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AN ATTEMPT IN DECREASING ANXIETY AND ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT IN ORAL   CLASSROOM SETTINGS VIA BETTER TEACHERS' SOCIABILITY:

Case of First Year EFL Students at Belhadj Bouchaib University Centre

An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a Master's Degree in Linguistics

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Dedications

To my dearest people to my heart

To my mother and my sisters with love

To my young sister 'Maha' for her support

To my all teachers and friends

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to scrutinize the issue of anxiety among first year LMD students from the English department, and studying at Belhadj Bouchaib university centre. It also aims to achieve two main objectives. On the one hand, it tries to discover the principal reasons that stand behind English foreign language learners' anxiety when performing orally in class. On the other, it attempts to maintain a supportive relationship between students and teachers as two partner-ships inside the classroom in order to improve the learners' oral performance and reduce anxiety. Through the use of a research tool which consists of two questionnaires, and then, based upon a mixed- method approach embracing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, we have tried, in this study, to collect the relevant data, and then analyze them. The first questionnaire has been devoted to the students, whereas the second has been administered to the teachers being in charge of the oral expression subject. Our results reveal that the phenomenon of anxiety really exists among the learners, and more particularly in the oral expression subject. This anxiety originates from fear of failing tests or negative evaluation, in addition to the apprehension of using a foreign language in front of an audience. The results also suggest various strategies that both teachers and students may follow in order to decrease the amount of anxiety and enhance the level of students' engagement in class through better teachers' sociability.

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Key to Acronyms and abbreviations

CA: Communication apprehension

EFL: English as foreign language

FL: Foreign language

FLA: Foreign language anxiety

FLCA: Foreign language classroom anxiety

LMD1: The first year of License, Master, Doctorate

OET: Oral English teaching

SL: Second language

General Introduction

General Introduction

As a result of globalization and cross- cultural relations, people are in need to use a different language from their mother tongue to communicate with others from different societies and cultures, and consequently, people from different regions find themselves in a situation where they are in need to speak in front of an audience using a foreign language (FL). Indeed, they need to learn another language in order to be able to express their thoughts and transmit their ideas to others.

However, learning a FL in academic settings is considered as a challenge for most people, especially English foreign language learners (EFL). EFL learners, who are not fluent in the target language, face various obstacles in the FL learning process, in which they cannot express themselves freely as they do with their mother tongue, especially in real life situations, one of the major problems that EFL learners encounter in the FL learning process is anxiety. This phenomenon often occurs because of many reasons that affect the learners' oral performance negatively and it can be reduced only through a better teachers' sociability.

In this study, we will try to comprehend the issue of anxiety from the perspective of EFL learners, in an attempt to identify the sources of anxiety, focusing on the actual factors that cause this phenomenon. We will also try to investigate the positive impact of teachers' sociability on students' oral performance through raising the learners' oral engagement and reducing the amount of anxiety.

This research work aims at finding out the reasons that stand behind EFL LMD1 students' anxiety in oral classroom settings, it also aims to maintain a supportive relationship between teachers and students in order to improve oral performance, and reduce anxiety inside class. In order to tackle the issue, the following research questions are stated:

1- Which factors trigger off the phenomenon of anxiety among EFL learners in oral classroom settings?

2- How does a better teachers' sociability contribute in decreasing anxiety and improving engagement in oral classroom settings?

Taking in consideration the above research questions, the following hypotheses are suggested.

1- The appearance of anxiety in EFL oral classroom settings stems from many psychological barriers.

2- Better teachers' sociability impacts students' oral engagement positively by decreasing their level of anxiety, and enhancing their oral performance in class.

This research work is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter reviews literature about anxiety, its types and its main components which represent the following: Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The chapter also reviews previous research on teachers' sociability and its impact on students' foreign language learning process. It also gives some background on the stages of foreign language learning namely: input, output, and processing. Furthermore, it establishes the psychological problems in oral English teaching (OET, hence forth). This chapter also introduces the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance and its various manifestations on students. The second chapter is devoted to the various theories related to the concept of teacher-students relationship and its impact on learners' engagement. It also introduces the term sociability and its role in reducing FL anxiety. It also presents the types of engagement which are: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement, and the way motivation and self- confidence impact this engagement in the learning setting. Finally, the third chapter deals with the practical part of the study; it provides descriptive analytic statistics of the results obtained from the administered questionnaire and includes some suggestions and recommendations as to how to solve the problem of anxiety among students.

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

Foreign language learning process has been a topic of discussion for many years since learning a foreign language requires a lot of efforts, strategies and techniques to be followed from both teachers and learners. Most researchers (Horwitz (1986), Sammy (1991), Macintyre (1991) agree that FL research focuses, not only, on improving learning pedagogies and the external factors of FL learners, but also on the internal factors such as sex, age, learning style, learning strategy, motivation and the impact of anxiety.

Moreover, FL teaching programs have shifted from focusing on developing the learners' linguistic competence to developing communicative competence. This, clearly shows the importance of making EFL learners able to communicate with a foreign language without being afraid from expressing their thoughts in different academic settings and social contexts; a fact which will absolutely enhance their oral abilities, and consequently, they will be more active inside the classroom.

In order to obtain a better understanding of the learning process and realize perfect academic achievements, the affective variables that learners bring with them from the environment outside the classroom to the academic settings need to be taken into consideration (Saminy, 1994)[1].

Making a FL learner able to speak English spontaneously is considered as a challenge, and in order to meet this challenge, the affective variables need to be investigated to simplify the process of learning and speaking. Anxiety is one of these affective factors that need to be studied because of its negative influence on learners' oral performance.

This chapter reviews literature on anxiety and its impact on the FL learning process. It gives some background to FL anxiety and studies its types. It also investigates the teacher/ students' relationship and the impact of teacher's sociability on learners' FL learning. Furthermore, it highlights the psychological flaws in oral English teaching and

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1Cited in (Wei, 2007).

the types of such flaws. Finally, the present chapter shows how anxiety manifests itself in the learners' performance.

1.2 Anxiety

There has been a growing body of research regarding FL learning process and the different sides that may affect this process negatively. Anxiety is considered as an important point in this kind of investigation, since it represents a major obstacle for many FL learners which they need to overcome.

1.2.1 Definition of anxiety

FL Anxiety refers to a set of negative emotions including the feeling of unease, worry and nervousness experienced by an individual. FL anxiety is considered as a reaction of these feelings that any EFL learner may experience during the learning process. Spielberger has agreed on this idea by saying the following; "Anxiety is a kind of troubled subjective feeling in the mind of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (1983)[2].

Furthermore, the same idea has been supported by researchers such as; Dordinejad and Ahamadabad, that FL anxiety is an important factor that influences one's level of achievement in FL anxiety learning. In other words FL anxiety is different from a general feeling of anxiety, and therefore, keeps learners from reaching their goals. According to Macintyre and Gardner (1994), FL anxiety is "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language context, including speaking, listening and learning" .This means that FL anxiety can occur if students are exposed to several negative experiences in a FL context.

Many researchers (Horwitz 1986; Scovel, 1978) agree on the fact that FL anxiety may impact the learner's oral performance either positively or negatively. It usually has a positive impact when the learner experiences moderate anxiety i.e., easy anxiety which will facilitate oral performance and lead to better results; in contrast, the result will be negative if the learner has severe anxiety, that kind of anxiety which causes a bad influence on the learners' oral expression.

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[2] **Cited in (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986 :125).**

1.2.2 Types of anxiety

Researchers agree that anxiety is classified into three types: State anxiety, Situation- specific anxiety and Trait anxiety. State anxiety refers to a temporary condition in response to some perceived threat. It describes the experience of unpleasant feelings when confronted with specific situations, demands or a particular object or event. It arises when the person makes a mental assessment of some type of threat. "State Anxiety may negatively influence FL learning and learners' performance, as it can interfere with their learning, social, and emotional development" (Salkind, 2008:38).

Situation-specific anxiety is also another type of anxiety which focuses on the situations where anxiety is found. As Macintyre and Gardner (1991:90) said "Situation anxiety can be considered as trait anxiety which is restricted to a specific context; this perspective examines anxiety reaction in a well defined situation such as public speaking during tests, when solving mathematics problems or in a foreign language class". This means that situation-spesific anxiety refers to the apprehension experienced by EFL learners in oral expression skills in some learning contexts.

