

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

**THE MOST COMMON CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH SPEAKING
SKILLS: THE CASE OF LIBYAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

MASTER THESIS

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STUDENTS

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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.

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ABSTRACT

THE MOST COMMON CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS: THE CASE OF LIBYAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the most common challenges encountered by Libyan English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in learning speaking in English. These students are studying in Al Mergib University in North Libya. It analyses the answers of 100 students who are currently studying in the English department at this university. This study addresses three main issues: What is the importance of English for Libyan undergraduate students? What were the common challenges Libyan EFL students have faced while learning the speaking skill?; Is gender a factor which affects the way students experience challenges in learning speaking? What are the students' perspectives on the effectiveness of some aspects of CLT in relation to learning the speaking skill? This study followed a quantitative approach. The data was collected through a researcher-made questionnaire. It consisted of 52 items which investigated the issues mentioned above. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-tests. The outcomes indicated that the most common challenges for Libyan EFL students in learning speaking were the lack of practice, opportunities and motivation to speak in English classes. In addition, the techniques/approaches that are used in the class do not encourage learners to speak English.

Keywords: challenges of speaking, teaching / learning speaking in English, communicative language teaching, practice and motivation.

ÖZ

NG L ZCE KONU MA BECER LER N ED NMEDE EN YAYGIN ZORLUKLAR:

L BYA ÜN VERS TE Ö RENC LER N N ÖRNE

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Bu çalı manın amacı yabancı dil olarak İngilizce konu mayı öğrenen Libyalı öğrencilerin en çok karşılaştığı zorlukları incelemektir. Öğrenciler Kuzey Libya'da Al Mergib Üniversitesi'nde öğrenim görmektedir. Burada bu üniversitede İngilizce bölümünde öğrenim gören 100 öğrencinin cevaplarını analiz etmektedir. Çalışma üç ana konuya değinmektedir: İngilizce'nin Libyalı lisans öğrencileri için önemi nedir? Konu ma becerilerini öğrenirken Libyalı İngilizce öğrencilerinin en çok karşılaştığı zorluklar neydi?; Cinsiyet konu mayı öğrenirken öğrencilerin karşılaştığı zorlukları etkileyen bir faktör mü? Konu ma becerilerini öğrenme ile ilgili İngilizce'nin bazı yönlerinin etkinliği konusunda öğrenci görüşleri nasıldır? Bu çalışma bir nicel bir yaklaşımla izlemiştir. Veriler araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan bir anket aracılığıyla toplandı. Yukarıda belirtilen konuları ele alan 52 madde içermektedir. Veriler tanımlayıcı istatistikler ve t-testi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar Libyalı İngilizce öğrencilerinin konu mayı öğrenmede en çok karşılaştığı zorlukların pratik, fırsat ve İngilizce derslerinde konu mak için motivasyon eksikliği olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca sınıfta kullanılan teknikler/yaklaşımlar öğrencileri İngilizce konu mak için teşvik etmemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: konu ma zorlukları, İngilizce konu mayı öğrenme / öğrenme, iletişimsel dil öğretimi, pratik ve motivasyon.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L2: Second Language

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CA: Communicative Approach

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SD: Standard Deviation

M: Mean

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Presentation

This chapter presents details about the background, the problem and the aim of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, definitions of terms, and the limitations of the study.

The Background of the Study

Language is a source of communication and it is the way through which we share our ideas and thoughts with others. Puromo (2008) found that people use language to talk about their opinions and they use it for communication, interaction and creating relations with others. The English language is regarded as a world language to communicate with others from different countries (Egan, 1999). Puromo (2008) argues that speaking well is of the greatest importance to pupils when interacting with others in a second language not only in teaching and learning environments, but also outside the English classroom. Pupils should be able to "speak in a well structured way" (Hampel, 2003, p.32) and develop their abilities to take part in a conversation.

Today, around the world, courses in listening and speaking have a prominent place in language teaching and learning approaches. According to Aksoy (2010) language teaching is based on the interests of the students in the target language, students should be helped by the teachers to learn and improve their speaking skills. Finding more effective ways to teach English speaking is a necessity of ever-growing needs for fluency in English around the world, as English has become an international

language (Richards, 2008). Richards claimed that the differences of language teaching approaches are to be expected as students' needs change from reading to oral proficiency; he also pointed out that when teachers select an approach and materials to use with their students, they should think about the learners' needs as well as the teachers' preference, and limitations of the school.

Alhamroni (2009) argues that the most difficult part which people encounter in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is speaking. In spite of the fact that most people know that the best way to avoid this difficulty is to practice speaking as much as they can, people cannot do this because they have not enough chances and not enough time to practice speaking in the classroom. Language centers often create courses focusing on the speaking skill but besides the help of these courses, students should make some effort to improve their speaking skills on their own. Qutub (2012) suggested that Arab university students face difficulties in learning English speaking because of the lack of employing the best techniques that enable them to speak English as a foreign language. He also argues that after eleven years of English language learning, Arab students are still incompetent in the language and thus, are incapable of the foreign language well. Engelska's (2008) study conducted in Pakistan underlined that there "the typical English language learning experience is almost devoid of any speaking practice at all" (p. 42). Further, he puts forth that this is a reflection of the examination system which has no provision for examination of oral skills.

In relation to the factors that affect the speaking skill, Richards (2008) explains that students' willingness to communicate is influenced by their motivation which is affected by their interests. Yorio (1980) also asserted that there are a number of anxiety

states that can affect the learning outcomes in an EFL environment such as class anxiety and test anxiety. Blake (2000) argues that motivation is important in terms of the students' ability to learn and speak English, and the teachers and learners should work to stimulate students' interests in learning.

In Libya, although learners have been studying English for a long time in schools and universities, the students still have hesitations in speaking English (Alhamroni, 2009). Libyan EFL students in higher education institutions and universities use their first language, i.e. Arabic, as a means of communication. The English language is a course that is required by the general educational curriculum. Therefore, it is made compulsory to study in order to pass examinations but not to improve their speaking skills (Alhamroni, 2009).

In the light of the previously mentioned issues, throughout my experience as a student who studied at Al Mergib University in Libya I noticed that there were some problems that students faced when learning speaking in their previous English studies. Students learning in this context had no kind of practice in the classrooms, the educators would teach by using traditional methods in which the learners were silent during the English classes. This highlights the need for teaching with new techniques and methods because these innovations offer more opportunities for students to practice English speaking (Lam & Lawrence, 2002). There are many approaches that claim to develop the speaking skill. However, I believe that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is the most appropriate when speaking is taken into account. This belief will be justified in Chapter two.

The Statement of the Problem

University students in Libya struggle with certain challenges in relation to English language learning. However, most of their learning issues are related to their previous experiences in high school and secondary school. Therefore, when they come to study at the university, they have difficulties in speaking English in their everyday lives and they do not have opportunities to speak English in their English classes. Speaking is neglected besides the fact that it is one of the most important skills to improve the target language (Alhamroni, 2009). Therefore, this study will focus on the difficulties that Libyan students face in learning to speak English, and what they need to do in order to overcome these challenges. This study also will investigate how students feel about certain aspects of CLT as a possible approach to improve and develop the speaking skill of Libyan students.

The Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the difficulties that Libyan EFL learners face in learning the speaking skill at Al Mergib University in Al.Khames city, Libya. In order to reach this aim, this study will attempt to answer the following research questions.

- 1- What is the importance of English for Libyan undergraduate students?
- 2- What were the common challenges Libyan EFL students have faced while learning the speaking skill?
 - a. Is gender a factor which affects the way students experience challenges in learning speaking?

- 3- What are the students' perspectives on the effectiveness of some aspects of CLT in relation to learning the speaking skill?

The Significance of the Study

According to Richards (2008), English language learners face challenges during the language acquisition process especially in terms of the speaking skill. Taking this into account, an investigation of Libyan learners to find out their difficulties is a significant stemming from the following considerations: Firstly, previous studies have shown students' needs to overcome the challenges of their English speaking. There is a need to determine students' attitudes towards providing and facilitating their learning of the speaking skill in the class. Secondly, this study is expected to contribute to the improvement of practice of learning speaking in English classes at the University of Al Mergib in Libya by using aspects of the CLT approach. Finally, this study will provide insights for teachers to support their learners to improve their speaking skills.

Limitations

This study is limited to undergraduate university students in Al Komes, Al Mergib University, Libya. There are not any teacher participants in this study. The students in this study learn English as a foreign language. They study at the English department at Al Mergib University. In this study, only a questionnaire was used to collect data with respect to students' challenges when learning the speaking skills.

Conclusion

This chapter of the study provided an introduction about the challenges that Libyan university students encountered in learning the speaking skill according to previous studies. In addition, this chapter presented the information about the aim of the study, significance of the study, and limitations. This study tries to investigate the problems of Libyan EFL students in Al-Mergib University in learning the speaking skills. Finally, the research questions were asserted to determine the difficulties that Libyan university students' face in learning the speaking skill and what they need in order to avoid their difficulties. The following chapter will present the literature related to this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Presentation

The review of literature explores issues relevant to what speaking is and its importance in learning English, what the challenges encountered by English as a foreign language (EFL) students in learning the speaking skill are, the needs of the students to overcome these challenges and the possible benefits of the communicative approach to promote EFL students' learning speaking.

The Importance of Developing Speaking Skills in Learning English

Recently, English has become the most important language used for communication around the world. The new world of mass interaction practically demands good knowledge of English (Morozova, 2013). Nomass (2013) claims that communication in speaking takes place between the speakers and listeners when they understand one another; both of them have a positive role to play in simple terms. The speakers have to produce their message into spoken language, whereas the listeners have to understand the speaker's language. Al Masri (2012) argues that speech is one way human beings connect with each other. To speak fluently and confidently in a variety of situations is a central human need and an important goal of education. Mohammadipour and Rashid (2015) argue that speaking is the most frequently used language skill; it is used twice as much as reading and writing in our daily communication. According to Ur (1996) "speaking is the most important skill among

the four skills. People who speak and use a language are referred to as speakers of that language. This indicates that using a language is more important than just knowing about it” (as cited in Alhosni, 2014, p. 23). He also claims that “it can also mean talking to oneself that no one can hear that can be termed as “interpersonal skills” or it refers to an ordinary contact conversation.” (p. 24).

Kayi (2006) puts forth that;

speaking is also a crucial part of second language learning and teaching.

Despite its importance for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued, and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today’s world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students’ communicative skills, because, only that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance. In order to teach second language learners how to speak in the best way, speaking activities are employed, they can be applied to ESL and EFL classroom setting together with suggestions for teachers who teach oral skills. (p. 52)

Almasri (2012) argues that “great speakers are not born, they’re trained. Speaking has always been a major focus of language learning / teaching, both the nature of learning speaking skills as well as approaches to teaching these skills are concentrated.” (Richards, 2010, p. 139).

The speaking skill is necessary to learn English because by speaking the second language (SL) learners will be motivated to express their thoughts, perspectives, and feelings; it develops other language skills, because, when the speakers tries to speak

they can improve their ability in grammar, writing, listening and pronunciation; the students can express themselves because speaking promotes self-confidence; and speaking improves learner's capacity to receive and express an idea in a special manner (Harmer, 2005).

Morovaza (2013) asserts that speaking is the most important skill that needs to be developed and improved as a means of effective interaction. In addition, she claims that EFL language learners should learn how they can increase or enhance their communicative ability (competence) in speaking. Khamkhien (2010) highlights that "speaking is the most important skill in learning a second language or foreign language" (p. 184). In other words, he argues that "the speaking skill is a critical part of the language learning and teaching process" (Khamkhien , 2010, p. 184).

Kayi (2006) states that English speaking should be taught to English as a second language (ESL) learners in order to: produce the speech of English speech sounds and patterns of pronunciation; use words and sentence stress; select appropriate words or statements to the proper social setting, audience and situation; know learners' thoughts in a meaningful sequence; use language as a meaning to express values and judgments; finally, use the language fluently and confidently with few unnatural pauses. Nomass (2013) argues that learners who try to achieve EFL knowledge need more language support. The students of EFL need more practice in speaking by being exposed to different activities that can help them to learn speaking effectively and easily.

