib, B. (2013). An investigation of the effect of journal writing on EFL Learners' oral production. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences, 4*(10), 3520-3525.

Bashir, M., Azeem, M., & Dogar, A. H. (2011). Factor effecting students' English speaking skills. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences, 2*(1), 34-50.

Boonkit, K. (2010). Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2*(2), 1305-1309.

Brown, J. D. (2003). Promoting fluency in EFL classrooms. *JALT National Conference* (pp. 1-12). Kyoto, Japan: Kyoto Institute of Technology.

Brown, R. S., & Nation, P. (1997). Teaching Speaking: suggestions for the Classroom. *The Language Teacher, 21*(1), 11-15.

Chastain , K. (1988). *Developing second-language skills. Theory and Practice* . New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classaroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 57*(3), 402-423.

Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Darsini, N. W. (2013). *Improving speaking skill through cooperative learning method of the Eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Ubud in academic year 2012 / 2013.*

Febriyanti, E, R. (n.d.).*Teaching English as a foreign language: problems and solutions.* Retrieved December 26, 2014, from

http://download.portalgaruda.org/article.php?article=96563&val=4806

Gan, Z. (2012). Understanding L2 speaking problems:implications for ESL curriculum development in a teacher training institution in Hong Kong. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(1), 43-58.

Ghrib, E. M. (2004). Secondary school students' perceptions of learning difficulties and strategies. *The Reading Matrix, 4*(2), 63-84.

Gilakjani , A. P. (2011). A study on the situation of pronunciation instruction in ESL/EFL classrooms. *Journal of Studies in Education, 1*(1), 1-15.

Hamad, M. M. (2013). Factors negatively affect speaking skills at Saudi colleges for girls in the South. *English Language Teaching, 6*(12), 87-97.

Hamza , A. A., & Hasan, M. F. (2009). Assessing the outcomes of EFL learning conversational skills for iraqi EFL undergraduates. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 1-22.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching* (3th ed.). Cambridge: Longman.

Harmer, J. (2008). *The practice of English language teaching: with DVD* (4th ed.). Pearson: Longman.

Hasan, A. S. (2013). *Teachers' and students' perceptions towards improving vocabulary through Short stories in the EFL classroom*. Unpublished MA thesis. Near East University, Nicosia.

Hol, D., & Paker, T. (2012). attitudes and perceptions of the students and instructors towards the speaking test communicatively. *Pamukkale University Journal of Education, 2*(32), 13-24.

Hue, N. M. (2010). Encouraging reluctant ESL/EFL learners to speak in the classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal, 16*, *3*.

Jdetawy, L. F. (2011). Problems encountered by arab EFL learners. *Language in India, 11*(11), 19-27.

Juhana. (2012). Linguistic factors that become students' obstacles to speak in English class. *Ragam Jurnal Pengembangan Humaniora,* 2(12), 63-77.

Juhana. (2012). Psychological factors that hinder students from speaking in English class (a sase study in a senior high school in south Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia). *Journal of Education and Practice, 3*(12), 100-110.

Kabir, S. U. (2014). *Challenges of speaking English in Bangladeshi classrooms*. Unpublished master's thesis. BRAC University.

Kayi, H. (2006). Teaching speaking: Activities to promote speaking in a second language. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *12*(11)

Lin, L. C. (2014). Understanding pronunciation variations facing ESL students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 4*(1), 16-20.

Mahmutoglu, H., & Kicir, Z. (2013). The use of mother tongue in EFL classrooms. *EUL Journal of Social Sciences, 15*(1), 49-72.

Morozova, Y. (2013). Methods of enhancing speaking skills of elementary level students. *Translation, 17*(1).

Muriungi , P. K., & Mbui , M. K. (2013). The influence of mother-tongue maintenance on acquisition of English language skills among days secondary school students in Imenti south district, Kenya . *International Journal of Linguistics , 5*(1).

Nazara, S. (2011). Students' perception on EFL speaking skill development. *Journal of English Teaching, 1* (1), 28-43.

Nejad, A. (2010). The construction of oral problems in an EFL contesxt: an innovative approch. *Students In Literature And Language, 1*(6), 8-22.