The third type of anxiety is trait anxiety, it is like state anxiety, since it arises in response to perceived threat, but it differs in its intensity, duration and the range of situations in which it occurs. As Macintyre and Gardner (1991:87) describe "Trait anxiety refers to a more permanent feeling of anxiety"

1.2.3 Components of anxiety

Researchers indicate that anxiety has a negative effect on students' performance in oral English; it is a serious problem in EFL classrooms and can be attributed to a complex set of reasons. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:.27) describe anxiety in relation to three performance anxieties: Communication apprehension (CA, for short), test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

1.2.3.1 Communication apprehension

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:127-128) define communication apprehension as:

> A type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people…, the special communication apprehension permeating FL learning derived from the personal knowledge that one will almost certainly have difficulty understanding others and making oneself understood.

Communication apprehension refers to the anxiety experienced in speaking or listening to other individuals. In other words, most EFL learners feel anxious when they are asked to perform in front of an audience using a FL, and this occurs because of lack of control of oral communication (Macintyre and Gardner, 1991). Communication apprehension is considered as a major factor in foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA, for short) because communication is the pillar of any FL learning process, and students usually find difficulties in expressing their thoughts and feelings using a FL.

1.2.3.2 Test anxiety

Test anxiety is another significant factor that affects EFL learners in the learning process. It was defined by Gordon and Sarason as "a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure".(1955)[3].Furthermore, this fear of exams foster an intimidating atmosphere for students. Since the previous research explored the negative impact of test anxiety on EFL learners' oral performance; it was essential for this study to tackle this particular cause of anxiety.

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[3] **Cited in (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986: 127).**

1.2.3.3 Fear of negative evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is that type of anxiety which is associated with learners' perception of how others see them, may negatively affect their FL ability. Students usually experience a kind of fear that comes as a result of being negatively evaluated by someone else (instructors, classmates, etc). According to some researchers such as; Leary, this fear arises from the prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings. This means that fear of negative evaluation is not related only to test situations, but it can occur in any evaluative situation.

A considerable number of investigators believe that CA, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are not the only factors that provoke anxiety in EFL classrooms. However, FL anxiety is more than that; it is everything related to the classroom from beliefs, feelings and behaviours.

1.3 Teacher-students relationship

This section is considered as an essential part for our research, since the relationship between the teacher and the students in the learning setting has a big impact on the learners, this impact may be either positive or negative, depending on the kind of the relationship they have.

1.3.1 The impact of teacher's sociability on students' foreign language learning process

Learning is a social and interpersonal process where teachers and students communicate with each other and build their own relationship, a relationship which can affect the learning process either negatively or positively. Collins and Green (1992), as cited in Marisa and Ryberg, (2004:3) explain the following:

> Together, teachers and students develop and evolve a social
> structure that establishes social norms, permissible
> behaviours, interpersonal relationships, etc. In this context
> of social interaction, participants foster the learning process

through social exchanges (such as give and receive feedback, guidance, encouragement, etc).

To be a FL teacher demands a lot of teaching methods, strategies, and activities to be followed in order to reach a good result, but good teaching does not include only the ability to transmit knowledge to students, since it also includes the ability of making students interested and motivated towards the learning process, Specifically, when students are exposed to positive emotional stimuli, they are better able to recall newly learned information (Nielson and Lorber, 2009:1).

In FL learning process, the relationship between students and teachers is very important. It is the starting point towards success i.e., by having a supportive relationship with students, teachers can offer students chances to be motivated towards the learning process, they will also feel protected and comfortable. This sense of security will create a safe and supportive environment suitable for acquiring a second language (SL, for short). Hargreaves states that:

> Good teaching is charged with positive emotions. It is not just a matter knowing one's subject, being efficient, having correct competencies, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are not just well oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy.
>
> (ibid, 1994: 835)

1.3.1.1 Stages of foreign language learning

Researchers have long been concerned with the study of the relationship between anxiety and language. They have also thrown light on the three stages of language learning, input, processing, and output. In other words, they have found that foreign language anxiety (FLA, for short) interferes with language learning; for this reason it is important to know how FL anxiety affects students 'oral performance.

1.3.1.1.1 Input

It is the first stage in language learning, and it refers to the part where language is acquired. Input anxiety refers also to the anxiety experienced by the learners when they encounter a new word or phrase in the target language. Macintyre reminds us that,

> Language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage, and retrieval processes, and anxiety can interfere with each one of these by creating a divided attention scenario for anxious students. Anxious students are focused on both the task at hand and their reactions to it. For example, when responding to a question in a class, the anxious student is focused on answering the teacher's question and evaluating the social implications of the answer while giving it.

(Ibid,1994: 96)

In other words, if anxiety occurs at this stage, internal reaction will distract with the learners 'attention to their state of fear and discomfort which causes miscomprehension of the message sent by the teacher, and this may lead to the loss of unsuccessful communication and increased level of anxiety. As a result, the role of the teacher at this stage becomes significant.

1.3.1.1.2 Processing

This stage refers to the part of language learning where the performing cognitive operations for new information took place. In other words, this stage refers to the time when the information acquired took place in the student's brain. According to Macintyre and Gardner "[…] high level of processing anxiety may reduce ability to understand messages, or to learn new vocabulary items in the target language" (1994:285).Some other psychologists see that at this stage anxiety interferes with the learner's cognitive tasks, that is why they should pay attention at first to any linguistic aspect they want to understand by using cognitive sources in processing information.

1.3.1.1.3 Output

The last stage is the output stage of learning. Anxiety is more likely to appear clearer at this stage, because it is reflected in the learners' performance, and it is the

teacher's role to help the learners overcome this obstacle. Studies show that language anxiety is negatively correlated with students' oral performance. Philips (1992) asserts that highly anxious students are likely to have lower oral performance in contrast to their relaxed counterparts.

1.4 The psychological problems in oral English teaching

While teaching a FL, teachers may face some difficulties in getting an appropriate progress from the students' learning process. When learning or acquiring a second language, students are likely to make some mistakes and fail in developing some skills, such us speaking, writing, etc. In order to hide certain mistakes, they build a wall to hide behind, in order to protect their own pride and self-esteem, this wall in FL learning process is defined as psychological barriers which represent a serious obstacle for teachers to improve learners' oral performance.

1.4.1Types of psychological problems

The majority of FL learners exhibit some problems regarding language learning. They show a kind of stress in certain areas of language learning, and this affects the academic achievement negatively. Even if students are interested in learning English, they show certain flaws in various language skills, especially speaking (Anagha Jayan, 2017).

In the next section, the main psychological barriers in OET will be discussed.

1.4.1.1 Self-abasement

From the psychological point of view, self-abasement is associated with shame and as Guang and Liang (2007: 54) Point out, "self-abasement students have almost no self-confidence and they hardly believe in their ability to speak English or face teachers, classmates and any sort of audience".

1.4.1.2 Pride

Pride is defined as an emotion that requires the development of a sense of self. FL learners give much importance to their self- image and the way others see and evaluate them. In fact, when they are anxious, their self-esteem is threatened. So, they often choose to speak a little, or to keep silent in the classroom just to avoid making mistakes and be mocked at by others in oral English communication (Guang and Liang, 2007:50).

1.4.1.3 Fear of difficulty

FL learners view communication in English as a hard task to accomplish, because they find difficulties in expressing themselves in a FL. Guang and Liang (2007: 54) state that "students who fear difficulty do see oral English communicative skills as being really hard to improve". As a result, they cannot successfully communicate in English owing to great psychological pressure and lack of self-confidence, and this is clearly noticed in their tendency to avoid facing the difficulties involved in oral English by frequently missing class.

1.5 The impact of anxiety on students' oral performance

The impact of anxiety on EFL students' oral performance has been and still the main concern of many researchers, such as (Horwiz, Macintyre, Spielberger,etc) who have used various instruments to test the degree of anxiety and they have had in return a mixture of results concerning this issue.

Moreover, "anxiety has potential negative effects at different levels; one of these levels is the learner's academic performance level; for example, bad oral subject grades" (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986:28). Anxiety, then, is considered as a serious obstacle to a better functioning of the learner's oral capacities.

Most researchers in the field of language education and psychology confirm that FL anxiety has been almost entirely associated with the oral aspects of language use. This means that FL speaking is the most anxiety provoking aspect for most learners, followed by listening as opposed to reading and writing.

According to previous research in FL learners, face difficulties in oral expression i.e., they feel anxious and afraid when they present something orally in front of an audience. They often feel that they are representing themselves badly or showing only a small part of their real personality and intelligence.