The Most Common Challenges that EFL Learners Face in Learning Speaking

There are many problems that EFL students need to overcome when learning speaking. English teaching techniques concentrate on other skills such as writing and reading more than the speaking skill. Zhao (2002) asserts that most of the EFL learners consider speaking difficult and lack proficiency in oral communication. In Malazia, there is no kind of practice in EFL speaking in the classrooms (Singh, 2013).

Furthermore, Thornburgh (2006) explains that the lack of fluency and motivation in speaking can affect the success of students to achieve this skill. He also adds that English speaking proficiency is the most important factor contributing to the learners' speech in the class. For nonnative speakers, English is difficult to speak. This might be due to the learners possessing a lack of confidence or motivation, or embracement and worry in the English class and the practice is a vital issue for speaking English so they must try to speak daily by interacting with their instructors and classmates (Dives, 2013).

Moreover, Ur (1996) investigated that there were some factors that affected speaking in English such as: EFL learners not having any ability to talk about themselves; the large number of students in the English class impacting on the students' participation in the class because some of the students do not have the chance to speak; time constraints; some learners are afraid, worried, and shy of making mistakes in front of their classmates; and some learners preferring to communicate with their friends in the class in their first language (as cited in Al-Hosni, 2014). The lack of communicative activities in textbooks is considered the main reason that makes speaking so difficult (Al Hosni, 2014). Qutub (2012) states that Arab learners who

learn EFL face problems in speaking because they prefer to speak in Arabic rather than English when they are communicating with other classmates inside and outside the classes. Furthermore, the lack of the foreign language communication is the lack of motivation to speak English. Khamkhien (2010) indicates that the factors that affect EFL students in English language speaking are the following: English speaking is considered as a hard subject to learn, there is no support to speak English outside the classroom to increase the opportunities to communicate, the learners of EFL usually depend on the English teacher to speak and they just listen without practicing, the learners do not find any motivation to speak English in the class, and the learners may have negative attitudes towards the foreign language. According to Bilal (2013), the difficulties of speaking that EFL learners face are related to some factors such as the lecturers' lack of experience of understanding the approaches that can be used to teach their students, the tasks which are discussed in the classes do not attract the attention of the students, there is not a variety of activities used in the English class, and the students are not motivated to practice speaking in the class so just a few learners are active in the class. In relation to another factor that effects speaking, such as anxiety, Abidin (2013) indicated that "learners who have shyness and inhibition are worried about their ability to speak the language and are less willing to participate in either classroom practice or in real-world communication" (para.1). He also claimed that "this trait can prohibit the progress in speaking a foreign language. It can also prevent a person from taking risks or seizing opportunities to practice and learn. Learners will have fear of making mistakes or being misunderstood" (para. 2). Niederhauser (1997) stated that if the learners have no idea about the task their motivation will decrease and

their anxiety will increase and the teachers should be aware of ways /activities that they can use in order to make their students avoid this feeling while developing their speaking skills. Nguyen (2011) stated that South East Asian learners prefer to be silent during the class because they feel shyness and embarrassment if they make mistakes in front of other classmates. He also claimed that in the South East Asian classes there is no kind of interaction, and during the teaching sessions the teachers talk and the students listen and take notes.

Aksoy (2010) asserted that the EFL students' poor speaking skills are influenced by lack of effort, and effective instruction and/or approaches whereas the successful EFL students are highly motivated or they are taught with effective approaches when learning speaking. According to Abidin and Mei (2013) communication among the EFL students usually causes problems for students because the learning styles and approaches that teachers use do not connect and the English subject does not relate to students' needs and interests. They also claimed that the high level students in Lao study English for two hours per week and this is not sufficient for their English learning in terms of the speaking skill. The majority of learners in their study had no motivation and practice to speak English.

In other recent studies, Abidin and Mei (2013) stated that many Lao learners have not been proficient in speaking English because of the lack of motivation of the physical environment or methods of learning and those students who are interested in learning speaking are motivated. Johnson (2011) puts forth that English is considered as a compulsory subject nowadays for South East Asian learners because they study other subjects in their first language. This means they do not use English to

communicate with others outside the lectures. They just learn it as any other course to pass the exams regarding the system of the university. On the other hand, they feel it is a hard subject because they started to study this course at high proficiency levels at school not at early stages like other subjects such as mathematics and history. He also pointed out that the Lao students' weakness in speaking is beyond the lack of the educators' weakness or use of effective/ineffective methods. In addition, he added that the problems when learning speaking were caused by various factors such as the size of the classrooms and the instructor's quality. Furthermore, the students insisted that they did not need English to speak. They consider speaking as a school course which they study to be able to pass an exam.

In Palestine, university students who only wanted to pass the English exam have a lack of achievement level to speak English because they considered it a hard course (Qutub, 2012). Moreover, according to Kayi (2006) in Nigeria, there is a factor that impacts learning and teaching speaking in English; English teachers do not use the recent techniques and different teaching methods.

Furthermore, Yemeni EFL learners have difficulties with English language speaking as well. One of these reasons is that the teachers do not focus or maintain the speaking skill in the foreign language. Most of the time the learners learn grammar and neglect oral skills in the class (Abdulrahman, Cheekeong, & Yassin, 2014). In addition, Yemeni university students always share their mother tongue, they cannot identify their errors, they always need the teacher to guide them to improve their competence in speaking, and the problems can be found in the curriculum itself which is not designed to improve the English speaking skill. Davis (2013) pointed out that Turkish EFL

learners believed that anxiety was the most important factor which affected their English speaking. In addition, in Thailand, the EFL teachers' deficiency in their selection of appropriate teaching approaches and just using traditional methods, such as the grammar-translation method in which there is no kind of practice in target language speaking; the teacher talks and the students listen due to its nature of teacher centeredness, are the factors that influence students' poor English speaking (KhamKhien, 2010).

In Libya, English is taught and learned as a foreign language, but there is no opportunity to practice English and this makes speaking it fluently very difficult. The reasons behind this difficulty are the following: lack of curriculum for the EFL learners by the schools and universities, lack of using good approaches and methods that are suitable for the language environment and the attitudes of the students that prefer to speak in their mother tongue (Pathan, Aldersi & Alsont, 2014). Moreover, Pathan, Aldersi and Alsont (2014, p. 102) added that in Libya, English is studied as any other course at schools with limited time with no practice in the class and this makes this skill very difficult for EFL Libyan students who may be afraid of embarrassment, lack of interest and motivation to practice the English language.

Furthermore, other problems that the Libyan EFL students face are: using the native language during English classes; the teachers may not be familiarized with the effective approaches that are useful for their learners in speaking, and they may not know how to select suitable materials for their students (Pathan, Aldersi, & Alsont, 2014). Ahmema, Miliszewska and Sztendur (2013) claimed that "awareness goes along with attitudes and a positive attitude towards communicative language teaching

is widely recognized as a necessary condition for effective implementation” (p. 12). They also assumed that in Libya the level of educational technology awareness and even basic computer skills is generally low among educators. Most of the students and teachers have little or even no knowledge in using computers, and even those who are familiar with computers use them for internet communication ” (p. 58). Moreover, Libyan EFL students study English as any other school subject and they also study all other courses in Arabic. For this reason, Libyan students have a lack of foreign language environment; they do not use and practice speaking (Al Hosni, 2013).

The Needs of EFL Learners to Improve and Enhance English Speaking

Motivation and interests. For all previous challenges, the educators should be aware of the students’ needs to avoid their difficulties to learn English speaking. Motivation is the most important factor that affects the success in learning a second/foreign language (Niederhauser, 1997). According to Chandrasegaran “motivation is defined as emotions and needs that constitute the source of the drive to expend effort required to learn a second or foreign language” (as cited in, Niederhauser, 1997, p. 7). Harmer (2007) claimed that motivation can be separated into two kinds. These are extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Extrinsic motivation focuses on the factors that have an impact outside the classroom. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation has the main role in the learner’s success or failure in learning a language. The classroom is a kind of motivation in which the teaching methods and teachers should try to foster intrinsic motivation to their students to learn the language.

In the light of the speaking skill, motivation is quite important when learning speaking. The learners who are trying to learn a foreign language at a high level believe that “language” means - “speaking something” because if there is no motivation to speak the language, they will lose their interests and encouragement and they will consider the teaching of the foreign language as any other subject that they study in school (Race & Wharton, 2010).

Norris-Holt (2001) stated that teachers cannot force their learners to speak English, teachers can only produce activities and opportunities for the learners to let their students speak in the target language. Martin (2003) claimed that enjoyable contents can increase the learner’s motivation to speak in the classroom and this will be valuable when teachers prepare well for the lessons, materials and activities in the class. Chastian (1998) argued that “students will be motivated and join more in speaking if: they are supplied with appropriate feedback, they are supplied with fascinating subject, they are supplied with activities they most like doing, they are supplied a suitable seating arrangement of chairs, and their teacher assists, commends and makes suitable circumstance for them” (p. 18). Jie (1999) also indicates that the subject takes a vital place in the learner’s interest. If the learners have an idea about the lesson they will be motivated to speak English. For this reason, teachers should find out the needs of the students to keep them interested and motivated. Jie (1999) also claimed that creating activities which focus on real communication will also increase motivation in the class. Therefore, teachers should help students to develop their motivational beliefs and employ effective approaches that will help their students achieve their academic goals concerning speaking.

Richards (2008) argues that motivation affects the competence level and interest of the students. Therefore, it is vital for instructors to not be demotivating when teaching speaking. That is to say, teachers should give the learners the chance to speak in class as much as possible. He also claimed that when EFL learners converse with their classmates they often use their mother tongue because they feel that communication will be easier than English.

Proficient teacher. Teachers play an important part in their students' English learning. They are the instrument responsible for creating a good situation in the learning of a foreign language. Teachers' success is due to their proficiency in the language and his/her competence and expertise in approaches and ways of language teaching (Pathan, 2014).

Lam and Lawrence (2002) argued that teachers should possess their own skills in the language in order to lead their students towards completion of objectives in learning the foreign language. For example, teachers who face difficulty in speaking cannot be successful in providing their students a good example of spoken language. In terms of teaching methods, teachers can adopt methods that they have confidence in and have the capacity to use. If teachers are unfamiliar with the details and basis of new methods they cannot use them in an effective way. Harmer (2005) noted that the job of teachers who deal with developing the speaking skill is more difficult than that of the other teachers who develop other language skills. If a teacher who deals with the speaking skill is fluent in the class then the students will talk fluently as well. However,

the students will not be fluent in the English language only by hearing correct speech; the teacher should also give learners some opportunities to practice the speaking skill.

According to Baker (2003) there are some English teacher requirements, such as proficiency (competence) in the target language, which involves the capacity to understand, to talk, to read, and to write English. Furthermore, the teacher should have experience of the foreign culture and cross-cultural communication. Another requirement is the effectiveness of teaching, which involves the ability to plan a lesson that concentrates on the goals of teaching. To reach these goals, the teacher must have patience, confidence, imagination, humor and creativity. Moreover, they language teachers should be friendly and have a good relationship with their students.

Thornburgh and Slade (2006) pointed out that the teacher has motivational influence on the pupil to speak when there is a good relationship between the learners and teachers which makes the students gain self-confidence and interest to interact with their teacher and classmates in the class. They also claimed that the teacher is responsible in inspiring his learners towards speaking in English fluently.

According to Norris-Holt (2001), the learner believes that if the teacher makes the students gain interest to speak and communicate in a successful way in the target language; they will develop their communicative skills. He also argued that teachers should be aware of the environment that supports the students to play a positive role in the class. Chastian (1998) found out that if the students are given time to prepare the tasks, they will be encouraged and maintained to speak English.