Nejad, J. A. (2011). An innovative approach to understanding oral problems in foreign language learning and communication. *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies, 1*(1), 3-21.

Ozturk, G., & Gurbuz, N. (2014). Speaking anxiety among Turkish EFL learners: the case at a state university. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 10*(1), 1-17.

Pathan, M., Aldersi , Z., & Alsout, E. (2014). Speaking in their language: an overview of major difficulties faced by the Libyan EFL learners in speaking skill. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies, 2*(3), 96-105.

Rababah, G. (2005). Communication problems facing Arab learners of English. *Journal of Language and Learning, 3*(1), 180-197.

Rahimy, R. & Shams, K. (2012). An Investigation of the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary test score. *International Education Studies,* 5(5), 141-149.

Rahmanipour , M., & Dovaise , M. S. (2011). A phonological contrastive analysis of Kurdish and English. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 1*(2), 73-82.

Riasati, M. J. (2012). EFL learners' perception of factors influencing willingness to speak English in language classrooms. *World Applied Sciences Journal, 17*(10), 1287-1297.

Richards, C. J. (2008). *Teaching listening and speakin fromtheory to practise.* New York: cambridge university press.

Richards, J. C., & Schimdt, R. (2010). *Dictionary of language teaching & applied linguistics.* London: Pearson Education.

Riddle , D. (2003). *Teaching English as a foreign language* . London: Hodder Education.

Saigh, K., & Schmitt, N. (2012). Difficulties with vocabulary word form: the case of Arabic ESL learners. *System*, 24-36.

Savasci, M. (2014). Why are some students reluctant to use L2 in EFL speaking classes? An action research at tertiary level. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (pp. 2682-2686). Istanbul, Turkey .

Sawir, E. (2005). Language difficulties of international students in Australia:the effects of prior learning experience. *International Eductional Journal, 6*(5), 567-580.

Sharif, R. B. (2014). *Foreign language classroom anixiety among Kurdish EFL learners in Northern Iraq.* Unpublished master's thesis. Near East University, Nicosia.

Sherkawey, P. H. (2012). *The application of integrated language skills in teaching Sunrise in Kurdistan schools*. Erbil: University of Salahaddin.

Short stories in the EFL classroom. Unpublished MA thesis. Near East University,

Sulaiman , B. M., & Muhammad, A. H. (2013). Passivization problems in the perfoemance of Kurdish EFL university students. *Journal of Basic Education College*(14), 598-606.

Tanveer, M. (2007). *Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of Glasgow.

Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education, 2*, 53-55.

Thornbury S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. England: Pearson Educational Limited.

Thornbury, S. (2006). *A dicionary of terms and concepts* . Oxford : Macmillan Education .

Ura, S. N. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai teachers' professional development needs. *English Language Teaching, 6*(11), 139-147.

Wang, Z. (2014). Developing accuracy and fluency in spoken English of Chinese EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, *7*(2), 110-118.

Yang, J. Y. (2014) Is speaking fluency stand necessary for the college students to develop in the EFL class? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies,* 4(2), 225-231.

Yingjie, Y. (2014). The development of speaking fluency: the 4/3/2 technique for the EFL learners in China. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning, 4*(3), 55-70.

Zhang, Y. (2009). Reading to speak: Integrating oral communication skills. *English Teaching Forum, 47*(1), 32-34.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect data about your opinion concerning the causes of difficulties in speaking English. Your contribution is important for this research and will help improve the teaching and learning of EFL speaking skill in Kurdistan, Iraq. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Please read the instructions for each part carefully and give your answers sincerely. Please note that **this study is not an evaluation** of your knowledge about teaching English. Your responses will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Ismael B. Hussein

MA student, Department of English Language Teaching.

Near East university, Nicosia-TRNC

Email Address: ismaelblal@yahoo.com

Part 1: Background Information

Name: (optional) ………………………………………

Gender: ◯ Male ◯ Female

Nationality: ………....................