1.6 Manifestation of anxiety on students

Anxiety affects EFL students mainly in oral settings where they are supposed to speak English publically. According to Micheal (as cited in Salkind, 2008:40), there are some common features across the different types of anxiety among EFL learners. These common features of anxiety include escape and avoidance behaviours, chronic worry, faulty threat perception, and activation of the nervous system.

Anxious students' main concern in oral expression settings is to avoid or escape any situation that provokes anxiety; there is also the faulty threat perception and as mentioned earlier, another feature of anxiety that is found among anxious learners. This kind of learners perceives situations that provoke anxiety as threatening. In addition to this, the psychological body of learners' changes when they feel anxious and this is what is known as nervous system activation which is a core feature of anxiety. As a result, students may experience heart beat, sweating, shaking, facial expressions and increased respiration.

According to Krinis (2007:1), anxiety can have physical, emotional and behavioural manifestations which can differ from one individual to another. Sweat, quick heart beat, worry, lack of concentration, forgetfulness, short answer responses, and avoidance behaviours, for instance; missing class, refusing to speak or remaining silent, and coming to class unprepared are FL anxiety' manifestations that have been listed by Krinis (ibid).

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have reviewed some literature concerning FL anxiety and its role in FL learning process. It is obvious that anxiety has a negative effect on EFL learners, the main reason why we have tried, in this chapter, to highlight the types of anxiety and its main components; namely, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. All these have negative impacts on learners' oral performance.

The chapter has also discussed the teacher-students' relationship and the way teachers' sociability affects the FL learning process, along with the stages of FL learning with relation to anxiety. Then, in order to explain the difficulties in oral English teaching, the chapter has included the types of psychological problems that both students and teachers may face in the learning process. Moreover, we have tried to throw light on the impact of anxiety on students 'oral performance. Finally, the chapter has dealt with the common features of anxiety i.e., the way anxiety can be clearly seen among EFL learners.

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Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction

A FL learning process demands a great amount of comprehension and collaboration between teachers and students. To make this process successful, the relationship between these two partners needs to be taken into consideration, since it may affect learners' engagement in the classroom.

In this chapter, we will firstly, introduce teachers' sociability in EFL classrooms and the way it can impact the FL learning process through reducing FL anxiety. We will also discuss some manifestations of teachers' sociability, namely, social interactions, listening, understanding, and knowing students. Then, learners 'engagement in EFL classrooms will be introduced as a significant point along with the different types of engagement, such as; behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Finally, we will explore the impact of motivation and self-confidence on learners' engagement by throwing light on the above cited terms.

2.2 Teachers' sociability in EFL classrooms

The environment where a foreign language is learned is considered as a place where various things may happen between teachers and students; these things, in fact build the relationship between the teachers and their students. Teachers' sociability -or what is known as social interactions with students-is the starting point of a good relationship that may affect the FL learning process positively. Therefore, this will be clearly investigated in the following section.

2.2.1 Definition of sociability

Learning is based on social and interpersonal processes between teachers and students. In this line of thought, the teaching/learning process is constituted on a social process of communication that occurs in the academic setting. Therefore, the academic setting is a place where teachers and students' personalities are clearly set up with the goals they want to achieve in the learning setting.

In other words, the social interactions and behaviours that occur in the EFL learning setting lead to a construction of a relationship, which might be a close

interpersonal relationship especially when the teacher adopts more affective, humanistic, and social behaviours, such as; knowing students, understanding, caring, etc.

Researchers such as, Sanson, Hamphil, and Smart (2004) and Harkin, Turner, and Dawn's (2001:82-84) agree that teachers' sociability refers to the positive social behaviour that teachers show towards their students in the academic settings.

2.2.2 The role of sociability in reducing FL anxiety

It is generally believed that good communication between teachers and students in EFL classrooms leads to good results, since effective cooperation between instructors and learners provides a suitable atmosphere for learning and students will undoubtly feel comfortable, a fact which raises their motivation towards learning. Hargreaves (1994: 835) says in this respect; "Good teachers are not just well oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their work and classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy".

From this quote, we may deduce that teachers' enthusiasm, feeling of energetic interest, and their constant support provided to their students leads to an effective teaching and consequently, a positive relationship will be established, as a result of this relationship, students will be provided with an appropriate, positive, and supporting environment for learning.

As already stated, teachers' sociability affects in one way or another FL learning process, since it helps the EFL learners to become less anxious and more comfortable, and as a result, the level of anxiety in the FL setting will be reduced and students' engagement will be raised.

2.2.2.1 Social interactions

As mentioned earlier, teachers' sociability refers to positive behaviours teachers use with their students. These positive behaviours are not related to the teachers' methodologies; but rather, to the teachers' way of teaching which may vary from one teacher to another.

Social interactions with students is the core of teachers' sociability, since it enables teacher to be close to students, this provides the teacher the opportunity to know students' level, and the ability to know what suits the students better. This way, the teaching/learning process will be more appropriate for both teachers and students, and will lead to good results at the level of students learning, and as Stronge (2007:24) reminds us "Teachers-learners social interactions give the teacher opportunities to demonstrate caring, enthusiasm, empathy, and fairness".

Thus, establishing a positive relationship with students leads to positive effects, since it motivates students and makes them feel comfortable, it raises their engagement and reduces the level of anxiety. This summarizes what is known as effective teaching.

Many researchers, such as (Brookhart and Loadmran, 1992; Peart and Campbell, 1999, and Kohn, 1996) agree that effective teaching is related to social interactions, since effective teachers are those who behave in a friendly and personal manner; they interact with their students and work with them directly. Moreover, they do not hesitate in introducing some of humour from time to time.

2.2.2.2 Caring and listening

In the context of education, there is a strong link between teachers and students. Caring and listening are considered as significant points to build a supportive relationship between the two partnerships.

In other words, it is important for teachers to listen to their students' ideas, not only those related to learning, but also those ideas which are related to topics outside the lesson frame, since this will show teachers' caring towards their students.

This idea has been supported by Stronge who mentions "Caring teachers have a sympathetic attentiveness for their learners' authentic voices" (2007:23). According to him, "caring is an act of bringing out the best in students through affirmation and encouragement" (ibid: 22).This means that caring teachers do not care about their students only in the classroom but also about students' lives in general.

A teacher who develops individual relationships with students tends to take the learning atmosphere to another level, where comfort and understanding exist, and positive emotions are experienced by both teachers and students. Thus, caring and listening are two important pillars that FL learning is based on, since this process does not only focus on transmitting knowledge to learners, but, it needs a comfortable environment for learning, where students feel relaxed and ready to interact and be engaged with their teachers. This means that students who perceive their teachers as caring, are more interested in the learning content, and this is considered as a first step towards success, since in the learning process, no improvement can be realized if students are not interested.

2.2.2.3 Understanding

Another component of teachers' sociability is understanding. Where caring and listening are important strategies, understanding is, in fact, a significant behaviour that effective teachers show towards their students. It is important for EFL teachers to understand students' needs inside class, since this is going to help in facilitating the teaching process.

In this view, Stronge (2007: 23) says: "students value teachers' understanding of their concerns and questions". This means that FL learners prefer teachers who listen to their concerns and understand their problems; they also want teachers who share with them their own personal lives and experiences. Through this teachers show humanity and a deep understanding towards them.

2.2.2.4 Knowing students

Besides social interactions, caring, listening and understanding, knowing students is the four point which is going to be investigated in the following lines. Stronge (ibid: 24) argues that "knowing students both formally and informally has a pervasive positive impact on learners' personality and learning".

In this sense, effective teaching demands keeping lines of communication with students open, i.e., it is not enough to understand students' learning style and needs only, but, it is also necessary for a teacher to know students' personality.

Similarly, Glasser (1992:48)[1] states: "the better students know the teacher, and the more they like what they know, the harder they will work for him or her" This means that teachers have to care about their students first as human beings, and then as students.

2.3 Learners' engagement

Keeping students engaged is one of the most important pillars for academic success. Shulman reminds us the following "learning begins with students' engagement" (2002:37)[2]. This means that students' engagement is necessary for learning, since their engagement refers to their concentration, interest and motivation towards the course.

Generally, academic settings and especially FL settings require students' engagement, i.e., to improve oral abilities, it is important for FL students to be engaged with the teacher during the learning session since their engagement represents an important part of their academic success and achievements in general.