Shumin indicated that “teachers must promote the learners by giving them the opportunity to speak the target language in the class as many students acquire English

in these contexts and they can exercise and act on each other by using the target language in class” (as cited in Aksoy, 2010, p. 21). The EFL teachers in Libyan universities and schools need to be trained in teaching English as a target language and the teacher should be aware of the focus on the sounds of the target language because the English language is completely different from the Arabic language in sounds and the system of the language itself (Pathan, Aldersi & Alson, 2014).

Practice and attitudes. Nguyen (2011) claimed the students in his study needed more practice to develop their speaking by interacting with their classmates. He also argued that the students believed that teachers should focus on the interests of the learners in the class. Moreover, he argued that it would be good if the teachers found out the students’ needs in listening and speaking by sending the learners to the labs and using communicative activities that would support students’ to express their opinions in front of the whole class.

According to Pathan, Aldersi and Alston (2014) Libyan EFL students should be provided with enough opportunities of practice in speaking in English. According to Singh (2013), teachers at a university level should focus on students’ participation in the class and communication with their classmates in groups or pair discussions. Communication allows students to speak and use their learning strengths but at the same time learners cannot avoid their weaknesses in speaking and are afraid of the sounds they may produce and all of these feelings make the students worry and be embarrassed to say anything to their classmates in the English classroom. In order to improve speaking and the oral skills is it important to practice and discuss and/or

engage students in solving problems and encourage them to use their creativity. The success of the students in the speaking skill is affected by their capacity to communicate (Brown, 2001). Furthermore, Puromo (2008) indicated that in spite of the classes becoming learner centered in the East of Asian classes which foster class discussion nowadays, students find it difficult to have whole class discussions and they prefer to participate in small group activities.

With respect to the practice that should be given to the Libyan EFL students, communicative and interactive teaching and learning should be maintained and supported in English speaking classes (Pathan, et al., 2014). According to Al Hosni (2014, p. 23) there are some situations that should be used in learning speaking. These situations should give students a great sense of motivation and interest to express themselves in the class in a proper way. Furthermore, Harmer (2005) highlights that while learning the speaking skill, the focus should be on drawing students' attention to EFL for an effective communication process and development. Moreover, Al Hosni (2014) postulates that for successful oral communication in learning and teaching, students' level of communicative proficiency should be tested; they should be given opportunities to express themselves in group and class discussions. While doing this, students' numbers should be considered; they can be divided into different groups and be allowed to have a group discussion. This will improve their level of effective communication in the target language.

Using Communicative Language Teaching in Fostering English Speaking Skills

Richards (2010) asserted that “speaking has always been a major focus of language learning and teaching, both the nature of speaking skills as well as approaches to teach them” (p.2). Foreign language learners should learn how to increase or enhance their communicative competence (Morozova, 2013).

Despite the importance of speaking, teaching has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today’s world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students’ communicative skills because only in this way students can express themselves and learn speaking through some communicative activities. (Blake, Devries & Yellen, 2004, p.1)

In the light of teaching and learning speaking through employing the most effective approach, researchers and educators agree that second/foreign language learners have to learn speaking by “interaction” and this aim could be achieved best when communicative language teaching is made valuable (Al Hosni, 2014). Furthermore, “the communicative approach (CA) is an approach of teaching and learning of second or foreign language that emphasizes interaction as both of means and the ultimate goals of learning a language” (Teaching English 4 all, 2011, para. 2). Moreover, the communicative approach enhances the interaction of the class and increases the opportunities for students to practice by communicating in the process of learning. It is an approach that includes pair and group work of learners to increase

self-confidence by engaging and giving the students opportunities to practice the language in the class (Agbatogum, 2014). “English language teaching and learning have been continually modified to suit the students’ needs and interests in order to discover the most effective way to improve the quality of learning” (Aksoy, 2010, p.1). The communicative approach is considered as an important approach to learn speaking in order to achieve a reasonable communicative competence and to be able to maintain sustainable language proficiency. This factor is crucial for a good language teaching structure (Pagina, 2010).

Mohammadipour and Rashid (2015) explain that, the communicative approach is crucial in the sense that it gives the students in the EFL class the chance to communicate very effectively. They further explained that when adopting the communicative approach, EFL teachers should create an environment or atmosphere where learners will be involved in real-life situations of communication, and authentic activities that promote the oral skills especially when learners collaborate in pair and group work activities. A similar survey was developed by Almasri (2012) who identified that “the goal of the communicative language teaching approach to create a realistic context for language speaking in the classroom. The focus is on functional language usage and the learners’ communicative competence to express their own ideas, feelings, attitudes, desires, and needs” (p. 20). Lake’s (2013) study indicates that the aim of the CA is to provide students with real life communication lessons that try to mimic the natural progression of language learning. The emphasis of genuine communication that imitate real life situations is supposedly more fun, interesting and more helpful for the students to improve their speaking skills as they practically learn

and interact in the target language on a daily basis. Creating a chance for speaking in English on a daily basis helps in building good fluency in spoken language (Lake, 2013).

CLT concentrates on some issues such as interaction and task based learning. The learner's interest and motivation should be centered in the class by the teachers who are using CLT (Race & Wharton, 2010). The characteristic of teaching and learning speaking a second language by employing a CA such as the CLT is that, it does not concentrate on the traditional methods, such as the grammar translation method and approaches which are teacher centered, but it concentrates on communicating in the target language. CLT increases the motivation of the learner in the classroom; it is a learner centered approach which takes into consideration the needs and interests of the second/foreign language (L2) learners in the classroom. In other words, classes with CLT are supported by communicative activities where the students interact and where the tasks are completely interactive. Accordingly, in these communicative activities the role of the teacher is to facilitate, monitor, and guide the learners (Brown, 2015). When the ability of speaking English fluently becomes a necessary goal, the most effective activities should be considered in learning and teaching speaking, such as group and pair work activities, discussion, role playing, information gap, telling a story, and brain storming (Al Hosni, 2014).

Lake (2013) claimed that there are four features of CLT which make this approach the most effective approach in learning speaking: it considers interaction the most important issue of learning and teaching the language; it provides opportunities for the student to concentrate on the educational process not on the language only; it

enhances the participation of the learners in the classroom learning; and it tries to connect the classroom activities with the outside world. In addition, there are many advantages that consider CLT as an effective approach when learning and teaching speaking. Some of these advantages are: the CA focuses on learning and centers on the practice of learning language which meets the needs of the learners; it provides students with communication opportunities; it emphasizes on the use of language rather than the form of the language; and it increases the student's interest by the participation and interaction of the students in the classes and this ensures that the students learn with pleasure rather than learning under pressure (Teaching English 4 all, 2011).

Moreover, there are four main principles that make CLT an effective approach in learning speaking. Firstly, students achieve the language by communicating with each other. In CLT students are encouraged to practice communication for a long period in the educational process. Secondly, meaningful interaction must be the aim of the activities set in the class. The activities of a communicative class should include the situation that supports authentic communication. Thirdly, learning how to communicate is a process which includes trial and errors. As students practice language, mistakes may appear frequently as they try to find out what works and what does not. That means the students are not expected to be 100 percent perfect but to improve and become better as they continue to practice continuously. In this case, they try to find out some errors and correct themselves; self-correction is fostered. CLT considers the fluency of learners rather than their accuracy because when teachers correct the errors directly the students will be interrupted and they will not be fluent (Singh, 2013).

Furthermore, Alamsri (2012) states that there are some other principles of CLT which include that: it is essential to place more importance on the functional approach than to allow grammatical structures to overwhelm effective communication. This is supposed to be a function of effective communication of language in contextual sense, which is crucial in CLT. When establishing the interest of the students the chronology of materials used can determine the effectual development of the learners. In this case, it should also be understood that the different activities established for the learners are done in various categories; they are carried out in accordance with the students' interests and needs. Davis (2013) states that as a language teacher, one of the most important things one should understand is to help students to develop their skills for an understandable and sustainable effective communication even while out of the classrooms.

The CLT teachers play an important role in improving the ability of the students to learn the speaking skills. They are organizers and facilitators; they should keep the communication practice among all learners in the class by preparing the activities and they should show how these activities will be carried out. In addition, they are participants in the class activities rather than explaining the activity only. They have a role to play by demonstrating and seeking the learners' language needs. This makes the learners aware of what is right and what is wrong (Harmer, 2007).

On the other hand, the CLT learners have a lot to achieve while speaking in the foreign language. The learner is an active participant with all the members of the class. Speaking together in the class enhances the skills of effective communication. In addition, the students in CLT classes are cooperative learners. The learners should

work with each other and they also need to be responsible for each other in the process of their educational development (Harmer, 2005). Apadi's (n.d) study argues that the "communicative approach is an innovation of target language teaching that aims to improve student's communicative competence, it also helps to carry out quality education, in the development of EFL in teaching in non-native countries, the teachers should be aware of the communicative approach in English teaching" (p. 2).

Therefore, CLT is an efficient approach where students learn the foreign language through communication. Real life contexts are used, activities which are designed to focus on the meaning not on form; the focus is on interaction. The feedback given to the students from the teacher through communication should focus on fluency. In this sense, the pupils have a chance to concentrate on the process as well as the language, such as in idioms. It tries to connect the language in the classroom with the language outside the class, and the interaction begins directly rather than after a long time of grammar, vocabulary or drills solving, and everyone; the students and teachers have their own roles to play in CLT. In CLT, both learners and educators have various roles in the learning and teaching process. Their roles are different from those traditional classes where the teachers talk and the students listen (where there is no interaction). In the classes where CLT is used, students have opportunities to practice the language and they can develop their speaking skills when they work together and are involved in communicative activities (Chang, 2011).

Conclusion

In this chapter, a review of previous studies relevant to challenges that learners encounter when learning speaking and the needs of those students to improve and develop their English speaking have been presented. The characteristics of CLT in fostering the English speaking skill by many researchers were provided. Detailed explanations about the methodology of the present study will be presented in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Presentation

This chapter explains comprehensively information about the research methodology employed in the current study. The research design and the research context of this study will be discussed followed by general information about the participants and sampling of the study, data collection instruments and procedures, and finally the data analysis will be discussed.

Overall Research Design

This study is designed as a survey study by employing a questionnaire which is a major tool when collecting data. In questionnaire studies Oxford (1990) referred that this method of data collection is efficient because it enables the researcher to cover a large number of participants in a relatively short time which would be very difficult with other data collection tools. This design is useful to understand and find out the challenges that Libyan EFL students face in learning the speaking skill. A questionnaire which included a group of close- ended questions was distributed to Libyan university students studying in the English language teaching (ELT) department that focused on the students' difficulties in learning English as foreign language (EFL) speaking, was prepared by the researcher. Gay and Airsain define a questionnaire as a "written collection of self-report questions to groups of research participants" (as cited in Altaibe, 2013, p. 290).

The use of the questionnaire suits the purpose of the study because the researcher has a large number of people to investigate, in this case, the researcher may acquire accurate and useful information derived from the questionnaire. The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed carefully according to some criteria which will be discussed in the data analysis section. The aim of the questionnaire was to try to investigate and understand what was happening in the EFL classes which made English speaking so difficult for students. Therefore, based on the problem of the present study and its objectives, the approach taken is the descriptive analytic method, which aims to describe the phenomenon and shed light on different aspects in order to understand and identify their causes. The descriptive analytic approach aims to explain the reality of the phenomenon through derivation assets of micro scientific steps in which attempts are being made to answer the differences between respondents according to some variables and expressed quantitatively down to understand the phenomenon and the required procedures to deal with (Creswell, 2008).