Highest degree earned:

◯ Master's Degree ◯ PhD

Number of years of English teaching experience

⊂⊃ 1year ⊂⊃ 2-5 years ⊂⊃ 6-10 years ⊂⊃ more than 10 years

Have you ever travelled to English-speaking countries such as England or America?

⊂⊃ Yes ⊂⊃ No

If yes, how long did you stay there? ………………………….

Part 2: General statements

Instructions: In this part, we would like you to tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by simply marking the appropriate boxes. Please do not leave out any of the items.

☐☐**Please choose only one answer for every question or statement.**

☐☐**Use the following scales:**

☐☐*Strongly agree*: (If you strongly agree with the idea stated in the item).

☐☐*Agree:* (If you agree with the idea stated in the item).

☐☐*Disagree:* (If you disagree with the idea stated in the item).

☐☐*Strongly disagree:* (If you strongly disagree with the idea stated in the item).

☐☐**Check (√) in the box that reflects your opinion about each of the following statements:**

1- Students in my department cannot speak English fluently.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

2-Students are weak in English speaking.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

3- Teaching English speaking skills is a difficult task.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

4- Students have difficulties in speaking English.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

5- Students have English pronunciation difficulties when they speak English.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

6- Students have grammatical difficulties while speaking English.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

7- Lack of adequate vocabulary makes speaking English difficult for the students.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

8- The differences between Kurdish and English sound systems make speaking English difficult for the students.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

9- Students do not speak English in the classroom because their classmates may laugh at them if they make mistakes.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

10- Students prefer to speak Kurdish in the English language classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

11- Students enjoy speaking English in the classroom

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

12- I encourage my students to speak English in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

13- My students usually speak English in the classroom

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

14- Students speak English with me outside the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

15- Students ask me about the correct pronunciation of English words.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

16- I usually correct all of my students' speaking mistakes.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

17- The English textbooks do not include enough speaking activities.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

18- The English textbooks help the students to improve their speaking skills.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

19- The duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve English speaking skills.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

20- The English textbooks emphasize written skills (reading and writing) more than oral skills (speaking and listening).

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

21- My students sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

22- Students speak English with me in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

23- I usually speak English in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

24- I sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Appendix B

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

  The aim of this questionnaire is to collect data about your opinion concerning the causes of difficulties in speaking English. Your contribution is important for this research and will help improve the teaching and learning of EFL speaking skill in Kurdistan, Iraq. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Please read the instructions for each part carefully and give your answers sincerely. Please note that **this is not a test** and your responses will not affect your grades in any course. They will be used only for research purposes.

                     Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Ismael B. Hussein

MA student, Department of English Language Teaching.

Near East university, Nicosia-TRNC

Email Address: ismaelblal@yahoo.com

Part 1: Background Information

Name: (optional)…………………………………………

Gender: ◯   Male   ◯   Female

Age: ………………….................

Nationality: ……………………

Place of Residence: City……………, Province…………….

First Language: ◯   Kurdish   ◯   Arabic   ◯   Turkish   ◯   Other (please specify)………………

English Language Proficiency Level: ◯   Low Intermediate

◯   Intermediate   ◯   High Intermediate   ◯   Advanced

Have you ever travelled to English-speaking countries such as England or America?

◯   Yes   ◯   No

If yes, how long did you stay there? ………………………….

Part 2: General statements

Instructions: In this part, we would like you to tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by simply marking the appropriate boxes. Please do not leave out any of the items.

□□**Please choose only one answer for every question or statement.**

□□**Use the following scales:**

□□*Strongly agree*: (If you strongly agree with the idea stated in the item).

□□*Agree:* (If you agree with the idea stated in the item).

□□*Disagree:* (If you disagree with the idea stated in the item).

□□*Strongly disagree:* (If you strongly disagree with the idea stated in the item).