2.3.1 Engagement types

This section is concerned with the different types of engagement. According to Fredrick, Bloomfield, and Paris (2004)[3], learners' engagement falls under three types: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive. In this line of thought, Revee explains engagement types as follows,

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[1] **Cited in (Erwin Jonathan,2004 :47)**
[2] **Cited in (Barkley, 2010 :4)**
[3] **Cited in (Marzano, 2007 :99)**

Engagement includes on-task behaviour , but it further highlights the central role of students' emotion, cognition, and voice… when engagement is characterized by the full range of on-tasck behaviour, positive emotions, invested cognition, and personal voice, it functions as the engine for learning and development.

(ibid 2006:658).

2.3.1.1 Behavioural engagement

Behavioural engagement refers to the efforts that students show towards their studies in the learning setting. It covers students' observable behaviours; their participation and interaction in FL academic settings. In other words, behavioural engagement can be measured by learners' hard work in the classroom, that is to say how much an EFL learner interacted with the teacher during the learning session.

2.3.1.2 Emotional engagement

Another type of engagement is emotional engagement; this kind of engagement includes personal interest and positive emotions that students experience while receiving a course. This means that besides behavioural engagement, students also show their emotional engagement, i.e., when they are emotionally interacted, they show how much they like and appreciate what the teacher gives them, however, if students are not emotionally interacted, they will experience negative emotions and these emotions are going to be clearly reflected on them through the absence of their engagement.

2.3.1.3 Cognitive engagement

Cognitive engagement is the potential involvement of the learners' mental activities and higher order thinking strategies in the learning context. This type of engagement is considered as a significant one, since students cannot have a deep learning if they do not have full cognitive engagement. In the same view, Feryal

(2008:151) explains "[…] when learners are fully engaged with the material at a deeper level, they are likely to come to understand it better".

2.4 The impact of motivation and self-confidence on learners' engagement

Learners' engagement in the classroom may be influenced in various ways. In this section, we will try to explore the way motivation and self-confidence impacts students' engagement in the learning setting.

We have chosen motivation and self- confidence as two key concepts to be related to students' engagement, because they are mainly regarded as a main concern in a FL learning process. Students who have a higher level of motivation and self-confidence are likely to be more engaged with the teacher, whereas, students who have a lack of motivation and self-confidence tend to be less engaged in the learning setting.

Generally, motivated and self-confident learners are those who do not feel anxious during the course, they seem to be relaxed and free from any kind of negative emotions that may prevent them from showing interest towards learning, being behaviourally, emotionally and cognitively engaged with the instructor, or showing a good oral performance. On the other hand, students who do not feel confident and motivated, tend to face the flaw of anxiety which stands as an obstacle in the way of their academic success.

As it has been explained previously, motivation and self-confidence may have a significant impact on the students' engagement as well as on EFL students' oral performance. Therefore, the following section will deal with engagement and motivation.

2.4.1 Engagement and motivation

According to Brophy (2004:4)[4] "motivation is the level of enthusiasm and the degree to which students invest attention and effort in learning". Following this quote, motivation refers to the feeling of interest that makes students want to learn. It is about the desire that students have towards their learning, i.e., how much students are eager to know more about the learning tasks.

Barkley (2010:9) explains, "Motivation is an important theoretical construct for FL learners. It explains the reasons for their engagement in a particular behaviour". In other words, here motivation refers to the learners' acquired competence which has been developed through the accumulation of experience with the learning situation.

The first responsible of students' motivation in the learning setting is the teacher, in other words it is the teacher's role to motivate students. Indeed, learners' motivation can be activated by the teacher through the use of specific teaching strategies and techniques.

In this sence, motivation plays a considerable role in the FL learning process. It raises the level of caring, which helps the learners to be more interested and engaged. This engagement that is caused by motivation is one of the most important components in the success of the FL learning process. Thus, FL learners are in need to this sort of engagement since, it not only helps them overcome FL anxiety but also the more motivated they are, the more engaged they will be.

2.4.2 Engagement and self-confidence

Self confidence refers to self- efficacy; it is one's own confidence that enables him/ her to achieve intended goals .Just like motivation, self- confidence is believed to be related to students' engagement. It is defined by Bandura (1986:391)[5] as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required attaining designated types of performance".

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[4] **Cited in (Barkley, 2010 :9)**
[5] **Cited in (Feryal, 2008 :149)**

Self-confidence helps students in different ways to be engaged with the instructor; this means that confident students are believed to show a kind of comfort and relax in the FL setting. Feryal confirms "self-confidence's role in the learners' behavioural engagement is that anxious students with low self-esteem are less likely to exert efforts in FL learning and they may even give up" (ibid, 2008: 51). In other words, the more self confidence students have, the more they are engaged and the more they are engaged, the more they learn, and the better they perform , which means that students' engagement cannot be realized without being students confident in their own abilities.

Being confident is the starting point towards a good performance; students need to be confident first, then, they can achieve their work. In this sense, Bandura suggests, "individuals first develop a sense of competence or efficacy at an activity then they do it" (ibid, 1997). This clearly shows how important it is for EFL learners to have confidence in their own competences, since it is going to facilitate their engagement by overcoming the different negative emotions related to anxiety.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have firstly introduced the students-teacher relationship and its impact on learners' engagement. After, we have attempted to explore the importance of teachers' sociability in the EFL classroom. We have also identified the term sociability in relation to some scholars' view points as well as the role of teachers' sociability in reducing FL anxiety along with social interactions, caring and listening, understanding, and knowing students.

This chapter has also discussed, learners' engagement and its different types: such as behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement. In addition to this, we have thrown light on the impact of motivation and self-confidence on learners' engagement, where the terms motivation and self-confidence have been discussed seperately in relation to engagement.

The next chapter will be devoted to the analysis and the interpretation of the data gathered from the first year English students in Belhadj Buchaib university center, and the oral expression teachers through two different questionnaires.

Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the practical part of this research work, which is about anxiety and its impact on EFL learning process, and how can teachers' sociability interfere in this situation making a positive change.

The present chapter includes the methodology followed in this study, and the sample chosen for our investigation. It also presents the tools that have been used in this research work and which consist of two different questionnaires, along with the data collected. These data will be analyzed in order to obtain a general view about EFL students' anxiety.

The first questionnaire is administered to the first year students of English and the second one is destinated to the teachers of oral expression in the English department at Belhadj Bouchaib University Centre.

3.2 Sample Population

The participants of this study consist of 50 first year LMD students of English and three teachers of oral expression. The reason behind this choice lies in the fact that first year EFL students usually face flaws when they come from the secondary school, and where teachers do not focus much on improving their pupils' oral abilities, and as such, they feel what is known as anxiety. In other words, they become unable to express their thoughts and feelings easily in front of an audience using a FL. Besides this, since teachers' sociability is a significant factor in this study, it was really important to gather data from oral expression teachers, in order to notice the impact of their social interactions with their students on their oral performance.

3.3 The research method

As already stated, to achieve the goals of this research work, data were collected using two different questionnaires; the first one was administered to the students and the second was given to the teachers of oral expression. The real aim of the study was not openly presented to the students, so that their responses could not be biased by the researcher's goals.

We have also chosen the qualitative method for this research work. This consists of gathering data using forms with general, emerging questions to permit the participants to generate responses and gathering information from a small number of individuals or sites. The qualitative method has been used to better understand the various phenomena under investigation, as it provides the researcher with responses that will best help understand the research questions.

3.4 Research Instruments

The data in this study were gathered from first year LMD students and teachers of oral expression (OET).These data were analyzed by us. Two questionnaires were used as a research tool in this thesis; the first one was given to students and it aims to collect data from the respondents, focusing mainly on the impact of anxiety on their oral performance, as well as its main sources to gain final results that may measure the validity of our hypotheses and lead us to obtain answers to our research questions.

The second questionnaire has been administered to the teachers of oral expression in our English department. This questionnaire is based on questions that investigate the relationship between teachers and their students in the learning setting, and the way this relationship can have a positive effect on the students' oral performance.

3.4.1 Students' questionnaire

A questionnaire including 12 questions was given to the first year LMD students (LMD1) in order to examine their anxiety sources and how can this anxiety affect their oral abilities. The questionnaire is divided into 3 parts; the first part is about students' personal information, the second part includes questions that are related to students' anxiety in the oral expression session, and the third one presents the kind of teacher that students prefer, a fact they believe could help them making a progress in their oral expression capacities.