Context

This study involved students studying at the Al-Mergib University. This university is one of the biggest Libyan universities located in Al Khomes, North Libya. All of the students who study in this university are students who speak Arabic as a first language and learn English as foreign language. The students who participated in this study are undergraduate students studying in the English department of the aforementioned university. Their English program consists of 18 hours per week and this includes the exams conducted for the students to proceed to the next level of the

final year. Most teachers who are Arabic teachers teach their students in the same manner they were taught when they were in school which resembles traditional approaches to teaching English. The students' population of the ELT department in Al-Mergib University is about 200 at the final level of the university. The majority of the students are Libyans. The university prepares students for their departmental studies by providing them with English courses in which instructors use traditional approaches and teacher-centered learning. The teaching and learning of the English language in this context are designed on a structural basis that focuses on how language is formed rather than how it is used. In other words, deductive grammar instruction is emphasized. The students learn language forms but they do not use them. The purpose of education at Al-Mergib University is to prepare the students for English exams at the end of each semester. However, in this process, the speaking skill appears to be neglected by the instructors and both the students and teachers concentrate on tests. These exams are based only on grammar items. However, two hours a week are allocated to practice the speaking skill in this particular university. For this reason, it is very difficult for the learners to practice speaking in such a context. As a result, university students graduate and finalize their university years without adequately having practiced their speaking skill.

Sampling and participants

The participants of this study included university students in Al Khomes - North Libya, which is the biggest university in terms of students' population in the North of Libya. The current study involved 100 students, both male and female. All of

them were students who were studying in the ELT department. The sample of this study were Libyan EFL students who were randomly selected from the ELT department of Al Mergib university because random sampling is a method for which participants are selected in a deliberative and non-purposive fashion to achieve a certain goal. According to Creswell (2008) “the intent of simple random sampling is to choose individuals to be sampled who will be representative of the population. Any bias in population will be equally distributed among the people chosen” (p. 153). The questionnaire was distributed to the participants in the fall of 2014 -2015 academic year at Al Mergib University. Data with respect to gender, age and year of study were collected from the students through the questionnaire as well.

Table 1.
Background Information of Students

Variable	N
Gender	
Male	49
Female	51
Year	
First Year	22
Second Year	33
Third Year	25
Fourth Year	20
Total	100

As mentioned earlier, there were 100 students who participated in this study. A closer look at the participants shows that, the students were between 20-25 years of age. They ranged from the first year to the fourth year of university.

Data Collection

Data collection instruments. In this study, data were collected through a questionnaire, which was necessary to achieve the objectives of the study. This tool provided the possibility of compiling data, easily sorted, displayed and analyzed.

The researcher designed the questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of 52 items of different questions related to this study. These questions focused on student's challenges that they face in learning the speaking skill. The questionnaire was given to students for a day and was collected the next day, to give students sufficient time to think and answer freely and accurately. The questionnaire items focused on students' opinions on their major difficulties that affected their learning of the speaking skill. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts. In the first part, there were questions with respect to gender, age and year of study at the department. In the second part, there were four main headings for collecting data about different issues. The first heading concentrated on the students' attitudes toward their English language learning. This section consisted of seven items (see Appendix A). The second heading was related to the major challenges that students faced in learning the speaking skill and the main factors that affected their English. This section included 22 items. In the third heading, the students were asked about their needs and favourite activities which could improve their English speaking. There were 13 items in this section. The fourth

heading was related to the students' perspectives regarding their English teacher's way of teaching the speaking skill and how the teacher can help them learn the speaking skill. This section consisted of 10 items.

The questionnaire consisted of a five point -Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, in which 1 is strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree for each of the 52 items. The data elicited from the questionnaire were descriptively analyzed and presented in items of frequencies (f) and percentage (%). They were also compared based on gender and year of study.

Pilot study. A pilot study was carried out in order to analyze possible issues. A questionnaire was administered to the Master degree Libyan EFL learners who were studying at the ELT department at Near East University. These students had not yet started their master courses and they had just graduated from their universities which meant that they had the same experience as the undergraduate students who were going to be chosen as the participants of this study. The participants in the pilot study also spoke Arabic as their native language. The pilot study was carried out to evaluate the instrument on a number of students (n=20) and see whether the instrument requires any adaptation. The main goal of the pilot study is to check for any flaws in the questionnaire items and modify them. During the completion of the questionnaire in the pilot study, the respondents did not face any problems or ambiguities in understanding the items. Therefore, the questionnaire used for collecting data was reliable.

Reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the consistence of measurement over time (Creswell, 2009, p.169). The reliability coefficient measures the consistency of the research instrument chosen and should report valid scores (Creswell, 2008). The analysis was conducted by using the Alpha Model. The data that were collected from the students were entered to an SPSS program in order to analyze the scale of reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha. The results revealed Cronbach Alpha score for the students' questionnaire 0.931. The questionnaire was considered to be highly reliable. Malhatro and David (2007) indicated the stability of a questionnaire and the strength of the internal cohesion, making it reliable, and the resolution is clear to the reader. The concept of validity refers to "the extent of the performance of the examination for the job that used to be performed or to perform the questionnaire for the purpose for which it was intended" (Saber & Hvajh, 2002, p.191). To check the validity of the questionnaire, the following steps were taken: First, the researcher revised three or more drafts of the questionnaire before the last version and all of these were shown to the supervisors of the research as well. Second, three professors in the ELT Department at the Near East University checked the questionnaire of the study in order to confirm the appropriateness of the instruments for the purpose of the current study. Third, a number of 20 Libyan EFL students who were studying in the ELT department took part in the pilot study. This was carried out to be able to check if there was any confusion in understanding the items of the questionnaire. As a result, the instrument used to collect data in terms of validity and reliability was sufficient as they did not constitute any problems.

Data collection procedures. For the present study, the researcher obtained the permission from the Head of the ELT department of Al Mergib University to conduct the research as a first stage. As a second, the questionnaire was distributed to the participants at the end of the class and they were required to bring them the next day at the same time. This was done to give the students enough time to select the responses accurately. Some colleagues, who were experienced in the field of research, helped the researcher to distribute the questionnaires. The researcher provided extensive explanation about the questions contained in the questionnaire for the distributors in order to facilitate their understanding and ability to respond to what may be asked by the respondents. The researcher explained all issues in the questionnaire that were not understood to the participants before leaving the class. After the participants had completed responding to the questionnaire and brought it back, the researcher collected the questionnaires and entered the data into the Statistical Package for Social Science” (SPSS) spread sheet to be analyzed.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed quantitatively. The responses in the questionnaire were analyzed by using an SPSS program. It was also used to identify the frequencies which were important for the interpretation of the data.

The descriptive statistics was used to identify the percentages and frequencies of the students’ responses. These measures were used to describe the findings on the challenges that students face in learning speaking, the needs of the students in speaking classes, and how the teacher can help to improve students English speaking. Moreover,

the data were analyzed according to the participants' gender by using a t- test in order to investigate whether there were any significant differences among the groups related to their gender.

Conclusion

In this chapter, detailed explanations about the research methodology employed in the current study were provided. The rationale for choosing the quantitative approach and the type of the questionnaire used was given. Detailed information about the procedures for collecting and analyzing data were also explained. The results of the analysis will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Presentation

In this chapter, the findings of the present study will be presented. The analysis of the quantitative study will be revealed in accordance with the research questions stated earlier. This chapter reflects the challenges Libyan university students face in learning the speaking skill, their needs to overcome these challenges and the benefits of using the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach to enhance the learners' English speaking skill.

The Importance of Learning English Speaking for Libyan EFL Undergraduate Learners

The first part of the questionnaire administered to the students was designed to discover the attitudes of the students towards English as a foreign language (EFL) speaking. The results showed that the respondents consider speaking as one of the most important skills in learning the English language.

Seventy five percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that students need the English language to be able to speak the English language fluently and to improve their speaking skill, whereas 15% remained neutral and 20% of the participants stated that they need English just to understand their lectures.

Table 2.
Attitudes of EFL Students toward the Speaking Skill

My main purpose of learning English speaking was:	5- S Agree	N	%	Mean	Std.D
	4- Agree				
	3- Neutral				
	2- Disagree				
	1- S Disagree				
7. To improve my language skills and to be successful in my department studies.	5	88	88%	4.86	0.4
	4	10	10%		
	3	2	2%		
1. To be able to speak English fluently in the class.	5	75	75%	4.58	0.88
	4	15	15%		
	3	5	5%		
	2	3	3%		
	1	2	2%		
2. To improve my speaking skills.	5	70	70%	4.54	0.86
	4	20	20%		
	3	6	6%		
	2	2	2%		
	1	2	2%		
4. To be able to pass the mid-term and final exams.	5	60	60%	4.12	1.2
	4	10	10%		
	3	12	12%		
	2	18	18%		
3. To be able to understand the lecture.	5	20	20%	3.75	1.06
	4	50	50%		
	3	20	20%		
	2	5	5%		
	1	5	5%		
6. To be able to speak with native speakers.	4	10	10%	2.4	0.92
	3	40	40%		
	2	30	30%		
	1	20	20%		
5. To communicate and speak with others outside the class.	5	2	2%	2.28	0.77
	4	3	3%		
	3	26	26%		
	2	59	59%		
	1	10	10%		

As a result, most of the Libyan EFL learners have a positive attitude towards improving and enhancing their speaking skill in their classes and in their daily speech. In addition, 88% of the participants indicated that they learn English speaking to improve their language skills and be successful in their studies. Most importantly, the main purpose was to be able to pass their English examinations (see Table 2). On the other hand, 0 -2 % of the participants agreed with the statement that they need English in order to be able to speak with native speakers and use it outside classes while 59 % disagreed with this item. It was evident from the zero number of students that they need English just to communicate with their classmates in their English classes. This may be because Al-Mergib Universities teach English as a subject and other courses in the Arabic language. There is no kind of practice outside the class to improve students' English speaking skills. Therefore, learners do not need English to communicate in such environments.

The results of the first section show that students considered speaking English fluently more important than the other skills (i.e., listening, writing, reading). Therefore, the students' attitudes towards learning English to communicate fluently with their classmates and lecturers is considered the most important issue that makes them improve their English speaking skill.

The Most Common Challenges Encountered by Libyan University Students in Learning the Speaking Skills in English

The questionnaire of the study included 22 statements regarding the difficulties that Libyan University EFL students face in learning English speaking (see Appendix

B). According to the responses of the participants, more than half of the students have difficulties in learning English speaking. The statements in section B (see Appendix B) were designed to investigate the challenges that the Libyan University students face in learning the speaking skills. The results also showed that practice is very important for the students' ability to participate and learn English speaking properly and the teachers should try to motivate their students to develop interest to learn the speaking skill (Harmer, 2007).

The first statement indicates that 98 % of the students strongly agreed that there was no practice in their classes, while only two of the 100 students reported 'agree'. Thus, all the students agreed that they lacked practice in the classroom. The results therefore revealed that the majority of the participants at Al-Mergib University were suffering from lack of participation and communication in English classes. To some extent, this result may be because of the students' lack of confidence and motivation to speak English in the class. As a result of this, they find it difficult to practice the English speaking skill. This was made evident in the responses which were indicated as 'disagree' which means all of the participants believe that lack of practice in the class contributed to these challenges. It may also be due to the methods used by teachers which are teacher centered. Hence, the results of the current study highlight the need for practice in classrooms in order to improve students' speaking skill. The students will not be able to speak English fluently and accurately if they do not practice and make contribution in the class together with their classmates (Nazara, 2011).

The next section (see Appendix B, Section C) indicated that students did not participate in the lessons effectively. There were 50% of the respondents who stated

that they did not participate in terms of interaction with their classmates and teachers in the English classes however 5% of the participants remained neutral, 20% disagreed, and 25% strongly disagreed. As a result of this present finding, it was discovered that the students had problems in communicating and expressing themselves properly. Actually, it may be that they could speak and express their ideas in the class but they did not have any opportunities to interact with their classmates in the class because the approach that was and is still being used in the English class was and is teacher centered, while 45% stated that they had enough background information about the subjects taught in English classes that enabled them to participate in the class. However, most of the students stated that they did not have an opportunity to participate in class activities and to interact with their classmates and teachers because of the very limited time allocated to learn English speaking.