□□**Check (√) in the box that reflects your opinion about each of the following statements**

1- Speaking English is important for me because it enables me to communicate successfully with native speakers of English.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

□   □   □   □

2- Speaking English is important for me because it enables me to get a good job in the future.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

□   □   □   □

3-Speaking English is important for me because other people will respect me more if I speak English fluently.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

□   □   □   □

4- I like speaking English.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

□   □   □   □

5- Speaking English is very interesting and useful.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

6- Speaking English is an important skill at the university level.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

7- Speaking English is tedious.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

8- Speaking English is difficult for me.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

9- I cannot speak English fluently.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

10- Pronunciation causes difficulty for me when speaking English.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

12- When speaking English, grammar becomes difficult for me.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

11- Lack of adequate vocabulary makes speaking English difficult for me.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

13- Differences between Kurdish and English sound systems make speaking English difficult for me.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

14- I speak English with my teacher in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

15- I prefer not to speak English in the classroom because my classmates will laugh at me if I make mistakes.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

`16- I prefer to speak Kurdish in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

17- I sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

18- Our English teachers encourage us to speak English in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

19-I feel shy when I speak English in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

20-I speak English with my teacher outside the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

21-I ask my teachers about the correct pronunciation of English words.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

22- I prefer that my English teacher corrects all of my speaking and pronunciation mistakes.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

23- Our English textbooks do not include enough speaking activities.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

24- Our English textbooks help me improve my English speaking skills.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

25- The duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve my English speaking skills.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

26-Our English textbooks emphasize written skills (reading and writing) more than oral skills (speaking and listening).

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

27- I enjoy speaking English in the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

28- I usually speak English in the classroom

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

29- My English teachers sometimes use Kurdish in the classroom

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

30- My English teachers usually speak English in the classroom

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

31- I prefer to speak Kurdish outside the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

32- I feel shy when I speak English outside the classroom.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

33- I am satisfied with my English speaking ability

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Appendix C

Written Permission from Abduh Ali Al-Ma'shy

aalmuashy@gmail.com

To

Me

Feb 22, 2014

Dear Mr. Ismael Bilal Hussein

Thanks for your email

I don't mind if you use my survey instruments in

your research.

regards

Abduh

Appendix D

Approval letter from College of Education- English Department

Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq

Council of Ministers/ Ministry of Higher

Education & Scientific Research

Salahaddin University/ Erbil/ College of

Education/ English Department

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that (Ismael Bilal Hussein) is allowed here to collect data in Salahaddin University/ College of Education- English Department to distribute questionnaires among students and instructors of the English Department

Dr. Mohammed Omer Ahmed,

Head of English Department

College of Education

Salahaddin University, Iraq- Erbil.

Email: infoenglishdept@gmail.com

13.5. 2014

Appendix E

Approval letter from College of Languages- English Department

To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that (Ismael Bilal Hussein) is allowed here to collect data in Salahaddin University/ College of Languages – English Department to distribute questionnaires among students and instructors of the English Department.

Best Wishes

Dr. Hamza Othman Muho
PhD in English Language
Head of English Department
College of Languages
Salahaddin University
zanadanazana@yahoo.com
+964 750 4559505
May 15th, 2014

Appendix F

Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of students' perceptions on the factors that affect their difficulties in speaking English

Item N	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
19	I feel shy when I speak English in the classroom.	184	SD	14.1%	3.15	1.04
			D	4.9%		
			A	32.1%		
			SA	48.9%		
17	I sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.	184	SD	15.2%	2.98	1.05
			D	10.3%		
			A	34.8%		
			SA	39.7%		
12	When speaking English, grammar becomes difficult for me.	184	SD	17.4%	2.81	1.07
			D	16.3%		
			A	33.7%		
			SA	32.6%		
10	Pronunciation causes difficulty for me when speaking English.	184	SD	21.2%	2.79	1.13
			D	12.5%		
			A	32.1%		
			SA	34.2%		
11	Lack of adequate vocabulary makes Speaking English difficult for me.	184	SD	22.3%	2.60	1.11
			D	21.7%		
			A	28.8%		
			SA	27.2%		
14	I speak English with my teacher in the classroom.	184	SD	23.9%	2.59	1.14
			D	21.7%		
			A	25.5%		
			SA	28.8%		
13	Differences between Kurdish and English sound systems make speaking English difficult for me.	184	SD	24.5%	2.59	1.13
			D	18.5%		
			A	29.9%		
			SA	27.2%		
27	I enjoy speaking English in the classroom.	184	SD	30.4%	2.58	1.23
			D	14.1%		
			A	22.3%		
			SA	33.2%		