3.4.2 Teachers' questionnaire

The second questionnaire was devoted to OET in the department of English; it contains eight questions. It is also divided into two parts; the first part consists of two questions on the social background of the teachers, and the second part which encompassed of six questions aims to gather information about the strategies, the methods and the styles each teacher uses to present a course of oral expression.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data gathered from the instruments are analyzed in a logical, coherent, and statistical way. Graphic and table representations will be clearly demonstrated below, along with explanation of the data gathered.

3.5.1 Results from the students' questionnaire

The first year EFL students were tackled to answer this questionnaire and, then deliver it to the researcher. The purpose of this questionnaire is, to gather the different opinions of students about their oral capacities, and how can anxiety prevent them from showing an accurate oral performance, in addition to how the manner of teaching oral expression affects the learning process.

For the purpose of having background information about the first year EFL students, the two following questions were asked.

Question 1: How old are you?
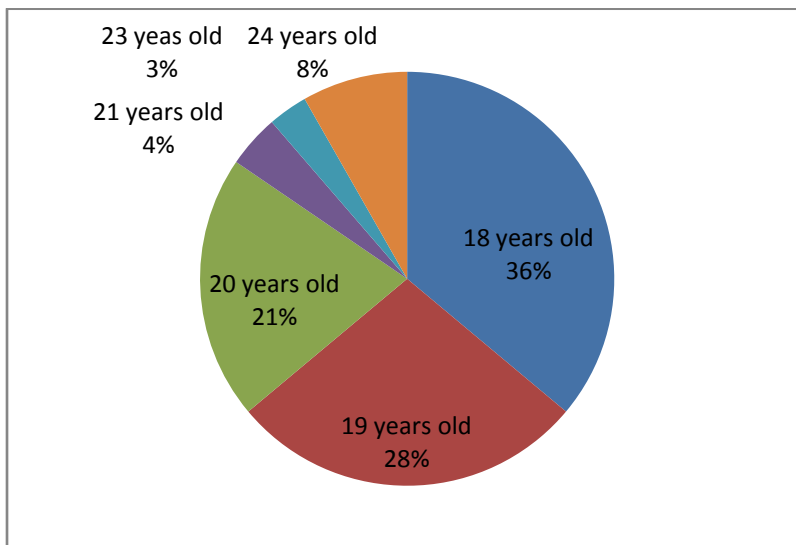
Pie chart 3.1: Students' age.

From the results of the first pie chart, it is clear enough that there is a diversity concerning students' age. All of them are considered as teenagers whose age is between 17 and 24 years old out of fifty. The majority of them are 18 years old and they represent 35% from the whole sample population while the minority of the students are between 17 and 23 years old. Those who are 19 years old represent 27% , and 20% refers to the students whose age is 20 years old; students who are 24 years old and who believed to be the older participants in our study represent 8% of our sample population.

Question 2: Are you male or female?

Males 5% **Ventes**
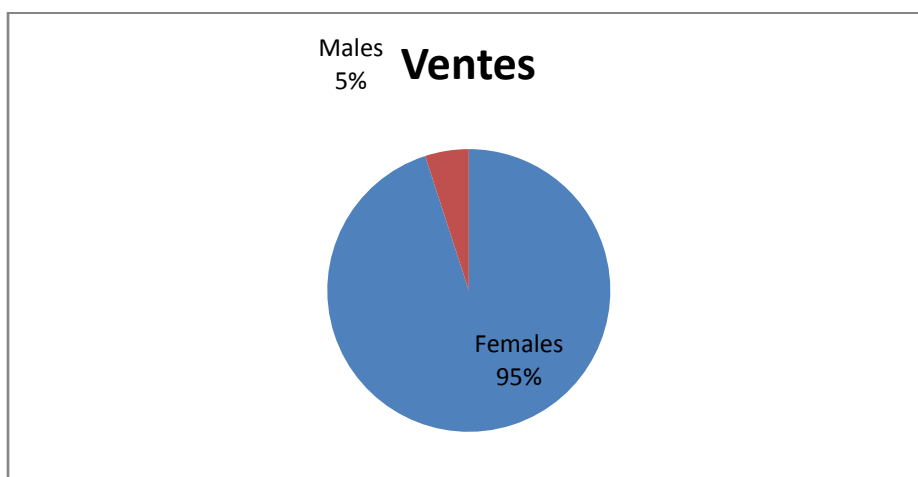
Females 95%

Pie chart 3.2: Students' gender.

The second figure shows that most participants in our sample population are females. Females represent 95% of the whole sample, whereas males represent only 5% of the whole population, which means that girls are more interested in learning a FL than males.

To investigate the level of anxiety in oral classroom settings six questions were posed:

Question 3: What were your marks in the subject of oral expression during the first semester?

(15-20) 5%   (5-10) 11%

(10-15) 84%
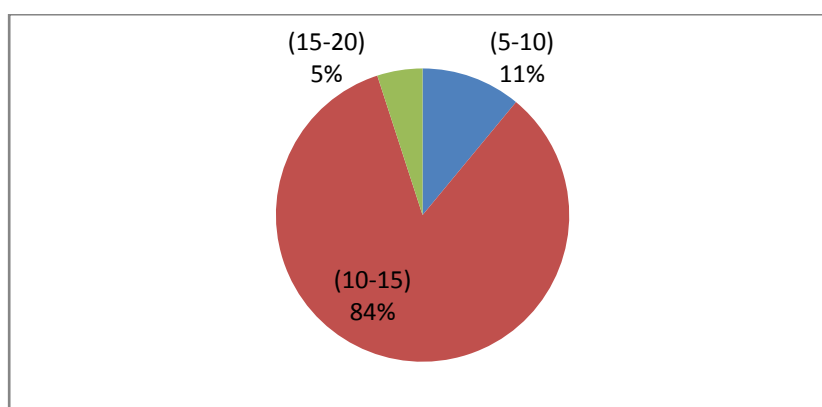
Pie chart 3.3: Students' oral expression marks during the first semester.

The pie chart above shows that 84% of the sample population have got between 10 and 15 pts on 20 in the oral expression subject, and 5% had marks between 15 and 20 while the rest who represent 11% , have got from 5 to 10 pts on 20. These results show that LMD1 students' level is not really bad since the majority had marks above 10.

Question 4: What is your opinion as regards the learning of English at university?
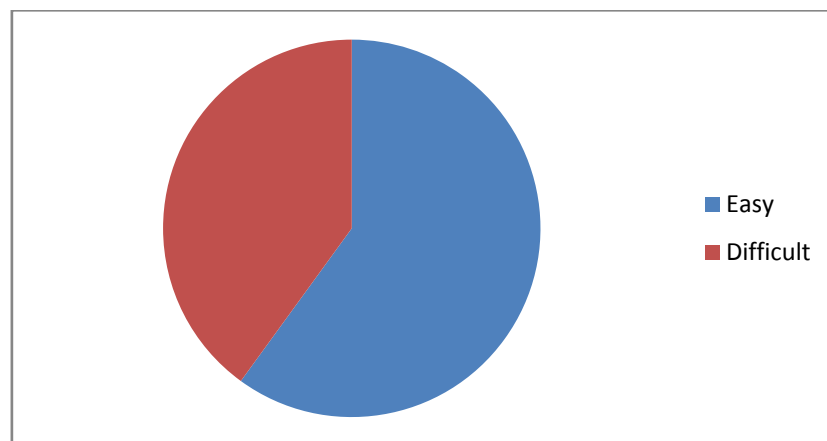
Pie chart 3.4: Students' opinion about learning English at university.

The pie chart above reveals that 60% of the whole sample thought that learning English as a FL at university is easy; however 30% of the students viewed that learning English is difficult.

Question 5: Do you like attending oral expression subject?
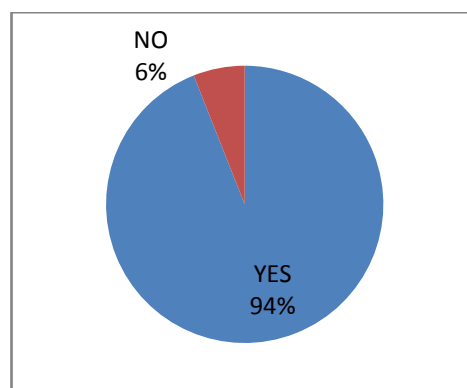
Pie chart 3.5: Students' attendance in the oral expression subject.

Table 3.5 Students' attendance in the oral expression subject (Students' justification).