Similar results can be identified in the following statement, 80% of the respondents believed that learners are not confident enough to practice and express themselves fluently in English speaking, whereas the minority of the participants 10% disagreed. These findings imply that the students like to practice speaking in the class but are timid to do so. The students cannot discover the proper words to express themselves and they are scared of making mistakes that might occur while speaking (Ferris & Tagg, 1996). This was made clear in the findings of statement 11 in which the majority of the respondents 89% stated that they face a lack of motivation to speak English in the class, while the minority of the respondents 11% remain neutral. In learning speaking, there are studies that support the importance of motivation to develop and improve the speaking skill. Wu's (2010) study states that "it is the

teacher's duty to create a less threatening atmosphere to motivate and to strengthen students' confidence. More motivated students tend to be more successful language learners" (pp.184 -185). The results of the current study also reveals that the students need to be motivated because they face challenges. The challenge is that they are not encouraged and motivated to improve their speaking skill for communicative purposes. It may be because they had no chance to express their opinions in the class. This, therefore, makes the students inattentive to some topics because the topic(s) did not attract their interests. Similarly, statement 12 indicated that 70% of the respondents that participated are not willing to speak about themselves. The result also shows that there seems to be difficulties in English classes regarding the area of speaking and understanding English.

Statement 13 identifies that there was a very limited opportunity for the students to practice the English speaking skill. The results of this statement show that more than half of the respondents 65% believed that Libyan EFL University students face difficulty in orally practicing the language which may be because students mostly do not have an opportunity to be exposed in an environment where English is the main language of communication. Furthermore, another reason for this may be that the time allocated for English teaching in the classroom is very limited. The students of Al-Mergib University are taught the English speaking skill for approximately two hours per week. On the other hand, the teachers still highlight that speaking is an essential skill for students and they work on this important skill (Bilal, 2013). Yet, nearly half of the participants complain that they did not have enough time to practice the speaking skill efficiently. In addition, in the present study 50 % of the respondents stated that

when they needed to speak with their teacher they often worry about making mistakes in front of their classmates. They usually try to speak in their first language (L1) rather than English (L2) when they want to ask questions to their teacher in English classes. Moreover, 51% of the respondents in statement 17 indicated that learners feel relaxed when they ask their English teacher in their mother tongue. This might be due to their little knowledge and language proficiency in the English language and they were afraid to make mistakes while speaking. It may also be due to the fact that the students have a lack of confidence in terms of classroom interaction. Following this, statement 19 revealed that more than half of the respondents 67% ($M= 3.74$ and $SD =1.35$) believed that the teacher talked in the class while the students only listened to the teacher without any practice, whereas 13% remained neutral and disagreed. The results, therefore, show that the participants had problems with the techniques that are used in the English classes. This may be because there was no kind of participation and contribution with their teachers and classmates. The students listened to the teacher without practicing what they were learning. McCombs (2001) describes that “teachers who use communicative approach are more successful in engaging students in an effective learning process and are themselves more effective learners and happier with their jobs” (p.190).

Following from the previous statement, the following statement clearly showed that nearly all the respondents 91% stated that the activities that are used in English classes are not enjoyable for the improvement of the students’ speaking skills while only 9% remained neutral. The findings therefore show that the participants of Al-Mergib University had difficulty in learning the English speaking skill. The reason

behind this is that the activities used in English classes did not help the students to improve the use of their communicative skills. Nolasco and Arthur (1987) emphasize this fact that it is the teacher's responsibility to provide his/her students with an English speaking environment. The significance of the activities in a classroom lies behind the method and/or approach employed by the English teacher to foster motivation and thus, encourage speaking in the English language. Similarly, statement 21 indicated that more than half of the respondents 55% believed that more attention was paid to the grammatical structure rather than speaking. Therefore, this finding shows that the participants faced a lot of challenges regarding classroom materials and activities. The reason behind this may be that the students were provided with new grammar topics and the only practice they had was gap filling of which was a very limited opportunity for them to practice the language. It may also be the activities and techniques employed in the classes which often pay more attention to engaging the students in a situation within which they could develop their grammatical competence rather than communicative competence which is needed for effective English speaking.

Communicative activities employed in an English class will not only enable students to communicate in another language but also helps them gain confidence in learning the foreign language as a medium of instruction (Davis, 2013). Statement 22 accentuates that the majority of the respondents 83% strongly agreed that the teaching approaches are not effective to improve students' speaking. The finding shows that the students have problems with the technique that their teachers are using in English classes. This may be due to the fact that the teachers use traditional methods and approaches in which the teachers talk and the students pay attention; there is no kind of

oral practice in the class. Therefore, they are unable to learn English through communication and how it can be used in context. It may also be because of the limited time and large classes. It seems difficult to use the communicative approach in such classrooms. The students only had two teaching hours of speaking per week. Thus, it was difficult to have the opportunity to practice speaking with all the students in these English classes (see Statement 23). Furthermore, the syllabus was provided to the teachers by the institution and the teachers were expected to cover the whole syllabus every week (Mccombs, 2001). Time and syllabus constraints play a vital role when dealing with the speaking skill.

Statement 24 represented the students' beliefs regarding learning English only to pass examinations. The results show that less than half 45% ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.36$) stated that they needed to know English in order to pass their examinations. In this case, it should be emphasized that the students of Al-Mergib University did not only need the English language to pass their examinations but also needed it for daily class communication in order to improve their speaking skill. With this result, it is evident that the participants showed positive attitudes towards learning the speaking skill. However, more than half of the respondents 85% indicated that the students did not show interest in speaking the English language in the class. The students will participate more in English classes if they develop interest for the subject. This may be made possible through the CLT approach that enhances and maintains the speaking skill to make students more interested in English classes (see Statement 25 in Appendix B).

Following this, statement 26 indicated that more than a half of the respondents 77 % stated that speaking activities were not suitable for their level to improve their language skills. In addition, the majority of the respondents 65 % agreed that these activities that they did in the class were not sufficient and interesting for the development of their English language in their classes (see Statement 27: Appendix B). As it can be viewed from the findings, it is obvious that the students find it difficult to speak the English language fluently while doing activities. The reason for this may be due to the fact that students speak mostly in their native language during pair or group work activities (if provided). Moreover, students are not encouraged to speak and improve their English speaking. Hence, this finding reveals that students' interests are not taken into account when activities are provided. The majority of the respondents 50% stated that the students could not identify their errors; they always need their teacher to guide them (see Statement 28: Appendix B). This clearly shows that self-correction is not fostered in such classrooms. In addition, the majority of the respondents 87% agreed that students prefer to remain silent in the class because they are afraid of being misunderstood by their teachers and classmates (see Statement 29 in Appendix B). As a result of this, the students may have a lack of confidence in English speaking because they are afraid of being embarrassed in front of their classmates. This shows that students need encouragement to speak the English language without being afraid of making mistakes. They should therefore be informed that making mistakes while speaking in the English language is normal and happens often especially with non-native speakers of the English language. Errors should be committed to understand that they are ladders to perfection in their learning process (Altaibe, 2013).

The Need of Students to Improve and Develop Speaking Skills in English Classes.

According to the questionnaire of the study there were 13 statements (see Appendix B) which were designed to understand the needs of the participants to overcome their difficulties in learning the English speaking skill. The results in this section showed that the majority of the respondents find the characteristics of the CLT approach beneficial to improve learners' speaking skill. Statement 30 stated that the students need motivation to improve their speaking skill. Ninety-three percent of the respondents agreed, 4 % remained neutral, while 1% disagreed with this statement. What is more, more than half of the respondents 84% stated that they need encouragement to boost their interest in improving their speaking skills, while 6% remained neutral and 5% disagreed 31. These results show that the participants need motivation and encouragement from their instructors in order to practice the speaking skill. The reason for this might be because they feel relaxed while communicating with their classmates when sharing ideas together and this gives them a good sense of motivation and it is a good indication that the students are supposed to be encouraged in English speaking classes without being afraid of using the English language. The students therefore need support to speak the English language. This could be made possible by prohibiting them from conversing in their native language in English classes.

Motivating the students to speak is a crucial issue that must be put into consideration. When the teachers encourage the students it helps their morale and they try as much as possible to develop more interest to speak the language in question. When motivation is lacking, the students easily lose interest and they find it difficult to

speak (Almasri, 2013). Students need to gain interest and find English classes more enjoyable. Once they enjoy it the enthusiasm becomes very high (see statement 31). According to Nunan (1988), language teaching is based on the students' interest in the target language. Statement 32 explores that the students need more opportunities to practice the speaking skill. Seventy-three percent of the respondents agreed with this statement while the minority of the respondents 25% disagreed. The finding therefore revealed that it could be made possible for students to engage in the target language if their English teachers provide them more opportunities to practice the language in the English classroom.

The following statement shows that the students need an effective approach that helps them improve their English speaking. Nearly all of the respondents (n=94) strongly agreed with this item while 1% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This uninterestingly reveals that the participants have difficulties in the approach being used in the class and this hinders them to improve their speaking skill. The lack of employing an effective approach clearly shows that students did not have any opportunity to practice the speaking skill. However, English language teaching and learning have been modified continuously in accordance with the students' needs and interest in order to discover the most effective method of English learning and thus the speaking skill itself. This finding therefore asserts that the communicative approach (CA) could be beneficial in learning English in general and the speaking skill in particular. CLT focuses on the practice and needs of the learners, the most essential purpose of CLT which consists of developing learners' communicative competence and improving the objectives of the program according to the learners' needs. Students

should learn the language for communicative purposes to express their needs by knowing how to use the target language. In the light of the above, the researcher found out that effective oral communication between students and their teacher is very important to develop the English speaking skill. Before designing the syllabus, the needs and the interests of the students in the target language need to be taken into consideration. Thus, the participants need enjoyable tasks that will attract their attention to improve their speaking skill. As shown in statement 33 in which 66% of the respondents strongly agreed, 10% disagreed and neutral.

Statement 35 shows that the students need a proficient teacher who uses a technique that encourages interaction among students. 94% of the respondents agreed with this statement while a minority of them remained neutral and disagreed. This finding clearly indicates that the teachers in this specific context are employing techniques that do not encourage interaction among students. Students need a significant activity that will encourage them to speak English in classes. The majority 64% therefore agreed with this while 16% remained neutral and disagreed (see statement 36). The results show that the syllabus should be designed in accordance with the communicative skills so that the students will have opportunities to develop interest for speaking and they will become more confident to interact in the English language in the class. It is therefore very important to preplan some activities before attending the English classes; this will help the students to practice language in the class effectively. The types of activities that help in achieving this are: group and pair work, and educational games with their classmates (see statement 37). In relation to this, half of the respondents stated that the students need to converse in English during English

classes in order to improve their speaking skill, while the majority of the respondents 63% agreed that they need to play educational games in English classes (see Appendix B: statement 39).

These findings show that the Libyan EFL students needed some activities that would help them in their English speaking. They will make use of the English language as their language of communication during their activities. Learners of English should be supported with efficient approaches such as CLT that is capable of improving the learners' speaking skill. The CA is framed to develop learners' communicative competence and one aspect of the approach is to develop the speaking skill by providing students with suitable and effective discussion and educational games, and providing learners opportunities in which they are involved in group and pair work. The following statement 40 stated that 82% of the participants agreed that they needed a friendly teacher who can provide a good relationship in order for the English classes to flow. Aksoy (2010) stated that subjects arouses learners' interest and if the learners have something informative about the subject it makes the participation active, and with a close relationship with their teacher they can speak English well. He also stated that the relationship of the students with their teacher is a good factor that keeps students' interest in developing their speaking skill. The results of these findings indicate that EFL teachers should find out their learners' interests to provide them with fascinating topics that can hold and arrest their interests and attention which will make them and their teacher establish a very good relationship in a relaxing atmosphere. In the next statement 41, it is stated that the EFL students need enough time to practice the speaking skill. More than half of the respondents 72% agreed with this statement.