26	Our English text books emphasize written skills (reading and writing) more than oral skills (speaking and listening)	184	SD D A SA	23.4% 21.2% 29.3% 26.1%	2.58	1.11
23	Our English text books do not include enough speaking activity.	184	SD D A SA	20.1% 28.3% 26.1% 25.5%	2.57	1.07
29	My English teachers sometimes use Kurdish in the classroom.	184	SD D A SA	21.7% 22.3% 33.2% 22.8%	2.57	1.06
22	I prefer that my English teacher corrects all of my speaking and pronunciation mistakes.	184	SD D A SA	27.2% 18.5% 27.2% 27.2%	2.54	1.15
15	I prefer not to speak English in the classroom because my classmates will laugh at me if I make mistakes.	184	SD D A SA	31.0% 18.5% 23.9% 26.6%	2.46	1.18
30	My English teachers usually speak English in the classroom.	184	SD D A SA	26.1% 23.4% 30.4% 20.1%	2.44	1.08
31	I prefer to speak Kurdish outside the classroom.	184	SD D A SA	27.7% 26.1% 26.6% 19.6%	2.38	1.08
20	I speak English with my teacher outside the classroom.	184	SD D A SA	28.8% 28.3% 20.1% 22.8%	2.36	1.12
16	I prefer to speak Kurdish in the classroom.	184	SD D A SA	35.9% 21.2% 17.9% 25.0%	2.32	1.20
33	I am satisfied with my English speaking ability.	184	SD D A SA	33.7% 26.6% 13.6% 26.1%	2.32	1.19

Appendix G

Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of teachers' perceptions on the factors that affect students' performance in speaking English

Item N	Items	N	Options	%	M	SD
12	I encourage my students to speak English in the classroom.	30	SD D A SA	0.0% 6.7% 43.3% 50.0%	3.43	.62
21	My students sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.	30	SD D A SA	23.3% 6.7% 26.7% 43.3%	2.90	1.21
9	Students don not speak English in the classroom because their classmates may laugh at them if they make mistakes	30	SD D A SA	3.3% 20.0% 73.3% 3.3%	2.76	.56
17	My students' English text books do not Include enough speaking activities.	30	SD D A SA	23.3% 13.3% 33.3% 30.0%	2.70	1. 14
10	Students prefer to speak Kurdish in the English language classroom.	30	SD D A SA	23.3% 26.7% 20.0% 30.0%	2.56	1.16
13	My students usually speak English In the class room.	30	SD D A SA	26.7% 26.7% 13.3% 33.3%	2.53	1.22
23	I usually speak English in the classroom .	30	SD D A SA	26.7% 20.0% 26.7% 26.7%	2.53	1.16
24	I sometimes speak Kurdish in the classroom.	30	SD D A SA	23.3% 23.3% 30.0% 23.3%	2.53	1.10

20	The English textbooks emphasize written skills (reading and writing) more than oral skills (speaking and listening)	30	SD D A SA	30.0% 16.7% 26.7% 26.7%	2.50	1.19
16	I usually correct all of my students' speaking mistakes.	30	SD D A SA	23.3% 30.0% 20.0% 26.7%	2. 50	1.13
22	Students speak English with in the classroom.	30	SD D A SA	33.3% 13.3% 26.7% 26.7%	2.46	1.22
18	The English text books help my students improve their speaking Skills	30	SD D A SA	23.3% 23.3% 16.7% 26.7%	2.46	1.13
11	Students enjoy speaking English in the classroom.	30	SD D A SA	6.7% 53.3% 33.3% 6.7%	2. 40	0.72
15	Students ask me about the correct pronunciation of English words	30	SD D A SA	10.0% 56.7% 30.0% 3.3%	2.26	.69
14	Students speak English with me outside the classroom.	30	SD D A SA	36.7% 26.7% 16.7% 20.0%	2.20	1.15
19	The duration of conversation classes is sufficient to improve students' English speaking skills.	30	SD D A SA	33.3% 36.7% 23.3% 6.7%	2.03	0.92