Options	Number	%	Justification
Yes	47	94 %	-Because I like speaking English. -Because I enjoy attending this module. -Because I like the teacher. -Because it helps us improving our oral capacities.
No	3	6%	-Because it is a boring subject. -Because I don't like the way of teaching. -No answer.

Interestingly, the majority of the students 95% liked attending the oral expression session because, as it was mentioned in their justifications above, oral expression subject is an opportunity for them where they can express their thoughts and feelings; however just a few of them 6% said that they do not like the oral expression subject which means that most of the students do not have problems in attending the oral expression session.

Question 6: Have you tried to speak English publically (outside the lesson frame)?
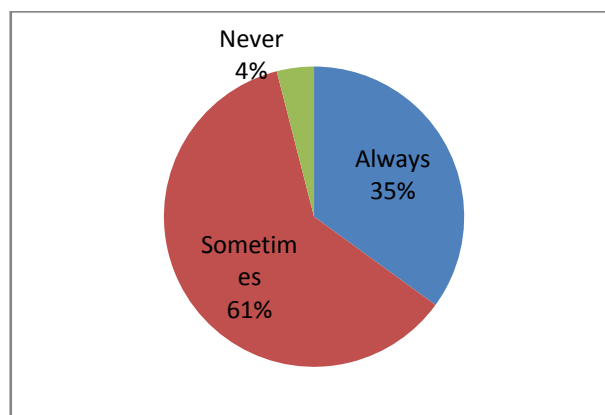
Pie chart 3.6: Students' use of English.

The results above show that 36 students who represent 61% of the whole sample population use English outside the classroom, but from time to time and 12 among them, i.e., 35% of said that they always use it outside the lesson frame. And only 2 students answered that they never i.e., they do not use English publically at all. According to the results obtained from the second question, we found out that students who tend to use always English are among those who said that learning English at university is quite easy; however, those whose answer was 'never', belong to the category of students who found English as a difficult subject.

Question 7: Do you feel confident when you speak English?
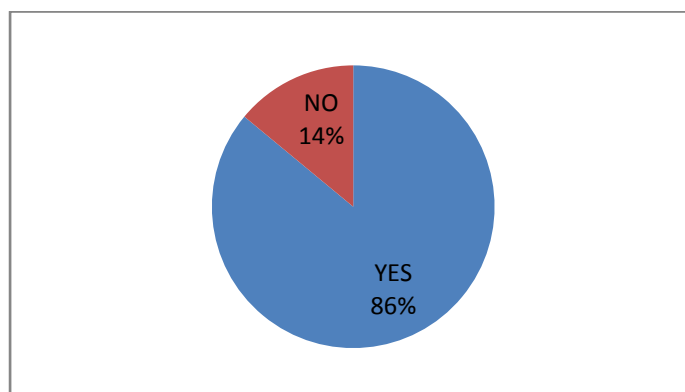
Pie chart 3.7: Students' feelings towards English speaking.

Students' answers concerning this question varied from one to another; a group of 43 students who represent 86% of the sample population said that they feel confident when they speak English, whereas, only 7 students said that they do not feel confident when they speak English, and they represent 14% of the whole sample chosen for this investigation

Question 8: How do you feel when you speak English in front of your classmates?
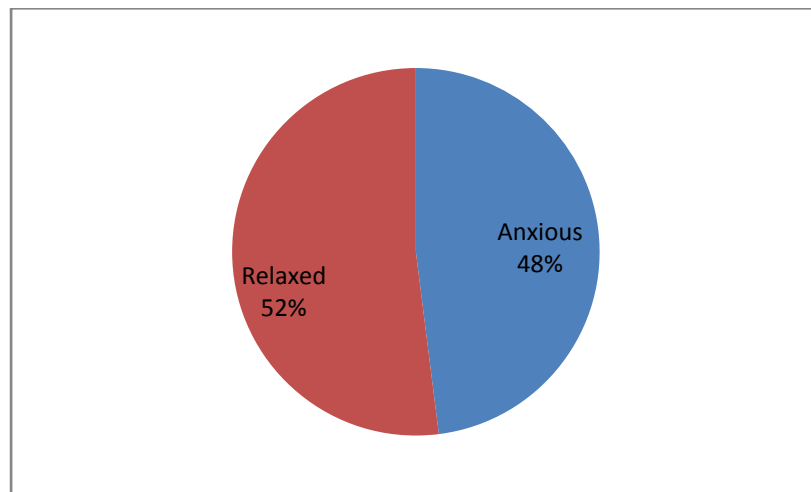
Pie chart 3.8: Students' anxiety.

The above pie chart reveals that the students are divided into two groups, those who felt anxious when they speak English in front of their classmates, and those who felt relaxed; interestingly, the results were almost similar, since 48% of the sample population revealed that they feel anxious; however 52% said they feel relaxed when using English in front of their classmates.

Question 9: As an EFL learner, what do you prefer?

a) Preparing yourself before doing an oral expression exam.

b) Doing the exam directly without preparation.
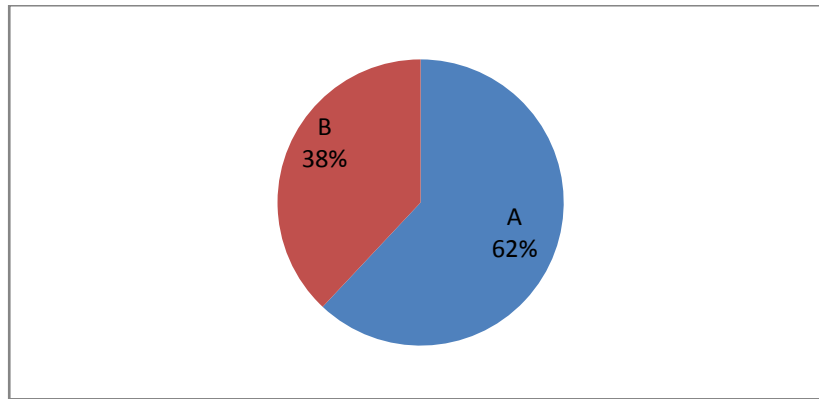
Pie chart 3.9: Students' preference when having an oral expression exam.

The pie chart shows that the majority of the students prefer being prepared before having an oral expression exam (OE, for short), they are 31 students who represent 62% from the sample population; whereas 19 students represent 38% prefer doing the exam directly without any preparation. This shows that our learners show a kind of fear from being negatively evaluated by their instructors or making mistakes while speaking English.

To figure out which type of oral expression teachers do student like, the following questions were asked.

Question 10: Do you like your teacher's method when teaching the oral expression subject?
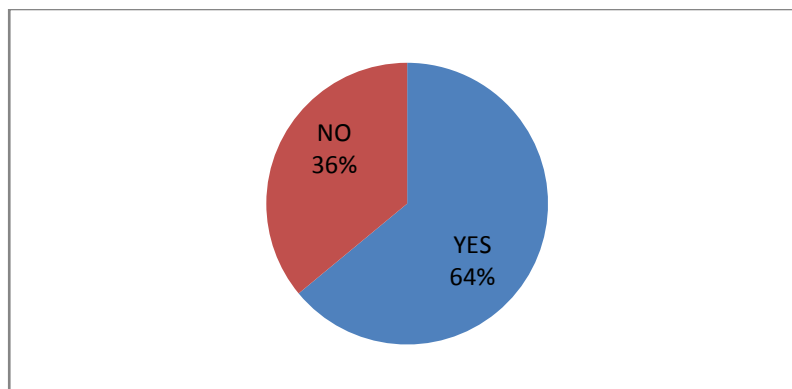
Pie chart 3.10: Students' opinion about the oral expression teaching method.

The pie chart above shows that most students, represent 64% from gave with a positive answer to our question; this means that the majority of them like the oral

expression teaching method used by their teacher, while the rest who consist of only 16 students, i.e., 36% from the sample do not like the teaching method employed by their teacher of oral expression.

Question11: Does the teacher's way of teaching affect your oral performance?
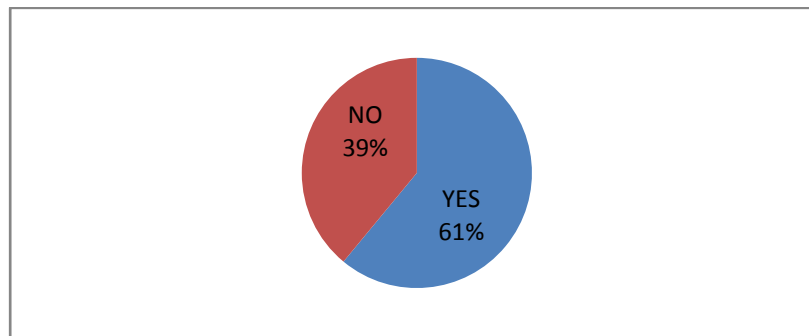
Pie chart 3.11: Oral expression teaching method impact on students' oral performance.