Johnson (2011) pointed out that if the teacher gives the students enough time to practice the language used in the performance rises because the sufficient time given to practice English speaking arouses more interest to speak it. Thus, it is clearly seen that it is important to give more time to the students to prepare and participate in English classes, and this will encourage them to speak more effectively. With respect to statement 42, the majority of the students 65% agreed that they needed a suitable size of an English class to promote English speaking. The findings of statement 42 showed that EFL learners need a small number of students in their English classes. This gives the students more opportunities to practice the English language in their classes.

Engelska (2008) highlighted that the use of a small number of students in a class makes the students utilize the language well with regard to what they have learned in English and this will give them an opportunity to practice adequately the speaking skill among themselves.

Differences in Students' Challenges in Learning Speaking Skills Based on Gender

In order to understand whether there was a difference between different groups of students based on their genders, a T-Test was carried out. The following tables show the independent T-Test results of the differences in the challenges of male and female participants.

Table 3.
Challenges in Learning Speaking Skills based on Gender

Questionnaire's Items	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
20. The activities that were used in the class were not enjoyable.	Male	51	4.06	0.27	0.03
	Female	49	3.98	0.33	
22. Teaching approaches were not effective to improve my speaking skills.	Male	51	4.82	0.48	0.04
	Female	49	3.66	0.89	
35. A good teacher who used techniques that supported interaction among students.	Male	51	4.9	0.24	0.03
	Female	49	3.02	0.27	
46. Engaged me to express my opinions in the class	Male	51	3.74	0.59	0.05
	Female	49	4.64	0.69	

Table 3 shows that only four items indicate a significant difference in the students' challenges in learning English speaking according to their gender. These items are items 20, 22, 35 and 46. There was a difference between male ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.27$) and female students ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.33$) in their beliefs about the activities that were used in English classes being enjoyable ($p = 0.03$).

Table 4.

Analysis of Item 20

Questionnaire's Items	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
20. The activities that were used in the class were not enjoyable.	Male	51	4.06	0.27	0.03
	Female	49	3.98	0.33	

The results showed that the mean scores for both females and males in item 20 are close to each other. However, the t-test indicates that male students believed that the activities that are used in English classes are not enjoyable more than female students. Although both the male and females agreed that the activities used in the English classrooms were not enjoyable, the t-test results showed that females (Females $M=4.38$, $S=0.83$) found them less enjoyable than males (Males $M = 4.44$, $S.= 0.76$). The reason behind this may be that the English teachers paid more attention to grammar rather than speaking. This finding also reveals that their English teachers employed traditional methods and did not take students' needs into consideration when selecting activities. Moreover, the number of the students in the English classes are very large and the time also is too limited to give opportunities to the entire class to apply suitable activities that support their speaking skill. In fact, these results showed that male students scored significantly higher than female students for this item, the reason behind this finding may additionally be that in Libyan culture and society, the male students behave more freely while they are speaking in the class while the females feel shy when they want to speak with their classmates and teachers in the class. Females probably think that more interaction with their male students will have a negative effect on their personality in the society. Al-taibe (2013) revealed that the social context is affecting gender's learning style in the learning process; it leads to both females and males students taking the social harms into consideration during learning process and they want to be more in control in the classrooms.

When the mean scores of both the male and females were observed in item 22 (see Table 5), it appeared that the males had a higher mean score ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.48$)

while the females had a mean score ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.89$) ($Sig = 0.04$), indicating that the teaching approaches employed were not effective to improve their speaking skills.

Table 5.

Analysis of Item 22

Questionnaire's Items	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
22. Teaching approaches were not effective to improve my speaking skills.	Male	51	4.82	0.48	0.04
	Female	49	3.66	0.89	

The results of this finding clearly shows that the male students believed that the teaching approaches employed by their English teachers were not effective to improve their speaking skills, compared to the female students who did not believe this as much as the males.

Table 6

Analysis of Item 35

Questionnaire's Items	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
35. A good teacher who used techniques that supported interaction among students.	Male	51	4.9	0.24	0.03
	Female	49	3.02	0.27	

Based on the data above, the results of two previous items: 22 and 35 were analysed. The male students had more positive beliefs regarding the lack of effective approaches that are used in the English classes to improve their speaking skills and they need proficient teachers who use techniques that support interaction among students, compared to the female students. The possible explanations for these findings

could be that male students are more confident than female students when expressing their opinions when speaking with their classmates in the class while female students prefer to listen to their teachers without any kind of interaction in the class. This maybe because they are not supported to speak in the class and feel they are safe when they are silent during the English classes. Following these items there was a shift from males to females in item 47. The mean scores of the females this time outperformed the males. The females ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 0.31$) mean score was higher than the males ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.21$) which indicates that their beliefs with respect to item 47; they need a teacher who reduces their anxiety when they want to speak in the class. Elmas, Demirdogen and Geban (2011) revealed that male students prefer to learn English through teachers who adopt communicative and collaborative approaches in their English classrooms more than female students because male students feel more pleased by sharing their knowledge with their classmates compared to females. They also asserted that teachers probably thought that it was feasible to teach and develop the low proficient learners' academic skills by using innovative approaches in learning environments.

In addition to item 47 in which the female students had a higher mean score, item 46 (see Table 7) also revealed that the female students had a higher mean score compared to the male students. Item 46 regarding students beliefs about their teacher indicates that females had a higher mean score ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.69$) compared to the male students with a mean score ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.59$) ($Sig = 0.05$). Within the concept of this item about students needing a teacher who can encourage them to express their opinions in the class females believed in this more than males.

Table 7.

Analysis of Item 46

Questionnaire's Items	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
46. Engaged me to express my opinions in the class	Male	51	3.74	0.59	0.05
	Female	49	4.64	0.69	

The results showed that females students with $M = 4.64$ had difficulty in expressing their ideas in the class and they need a proficient teacher to engage them in the learning process (especially in speaking) to avoid such a problem. The reasons behind this may be that female students in this specific context have anxiety when they want to speak. They are not confident when speaking in English in front of their classmates in the class because they feel the fear / embarrassment when they make mistakes in such environments. Here, they need more motivation and support from their teachers to feel more safe and comfortable in the class to improve their speaking skills.

Individual items were examined; the results of the independent samples T-Test showed there were four items significantly different concerning the most common challenges that Libyan EFL students face when learning speaking. In almost all of the significant items for gender differences, the male and female students had different points of view.

The Perspectives of Students towards the Characteristics of CLT to Overcome their Difficulties and Improve their English Speaking

In the following sections, analysis of each response of the participants of the study of how the English teachers can help their EFL students to overcome their challenges in the learning speaking skill will be discussed. There are ten statements regarding this section (see Appendix B, Section C). These statements were designed to investigate the roles of the teachers when they use CLT in English classes to develop their students' speaking skill. Statement 43 indicates that the students will greatly improve in their English speaking if their teacher encourages them. Ninety-five percent of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement while 4% remained neutral and 0% disagreed. Similarly, in statement 45 more than half 68% stated that the teacher should motivate their students to learn the speaking skill. Richards (2013) points out that teachers need to provide tasks, techniques and activities in which learners play the major role. It is therefore their duties to motivate, facilitate and monitor these activities and techniques to give them proper modification. Hence, the result reveals that the respondents indicated that the teachers should help their learners when they play their own roles in the English classes. Statement 44 indicated that the students needed teachers as facilitators to facilitate the learning of speaking by using simple words. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement, while 12% remained neutral and 2% disagreed. Furthermore, statement 46 indicated that the teachers could help their students to improve their speaking skill when they engage them in expressing their ideas and opinions in the English class. Eighty-four percent of

the respondents remained neutral and disagreed. The following results revealed that almost all the students 96% strongly agreed that they can improve in speaking English by receiving help from their teachers to reduce their anxiety while they are speaking (statement 47). Moreover, 87% of the respondents indicated that their teachers should know their responsibility as regards to helping their students improve their English speaking (statement 48). Almost all the students strongly agreed that it is good for their teachers to assist them in overcoming their difficulties in speaking in English which could be carried out by allowing their learners to commit mistakes and thus, wisely and politely correct these mistakes (statement 49). In addition, 89% of the respondents strongly agreed to statement 52 that their teachers should let their experience be taken care of. The results of the statements 46, 47, 48, 49, and 52 of the current study shows that it is the duty of the teachers to help students overcome their difficulties in speaking, and make them gain confidence to improve the quality of their English speaking. This may be made possible if the English teacher creates a class atmosphere in which students will be able to express their opinions and ideas while learning in the classroom. Heller, Underwood and Tasi (2012) stated that teachers should build a friendly relationship with students based on mutual trust. They further stated that once the students trust their teacher they develop confidence and they will not be afraid to make mistakes because the teacher has created a conducive environment for interaction and practice. Therefore, it is very important for teachers and learners to have mutual trust; under such a condition every mistake will become another topic for learning and it will expand students' knowledge. One of the difficulties in learning speaking is lack of self-esteem. Self-esteem leads to great achievement in acquiring English speaking.

Those students who have a very high self-esteem and confidence are always very outspoken in the class and these learners tend to improve in speaking quicker.

The following statements 50 indicated that teachers can help their students by engaging them in communication in the class. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Moreover, nearly all the participants 99% accepted that the teacher should use very significant activities and techniques that could improve the practice of speaking in English in the classroom (statement 51). The results then show that the teachers are expected to guide the class; their roles should help students to work with one another to find answers to rising questions with respect to communication. It is therefore important for the students to be encouraged by their teachers. Ebrahimi, Salehi, Sattar and Shojaee (2015) stated that “in planning class activities, the focus of the English teacher was on identifying the tasks students needed to do in order to learn speaking” (p. 95). The results of this study showed that one of the most important aspects in the teaching process is that teachers need to consider the learners’ opinions in learning speaking and provide them with the necessary activities when learning speaking.

Conclusion

In this chapter, detailed information about the quantitative findings of the study were presented. In addition, the T-test results based on the students’ difficulties comparing their gender was presented. The quantitative results showed that the Al Mergib University students encountered some difficulties in learning the speaking skill. The following chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations Chapter of this study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presentation

This chapter includes the final remarks about the current study. First, the major findings of the research presented will be summarized. Then, a set of implications and recommendations related to the present study will be provided. Finally, the conclusions of the study will be stated.

Main Findings

Based on the analysis of the students' questionnaire, in relation to the difficulties faced when learning English speaking, the Libyan English as a foreign language (EFL) students in Al-Mergib University suggested that they face difficulties related to lack of motivation and teachers' interest in students, lack of confidence to practice English speaking, and the use of traditional approaches to teaching the English language. Most of the participants indicated that they feel embarrassed when they speak in English in the class, and that they feel more relaxed when they speak in their first language (Arabic). The findings therefore revealed that the participants of Al-Mergib University may be experiencing foreign language speaking anxiety or lack of confidence in producing the target language in the classroom. Teachers in this context seem to not use activities that engage students to practice English speaking in the classroom. Nelson and Arthur (1987) emphasize the significance of the activities in an English classroom. Thus, they pointed out that using effective methods/ approaches by

foreign language (FL) teachers are important to motivate the students to speak the English language. In addition, the majority of the participants' responses determined that they had no opportunities to speak English during English classes because of the limited time and large size of the classes.

Moreover, in relation to the needs of the students when learning English speaking, the findings of the current study showed that Libyan EFL students need some help and encouragement from their teachers when learning English speaking. Their interests (needs) also need to be taken into account when learning English speaking. Furthermore, they need more opportunities to practice the speaking skill. In addition, the results showed that Libyan EFL students need efficient teachers who use effective approaches and techniques that support interaction among students to improve their speaking skills in English classes. They need enough time to practice their speaking skills and a suitable size of class to promote English speaking. According to Saricoban (1999) the "speaking skill of second language is not derived naturally; it needs some processes of learning" (p. 89). The process of learning in the classroom involves the relationship of the students and teacher. The process of speaking in the classroom requires students to be taught with the help of effective approaches that enhances their speaking skill (Richard, 2008).