The results in the pie chart above reveal that 35 of the total number of our participants representing 61%, answered 'YES' i.e., they agreed that their teacher's way of teaching impacts their oral performance either positively or negatively, in other words, the method gives a positive impact when it is suitable for the learners, and vice versa; it also shows a negative impact when the teaching method does not match with the learners' needs. On the other hand, 15 students, 39% answered "NO". This leads us to suppose that this particular category of students, are either confident about their oral abilities, and find their teachers' way of teaching has no impact on their oral performance, or that the teaching method used by their teacher does not have a positive impact on their oral abilities since they do not feel any kind of progress.

Question 12: How do you want your oral expression teacher to be?

The aim of the last question included in this questionnaire was to know the different characteristics that students want their teacher to have, and following the aim, the students were asked to give five characteristics, to describe how their oral expression teacher needs to be.

From the answers obtained, it seems that most of the learners prefer their oral expression teacher to be first sociable i.e., they want their teacher to be friendly with

them, funny, and helpful. Moreover, they prefer their oral expression teacher to be serious, and a hard worker being able to provide them with the necessary knowledge and the techniques they need to improve their oral capacities. Furthermore, they want their teacher to be fair. Here, we have quote some of their answers. They said: "we need a teacher who gives all the students an opportunity to speak during the session; we need a teacher who does not judge on our performance directly".

3.5.2 Results from the teachers' questionnaire

The second questionnaire in this study was administered to the oral expression teachers of English department working at Belhadj Bouchaib university centre. The first section in this questionnaire aims to have some background information about our participants, and it includes the following questions.

Question 1: Is this your first experience as a teacher at university?
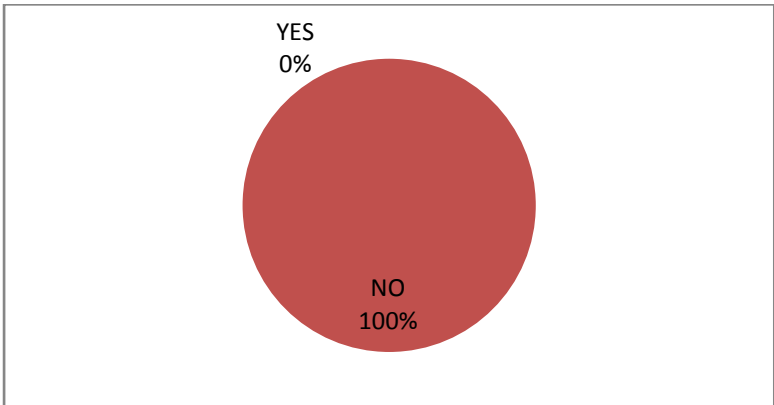
Pie chart 3.12: teachers' experience at university.

The results above show that all the teachers questioned for this inquiry have an earlier experience of teaching at university. The second section in our questionnaire is about teaching oral expression; this part includes 6 questions.

Question 2: Have you taught oral expression earlier?
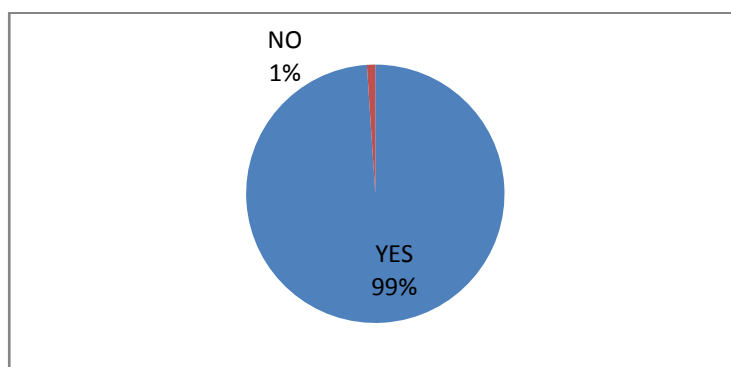
Pie chart 3.13: Teachers' experience in oral expression subject.

As it is shown above, most teachers have an experience in the oral expression subject, i.e., they have taught this subject before, and just one teacher mentioned that he has not taught this subject previously.

Question 3: Do you find difficulties in teaching the subject of oral expression?

Table 3.14 Teachers' difficulties in teaching the oral expression subject.

Options	Number	Teachers' justifications
Yes	02	-Because of the overcrowded classes. -Because of the inadequate materials. -There are no official programmes or syllabus.
No	01	

Question 4: Describe your relationship with your students.

To have information about the kind of relationship our teachers and learners have with each other, we have tried to ask our teachers to describe this relationship and interestingly, their answers were almost the same, they described their relationship

with their students as good, however, only one teacher has given a different answer, mentioning that the relationship with his/her students may vary from time to time, which might be sometimes neutral, friendly, unfriendly, intimate, etc., but still human. Following these results,, it seems that teachers do their best to keep the relationship with their students stable and suitable.

Question 5: Are you sociable with your students?
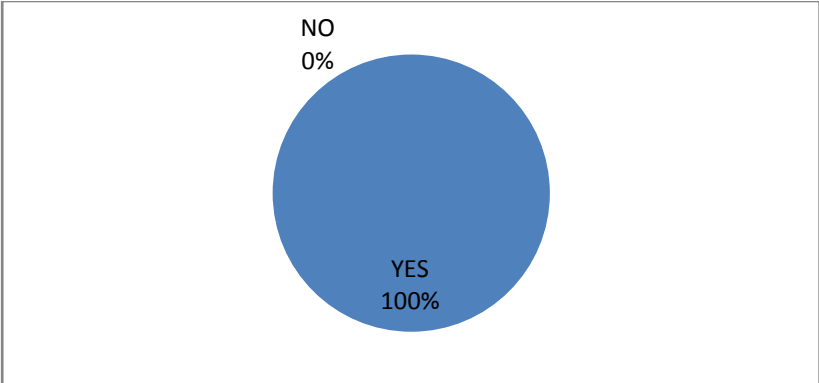
Pie chart 3.15: Teachers' sociability with their students.

The pie chart above shows that all the teachers provided a positive answer, which means that our teachers prefer sharing a kind of sociability with their students in the learning setting. And the table below represents their answers.

Table 3.16: Teachers' justification.

Options	Numbers	Justification
Yes	03	-We need to be sociable from time to time. -We should treat people the way they want. -It helps in improving interaction with students. -It is a question of nature.
No	00	

Question 6: As a teacher of oral expression, which strategies do you usually use to help your students avoid anxiety while speaking English publically?

According to the answers we got from our participants, various strategies may be used by the oral expression teacher to help the learners not to be anxious; these strategies vary from one teacher to another, although they shared the same opinions such as: avoiding correcting the students' mistakes directly and harshly, inviting them to interact, and making them feel at ease.

Question 7: In what ways does your 'sociability' help in improving your students' oral expression capacities?

The last question in this questionnaire based on the significance of teachers' sociability in improving the learners' oral abilities i.e., how can their sociability help the learners showing a good oral performance without being affected by anxiety.

The teachers have provided us with some information that can be summarized in the following two points: First, the sociability of the teachers is necessary in the teaching/learning process because it opens the path to the students to have certain stability and second, when the teacher shows his interest towards his/her students as being humans and treat them as such, he will gain in return their involvement in the class through establishing a relaxing atmosphere.

3.6 General Interpretation

We have decided to use two questionnaires as a tool in this study to get answers for our research questions. By using this tool, we have figured out that FL oral anxiety really exists among the sample we have chosen for the completion of this research work.

Our first questionnaire was devoted to the first year English students in Belhadj Bouchaib university centre. It started with a question from which we wanted to witness   on the level of students in the oral expression subject by asking them about their TD and exam marks during the first semester. Interestingly, the results obtained show that the majority of the students who represent 84% from the whole sample

population, their marks were between 10-15 on 20 and 11% of them got between 5-10 on 20, while only 5% of the students got 15-20 on 20. These marks show that the students' level in oral expression subject is not really bad since the majority got above 10 on 20. Along with these results, their answers for the second and the third question which were about describing English learning at university and attending the oral expression subject confirmed that the majority of the students found English as an easy subject to be learned at university. Moreover, a great number representing 94% provided a positive answer to this question and only a few of them representing 6% said gave a negative answer, which means that our learners do not show any flaws as to the use of English language, particularly in the oral expression session.