In relation to the students' perspectives regarding their attitudes towards the different characteristics of communicative language teaching (CLT) to improve their English speaking skills, students believed that they would benefit from methods that utilize CLT to eliminate the difficulties in learning the speaking skill. This is because CLT is an approach that deals with interaction and practice. It allows students to

become fluent in EFL speaking (Bilal, 2013). The results of the final part of the questionnaire revealed that English teachers can help their students when learning the speaking skill by encouraging, facilitating, and motivating them in English speaking classes. The results also showed that the English teachers can help their students improve their speaking by; using significant activities that maintain speaking practice in the class, being aware of their students' abilities and needs, and different proficiency levels.

In relation to the findings regarding gender, the results showed that male students had a higher mean score than female students in their belief about “the activities that are used in the class are not enjoyable.” There was also a significant difference with item “teaching approaches are effective to improve my speaking skills” the results indicated that male and female students' beliefs varied within this item. Male students again had a higher mean score compared to the female students. A shift from males to females was seen in the item “they need a good teacher who uses techniques that support interaction among students”. Female students had a higher mean score compared to the male students. Following this, the item “I need a teacher who engages me to express my opinions in the class” had a higher mean score among the female students compared to the males.

It is important to refer that learning speaking is necessary in learning English because by speaking in the second language, learners can express their thoughts, perspectives, and feelings. In this case, speaking arouses self-confidence. It also improves learners' capacity to express their ideas in the classroom. Speaking is the most important skill that should be developed and improved to achieve effective

interaction. Therefore, EFL language learners should learn how they can increase or enhance their communicative ability (competence) in speaking.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings obtained in this study, several educational implications can be drawn. First, more detailed information about the challenges that are faced by EFL learners in learning speaking, such as the main reasons behind these difficulties and other suggestions about utilizing other approaches/ techniques to improve the speaking skill could be investigated because the current study conducted only highlighted the communicative approach (CA) to improve the speaking skill. On the other hand, because the present study was limited to the students in Al Mergib university in North Libya and only employed a questionnaire (single method) to collect data, further studies should be conducted to teachers and students who may have different perspectives about the challenges that they encounter in learning and teaching English speaking. Furthermore, in terms of reliability a small observation followed by a questionnaire could be carried out to ensure that the responses are similar. Other approaches to collect data such as observation and/or interview, could be employed to investigate the teaching and learning of English in North Libya. The study covered only the Libyan EFL students in the university. Therefore, a further study could be conducted to cover participants in both high schools and universities by using a comparative research design method. Comparing the teachers and students' beliefs in high schools and universities in Libya will enable both students and teachers to be aware of their difficulties in learning and/or teaching the speaking skill, revealing the

students' needs and thus, providing them with innovative approaches which will develop the learners English in general and their speaking in particular, need to be investigated.

Suggestions for Educational Practice

When learning English speaking, Lie (2012) states that many EFL students have not succeeded in speaking in English well because they lack motivation, practice, and the method of which the teaching of the English language is being used. It is therefore recommended that:

- Teachers should realize that motivation, interest, interaction and practice that will improve the attitudes of students towards English speaking are vital factors to develop EFL students in their speaking skills.
- The current study found that, students believed that teachers are not using aspects of CLT in their classrooms. It also found that they do not employ interesting activities. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL teachers, especially in Libya, should take their students' interests into account and prepare activities that are enjoyable and not only based on grammar.
- Teachers should create a warm and encouraging environment in the classroom to allow students to use and practice English.
- Students should be supported with communicative activities that will help them develop their English speaking.
- More hours should be allocated to the teaching of English speaking which will encourage the students to practice and learn more about the speaking skills.

- Teachers should not totally depend on a single approach when teaching English speaking. Innovative approaches when teaching English should be preferred to be employed rather than traditional language learning approaches.
- EFL teachers should be trained on the innovative approaches to be able to employ them in their EFL classrooms.
- Teachers should eliminate the anxiety of their students while they speak English in the classroom.
- EFL teachers should provide their students opportunities to use the target language and eliminate native language usage in the EFL classroom.
- EFL teachers should avoid any embarrassing situation that will make the students feel disgraced in front of their classmates.
- In relation to the needs of the students, teachers of EFL should be proficient enough in speaking to provide confidence and motivation to their students.
- EFL teachers should have a good relationship with their learners in order to enhance students' confidence. By doing so, students develop self-confidence (Thanasoulas, 2002).
- To avoid poor speaking, lack of self-confidence, shyness, and embarrassment in EFL classes, EFL teachers should focus on communication among classmates which could be made possible through group and pair work.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the finding of the study briefly and drew conclusions about Libyan EFL students' challenges that they encountered in learning the speaking skill. This chapter also provided some recommendations and implications to help EFL students avoid their difficulties, and suggestions for EFL teachers which could help their students improve in English speaking.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Department of English Language Teaching

- **Questionnaire for students:**

Dear students,

I am an MA student in the ELT department. This questionnaire was prepared to identify the challenges you encounter in learning English speaking skills. Your contribution will provide me with valuable data to understand your problems. Your responses/answers will only be used for this study. These answers will not affect your grades. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments via the following contact details.

Eman Abusteen

E-mail: mannalibya@gmail.com

Background

Please mark appropriate option by putting a “X” next to each statement that is suitable for you or complete by filling in information.

Male..... Female.....

Age:

Years of study:

Please put (X) where appropriate:

A- My main purpose of learning English speaking was:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. To be able to speak English fluently in the class.					
2. To improve my speaking skills.					
3. To be able to understand the lecture.					
4. To be able to pass the mid-term and final exams.					
5. To communicate and speak with others outside the class.					
6. To be able to speak with native speakers.					
7. To improve my language skills and to be successful in my department studies.					

B-I find it difficult to speak English because:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. There was not any kind of practice in my class.					
9. I didn't participate with my classmates and teacher in the class.					
10. I had a lack of confidence to contribute/participate					

pate and practice speaking.					
11. I faced a lack of motivation to speak in English in the class.					
12. I was not willing to speak about myself in the class.					
13. I had not chance to speak during the English lessons because of the limited time of class.					
14. When I spoke, I worried about making mistakes in front of my classmates.					
15. I felt embracement/shyness when I started to speak in English in the class.					
16. I preferred to participate in the lesson by using my first language rather than English.					
17. I was relaxed when I asked questions to my teacher in my first language.					
18. I considered English was a hard subject to learn because my other subjects					

were in my first language.					
19. I just listened to my teacher talking.					
20. The activities that were used in the class were not enjoyable.					
21. In the class more attention was paid to grammar rather than speaking.					
22. Teaching approaches were not effective to improve my speaking skills.					
23. I had not opportunity to practice speaking because my class was very large.					
24. I put in my mind that I need English only to pass an exam					
25. I did not feel any interest to speak in the class.					
26. There was no variety of activities in the class to suit my level to enhance/improve my speaking skills.					
27. In my class, English was not used all the time.					
28. I could not					

identify my errors, I need my teacher to guide me.					
29. I preferred to be silent because I had a fear of being misunderstood by my teacher and classmates.					
C- To improve and develop my speaking skills in the class I need:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30. Motivation to support me to speak English.					
31. Encouragement and interest to learn speaking skills.					
32. Enough opportunities to practice the speaking skills.					
33. Effective approaches /techniques that helped me to improve my English speaking.					
34. Enjoyable tasks that attracted my attention.					
35. A good teacher who used techniques that supported interaction among students.					
36. Significant activities that supported the					

practice of speaking in the class.					
37. To work in a group and in pairs with my classmates.					
38. To converse with my friends and my teacher.					
39. To play language games in the class.					
40. A friendly teacher who had good relation with me.					
41. Enough time to practice my speaking skills.					
42. Suitable size of class to promote English speaking.					

D- My English teacher can help me in learning speaking skills when he/she :	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
43. Encouraged me to speak in English.					
44. Facilitated the learning process by using simple language					
45. Motivated me to learn speaking skill.					
46. Engaged me to express my opinions in the					

class.					
47. Reduced my anxiety when I wanted to speak in the class.					
48. Knew my abilities in learning speaking skills.					
49. Allowed me to make mistakes and still feel OK.					
50. Involved me more in communicating in the class.					
51. Used significant activities that maintained the practice in the class.					
52. Had experience to take care of the different levels of his/her students.					

Thank you for your contribution

APPENDIX B

Descriptive Statistics for Students' Difficulties Survey Results

1- My main purpose of learning English speaking was:	5- Strongly Agree				Mean	Std.D
	4- Agree	3- Neutral	2- Disagree	1- Strongly Disagree		
		Frequency	Present			
7. To improve my language skills and to be successful in my department studies.	5	88	88%			
	4	10	10%	4.86	0.4	
	3	2	2%			
	5	75	75%			
1. To be able to speak English fluently in the class.	4	15	15%			
	3	5	5%	4.58	0.88	
	2	3	3%			
	1	2	2%			
2. To improve my speaking skills.	5	70	70%			
	4	20	20%			
	3	6	6%	4.54	0.86	
	2	2	2%			
4. To be able to pass the mid-term and final exams.	1	2	2%			
	5	60	60%			
	4	10	10%			
	3	12	12%	4.12	1.2	
3. To be able to understand the lecture.	2	18	18%			
	5	20	20%			
	4	50	50%			
	3	20	20%	3.75	1.06	
	2	5	5%			

	1	5	5%		
	4	10	10%		
6. To be able to speak with native speakers.	3	40	40%	2.4	0.92
	2	30	30%		
	1	20	20%		
	5	2	2%		
5. To communicate and speak with others outside the class.	4	3	3%	2.28	0.77
	3	26	26%		
	2	59	59%		
	1	10	10%		

B-I find it difficult to speak English because:

8. There was not any kind of practice in my class.	5	98	98%	4.98	0.14
	4	2	2%		
20. The activities that were used in the class were not enjoyable.	5	91	91%	4.91	0.29
	4	9	9%		
11. I faced a lack of motivation to speak in English in the class.	5	89	89%	4.89	0.31
	4	11	11%		
25. I did not feel any interest to speak in the class.	5	85	85%	4.85	0.36
	4	15	15%		
29. I preferred to be silent because I had a fear of being misunderstood by my teacher and classmates.	5	87	87%	4.77	0.71
	4	9	9%		
	3	3	3%		
	2	1	1%		
22. Teaching approaches were not effective to improve my	5	83	83%	4.73	0.69
	4	10	10%		

speaking skills.	3	5	5%		
	2	1	1%		
	1	1	1%		
26. There was no variety of activities in the class to suit my level to enhance/improve my speaking skills.	5	77	77%		
	4	13	13%		
	3	6	6%	4.62	0.81
	2	3	3%		
	1	1	1%		
10. I had a lack of confidence to contribute/participate and practice speaking.	5	80	80%		
	4	10	10%		
	3	3	3%	4.58	1.02
	2	2	2%		
	1	5	5%		
23. I had not an opportunity to practice speaking because my class was very large.	5	75	75%		
	4	15	15%		
	3	3	3%	4.57	0.89
	2	6	6%		
	1	1	1%		
12. I was not willing to speak about myself in the class.	5	70	70%		
	4	10	10%		
	3	5	5%	4.55	0.81
	2	15	15%		
18. I considered English is a hard subject to learn because my other subjects were in my first language.	5	66	66%		
	4	24	24%		
	3	3	3%	4.48	0.89
	2	6	6%		
	1	1	1%		
21. In the class more attention was paid to grammar rather than speaking.	5	55	55%		
	4	36	36%		
	3	4	4%	4.41	0.79
	2	5	5%		

	5	65	65%		
27. In my class	4	15	15%		
English was not	3	10	10%	4.32	1.1
used all the time.	2	7	7%		
	1	3	3%		
<hr/>					
	5	67	67%		
19. I just listened	4	13	13%		
to my teacher	3	7	7%	4.24	1.31
talking.	2	3	3%		
	1	10	10%		
<hr/>					
28. I could not	5	50	50%		
identify my errors,	4	15	15%		
I needed my	3	15	15%	4.15	1.02
teacher to guide	2	10	10%		
me.					
<hr/>					
	5	50	50%		
9. I didn't	4	20	20%		
participate with	3	20	20%	4.05	1.17
my classmates and	2	5	5%		
teacher in the class.	1	5	5%		
<hr/>					
	5	35	35%		
15. I felt	4	46	46%		
embracement/shyn	3	11	11%	4.05	0.96
ess when I started	2	6	6%		
to speak in English	1	2	2%		
in the class.					
<hr/>					
	5	51	51%		
17. I was relaxed	4	22	22%		
when I asked	3	7	7%	4.00	1.26
questions to my	2	16	16%		
teacher in my first	1	4	4%		
language.					
<hr/>					
14. When I spoke,	5	50	50%		
I worried about	4	25	25%	3.94	1.36
making mistakes in					
front of my					

classmates.	3	2	2%		
	2	15	15%		
	1	8	8%		
	5	45	45%		
24. I put in my mind that I need English only to pass an exam	4	15	15%	3.76	1.36
	3	20	20%		
	2	11	11%		
	1	9	9%		
	5	43	43%		
16. I preferred to participate in the lesson by using my first language rather than English.	4	17	17%	3.74	1.35
	3	20	20%		
	2	11	11%		
	1	9	9%		
C- To improve and develop my speaking skills in the class I needed:					
35. A good teacher who used techniques that supported interaction among students.	5	93	93%	4.93	0.26
	4	7	7%		
	5	94	94%		
33. Effective approaches/ techniques that helped me to improve my English speaking.	4	3	3%	4.9	0.44
	3	2	2%		
	2	1	1%		
	5	93	93%		
30. Motivation to support me to speak English.	4	4	4%	4.89	0.45
	3	2	2%		
	2	1	1%		
	5	82	82%		
40. A friendly teacher who had good relation with me.	4	10	10%	4.69	0.77
	3	4	4%		
	2	3	3%		

	1	1	1%		
	5	84	84%		
30. Encouragement and interest to learn speaking skills.	4	6	6%	4.67	0.87
	3	5	5%		
	2	3	3%		
	1	2	2%		
	5	73	73%		
37. To work in a group and in pairs with my classmates.	4	10	10%	4.54	0.82
	3	15	15%		
	2	2	2%		
	5	73	73%		
31. Enough opportunities to practice the speaking skills.	4	17	17%	4.51	1.02
	3	3	3%		
	2	2	2%		
	1	5	5%		
	5	72	72%		
41. Enough time to practice my speaking skills.	4	8	8%	4.39	1.11
	3	10	10%		
	2	7	7%		
	1	3	3%		
	5	65	65%		
42. Suitable size of class to promote English speaking.	4	20	20%	4.39	1.02
	3	7	7%		
	2	5	5%		
	1	3	3%		
	5	63	63%		
39. To play language games in the class.	4	22	22%	4.36	1.03
	3	5	5%		
	2	8	8%		
	1	2	2%		
	5	64	64%		
36. Significant activities that support the practice of speaking in the class.	4	16	16%	4.32	1.07
	3	10	10%		
	2	8	8%		

	1	2	2%		
	5	66	66%		
34. Enjoyable tasks that attract my attention.	4	14	14%	4.31	1.15
	3	10	10%		
	2	5	5%		
	1	5	5%		
	5	50	50%		
38. To converse with my friends and my teacher.	4	25	25%	4.1	1.14
	3	15	15%		
	2	5	5%		
	1	5	5%		
	5	50	50%		

D- My English teacher can help me in learning speaking skills when he/she :

48. Knew my abilities in learning speaking skills.	5	87	87%	4.93	0.26
	4	7	7%		
	3	4	4%		
	2	1	1%		
	1	1	1%		
46. Engaged me to express my opinions in the class.	5	86	86%	4.9	0.44
	4	4	4%		
	3	8	8%		
	2	2	2%		
43. Encouraged me to speak in English.	5	95	95%	4.89	0.45
	4	4	4%		
	3	1	1%		
44. Facilitated the learning process by using simple language	5	78	78%	4.67	0.87
	4	12	12%		
	3	5	5%		
	2	2	2%		
	1	3	3%		

	5	79	79%		
50. Involved me more in communicating in the class.	4	11	11%	4.54	0.82
	3	3	3%		
	2	7	7%		
	5	68	68%		
45. Motivated me to learn speaking skill.	4	22	22%	4.51	1.02
	3	2	2%		
	2	5	5%		
	1	3	3%		
	5	89	89%		
52. Had experience to take care of the different levels of his/her students.	4	10	10%	4.36	1.03
	3	1	1%		
	5	98	98%		
49. Allowed me to make mistakes and still feel OK.	4	1	1%	4.32	1.07
	3	1	1%		
	5	96	96%		
47. Reduced my anxiety when I wanted to speak in the class.	4	3	3%	4.31	1.15
	3	1	1%		
	5	99	99%		
51. Used significant activities that maintain the practice in the class.	4	1	1%	4.1	1.14

APPENDIX C

T- Test Results of Students' Challenges According to their Gender

A- My main purpose of learning English speaking was:	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
1. To be able to speak English fluently in the class	Male	51	4.6	0.86	0.94
	Female	49	4.56	0.91	
2. To improve my speaking skills	Male	51	4.54	0.86	0.8
	Female	49	4.54	0.86	
3. To be able to understand the lecture	Male	51	3.76	0.98	0.83
	Female	49	3.74	1.03	
4. To be able to pass the mid-term and final exams	Male	51	4.24	1.13	0.12
	Female	49	4.00	1.26	
5. To communicate and speak with others outside the class	Male	51	2.30	0.79	0.91
	Female	49	2.26	0.75	
6. To be able to speak with native speakers	Male	51	2.40	0.93	0.86
	Female	49	2.41	0.93	
7. To improve my language skills and to be successful in my department studies.	Male	51	4.86	0.4	0.79
	Female	49	4.86	0.4	

B-I find it difficult to speak English because:

8. There was not any kind of practice in my class.	Male	51	4.98	0.14	1.00
	Female	49	4.98	0.14	
9. I didn't	Male	51	4.06	1.15	0.88

	participate with my classmates and teacher in the class.	Female	49	4.04	1.19	
10.	I had a lack of confidence to contribute/participate and practice speaking.	Male	51	4.6	0.97	
		Female	49	4.56	1.07	0.68
11.	I faced a lack of motivation to speak in English in the class.	Male	51	4.94	0.24	
		Female	49	4.84	0.37	0.53
12.	I was not willing to speak about myself in the class.	Male	51	4.5	0.81	
		Female	49	4.5	0.81	1.34
13.	I had not chance to speak during the English lessons because of the limited time of class.	Male	51	4.32	1.13	
		Female	49	4.28	1.18	0.87
14.	When I spoke, I worried about making mistakes in front of my classmates.	Male	51	3.96	1.35	
		Female	49	3.92	1.38	0.72
15.	I felt embracement/shyness when I started to speak in English in the class.	Male	51	4.08	0.94	
		Female	49	4.02	0.98	0.98
16.	I preferred	Male	51	3.76	1.35	0.95

	to participate in the lesson by using my first language rather than English.	Female	49	3.72	1.37	
17.	I was relaxed when I asked questions to my teacher in my first language.	Male	51	4.02	1.27	
		Female	49	3.98	1.27	0.95
18.	I considered English is a hard subject to learn because my other subjects were in my first language.	Male	51	4.5	0.84	
		Female	49	4.46	0.95	0.64
19.	I just listened to my teacher talking.	Male	51	4.26	1.31	
		Female	49	4.22	1.33	0.89
20.	The activities that were used in the class were not enjoyable.	Male	51	4.06	0.27	
		Female	49	3.98	0.33	0.03
21.	In the class more attention is paid to grammar rather than speaking.	Male	51	4.44	0.76	
		Female	49	4.38	0.83	0.64
22.	Teaching	Male	51	4.82	0.48	0.04

	approaches were not effective to improve my speaking skills.	Female	49	3.66	0.89	
23.	I had not opportunity to practice speaking because my class was very large.	Male	51	4.6	0.83	0.55
		Female	49	4.54	0.95	
24.	I put in my mind that I need English only to pass an exam	Male	51	3.78	1.36	0.95
		Female	49	3.74	1.38	
25.	I did not feel any interest to speak in the class.	Male	51	4.86	0.35	0.58
		Female	49	4.84	0.37	
26.	There was no variety of activities in the class to suit my level to enhance/improve my speaking skills.	Male	51	4.64	0.78	0.68
		Female	49	4.6	0.86	
27.	In my class English was not used all the time.	Male	51	4.34	1.08	0.85
		Female	49	4.3	1.13	
28.	I could not identify my errors, I need my teacher to guide me.	Male	51	4.16	1.02	0.86
		Female	49	4.14	1.03	
29.	I preferred to be silent	Male	51	4.84	0.47	0.45

	because I had a fear of being misunderstood by my teacher and classmates.	Female	49	4.8	0.57	
C-To improve and develop my speaking skills in the class I need:						
30.	Motivation to support me to speak English.	Male	51	4.92	0.34	
		Female	49	4.86	0.53	0.18
31.	Encouragement and interest to learn speaking skills.	Male	51	4.68	0.84	
		Female	49	4.66	0.89	0.8
32.	Enough opportunities to practice the speaking skills.	Male	51	4.54	0.97	
		Female	49	4.48	1.07	0.64
33.	Effective approaches /techniques that helped me to improve my English speaking.	Male	51	4.82	0.6	
		Female	49	4.98	0.14	0.08
34.	Enjoyable tasks that attracted my attention.	Male	51	4.32	1.13	
		Female	49	4.3	1.18	0.85
35.	A good teacher who used techniques that supported interaction among students.	Male	51	4.9	0.24	
		Female	49	3.02	0.27	0.03
36.	Significant	Male	51	4.32	1.08	1.51

	activities that supported the practice of speaking in the class.	Female	49	4.32	1.08	
37.	To work in a group and in pairs with my classmates.	Male	51	4.56	0.81	0.67
		Female	49	4.52	0.84	
38.	To converse with my friends and my teacher.	Male	51	4.12	1.12	0.78
		Female	49	4.08	1.18	
39.	To play language games in the class.	Male	51	4.38	1.03	0.85
		Female	49	4.34	1.04	
40.	A friendly teacher who had good relation with me.	Male	51	4.7	0.74	0.78
		Female	49	4.68	0.82	
41.	Enough time to practice my speaking skills.	Male	51	4.4	1.09	0.83
		Female	49	4.38	1.14	
42.	Suitable size of class to promote English speaking.	Male	51	4.42	0.99	0.18
		Female	49	4.36	1.06	

D- My English teacher could help me in learning speaking skills when he/she :

43.	Encouraged me to speak in English.	Male	51	4.96	0.2	0.15
		Female	49	4.92	0.34	
44.	Facilitated the learning process by using simple language	Male	51	4.76	0.56	0.06
		Female	49	4.44	1.15	

45. Motivated me to learn speaking skill.	Male	51	4.48	0.95	0.84
	Female	49	4.46	1.01	
46. Engaged me to express my opinions in the class.	Male	51	3.74	0.59	0.05
	Female	49	4.64	0.69	
47. Reduced my anxiety when I wanted to speak in the class.	Male	51	4.09	0.21	0.43
	Female	49	4.94	0.31	
48. Knew my abilities in learning speaking skills.	Male	51	4.8	0.61	0.57
	Female	49	4.76	0.72	
49. Allowed me to make mistakes and still feel OK.	Male	51	4.98	0.14	0.36
	Female	49	4.96	0.28	
50. Involved me more in communicating in the class.	Male	51	4.64	0.83	0.69
	Female	49	4.6	0.88	
51. Used significant activities that maintained the practice in the class.	Male	51	4.94	0.21	0.68
	Female	49	4.68	0.14	
52. Had experience to take care of the different levels of his/her students.	Male	51	4.9	0.3	0.24
	Female	49	4.86	0.4	