In questions 5 and 6, most of students said that they feel confident when they speak English and the minority of them claimed that they do not; their answers for question 5 logically agree with their answers in the 6th question, since those who showed confidence, felt relaxed when they spoke English in front of their classmates, and those who did not feel confident, were anxious while using English in front of an audience; however, there was a group among these students whose answers in question 5 contradicts with their answers in question 6; they claimed that they feel confident when they speak English, while at the same time they feel anxious in front of their classmates, which leads us to the following interpretation: the setting where the FL is spoken by the learners plays an important role in the appearance, as well the disappearance of oral anxiety.

In question7, the findings show that 62% of the learners prefered to prepare themselves before doing an oral expression exam, which means that our learners are afraid from experiencing oral anxiety during their performance. Whereas 38% claimed that they prefer doing the exam directly without preparation; students of this category may be much more confident of their oral capacities.

Furthermore, this study reveals interesting findings in the third part of our questionnaire concerning the teaching method used by oral expression teachers. The findings of the first question in this part show that 64% of the whole sample population like the method used by their oral expression teacher while (36%) of them

said 'no' i.e., they do not like the oral expression teaching method. Consequently, those who mentioned a negative answer feel no progress in their oral performance, and those who gave a positive answer, may either feel comfortable in the learning setting or may like their teacher.

On the other hand, 61% of the learners claimed that the oral expression method used by their teacher impacts their oral performance, while 38% said that it does affect their oral proficiency at all. From these findings, we may deduce that students who claimed that the teaching method affects their oral performance, believe that this impact can be either positive or negative because we cannot ignore that 39% of the learners do not like the teaching method. Finally, in the last question, students were given a chance to describe how they want their oral expression teacher to be, and their answers varied from one learner to another. However, they all shared the same idea, and the results showed that students wanted their oral expression teacher to be at the same time sociable, capable and fair.

The second questionnaire in this study was administered to the oral expression teachers in the department of English; the aim behind this questionnaire was to have an idea about the impact of the relationship between the students and the teachers as two partnerships in this study on the learners' oral performance, in other words, testing whether their sociability affects positively the students' oral capacities.

This questionnaire was divided into two parts; the first part included questions that were related to the teachers' personal information, and as such, a question about the teachers' experience at university was asked. The answers provided showed that all the teachers questioned already had an experience of teaching at university which means that our teachers are quite experienced at the level of university i.e., working with university students is not something new for them.

In the second part of the teachers' questionnaire, 6 questions were included to analyse oral expression teaching. Through question1, we have tried to figure out if our teachers already taught the oral expression subject during the previous years.

The results revealed that almost all the teachers had a previous experience in teaching this particular subject, and the aim behind this question was to know whether this experience in teaching will have an impact on students' learning or not. In question 2, teachers were asked about the kind of difficulties they find while teaching the oral expression subject, and therefore, 2 of teachers claimed that they do not find obstacles in teaching this subject, while one of them said that he sometimes encounter difficulties such as, the lack of adequate materials and overcrowded classes, these kinds of difficulties certainly represent an obstacle for the teachers who want to improve the learners' oral abilities.

Our teachers were also asked to describe the kind of relationship they have with their students in question 3, since it is important for us to know about the kind of relationship students and teachers have in the classroom. And this relationship is considered as a pillar in the enhancement of EFL learners' oral performance. Consequently, teachers agreed on one point which is represented in the fact that their relationship with their students is perfect, because as it was mentioned earlier, teachers are aware of the significance of making this relationship as stable as possible. In question 4, sociability is the key concept, and interestingly enough, all the teachers revealed that they are sociable with their students and the reasons varied from one teacher to another, although they were based on a single view that sociability is really needed in the oral expression subject.

In question 5, we wanted to know about the strategies used by teachers in the classroom to help their students overcome oral expression anxiety. Following this, each teacher had his/her own answer, since each of them had his/her own way in transmitting the message; our teachers agreed that their teaching strategies as regards the oral expression subject aim to improve students' interactions and raise their oral engagement inside the classroom, a situation which may only happen when students feel comfortable and free during the learning session.

Since this study is based on the significance of teachers' sociability in promoting the learners' oral abilities, question 6 was presented to explore in what

ways does this sociability help the EFL learners avoid anxiety and improve their oral capacities?

Our participants confirmed that sociability is necessary since it provides a stable and comfortable atmosphere of learning where the learners feel free and able to express themselves without being afraid or anxious.

3.7 Conclusion

Through the use of two questionnaires as a research instrument, we have noticed that FL oral anxiety really exists among the participants of this research work, by asserting that anxiety is a common problem that affects the students' oral performance. Furthermore, this study reveals interesting findings concerning the great significance of the teachers' sociability in the academic settings and the way this sociability plays a significant role in reducing oral anxiety and raising students' engagement in oral expression sessions.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present study has investigated the negative impact of anxiety on first year LMD students at the department of English in Belhadj Bouchaib university centre. It has also explored the kind of relationship EFL learners and oral expression teachers have in the oral expression session, and the way teachers' sociability raises learners' oral engagement and reduces their anxiety.

Anxiety is a serious issue that exists among FL learners; it is an important affective variable which should be taken into consideration since it causes a significant negative impact on the FL learning process affecting the learners' oral abilities. That is why, it is important not to overlook this issue; it must be detected among EFL learners not only by trying to find the main factors that lead to the appearance of FL anxiety, but also the way it can be decreased by, especially in the oral expression subject.

After analysing the data gathered from the students' questionnaire, we have found that anxiety really exists among EFL learners, and as it was mentioned earlier in this study the main factors that provoke anxiety are; test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication anxiety. In other words, learners are not confident in their oral capacities and they feel anxious when they perform in front of an audience.

Establishing good and friendly relationships in oral expression settings is considered as the basis for the success of the FL learning process. Therefore, the teachers can play an important role in helping anxious learners by overcoming their anxiety and improving their oral performance by taking in consideration the provoking anxiety aspects mentioned above and reconsidering the immense positive role of their sociability in building a supportive relationship in the learning place.

This study has shown how important teachers' sociability is for improving EFL learners' oral abilities. It has also raised oral expression teachers' awareness about the crucial impact of their sociability on EFL learners' oral performance through clarifying the extent of learning anxiety our students have. As a result, teachers will be more aware of how to help their students reducing their anxiety and promoting their oral engagement.

This research work has also many limitations. To start with, the results cannot be overgeneralized to all EFL studying at the university centre at all levels since our study is concerned only with LMD1 students who came from secondary schools where little is done to improve their oral abilities. As such, the results obtained for this study can only be applicable to the sample population that has been chosen for our investigation. Second, we cannot relate all the negative behaviours and feelings EFL learners' have in the learning setting to oral anxiety because there are other affective variables that affect the FL learning process.

Taking in consideration the findings and the limitations of the present research work, the results have shown that FL anxiety exists among EFL learners and represents an obstacle for the improvement of the learners' oral performance. Consequently, teachers' sociability is needed to raise the learners' engagement and promote their oral abilities.

Through this study, we also hope to present some further suggestions and ideas for further research. First, we attempt to suggest an investigation of the negative affective variables that impact FL process. Second, we propose to apply the theme of this study on second and third LMD learners, and even master' students, since FL anxiety may impact all EFL learners at different levels.

This research work has given FL oral expression teachers an idea about which kind of relationship they need to establish with their students during the oral expression sessions. Finally, it has demonstrated how important it is to work on promoting students' oral abilities in secondary schools before they move to university.

Therefore, our purpose behind choosing this topic is to help EFL learners knowing the importance of building a supporting relationship with their teachers in the learning setting in order to overcome their FL anxiety and reach a higher academic success.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Students' Questionnaire

Your participation in our research work is of great help; this is the main reason why we would like you to answer the questions below:

A) Personal information:

1. Age: ………….

2. Sex: Male ☐   Female ☐

B) Anxiety in oral classroom sessions:

1. What were your marks in the subject of oral expression during the first semester?

TD ☐   Exam ☐

2. What is your opinion as regards the learning of English at university?

Easy ☐   Difficult ☐

3. Do you like attending oral expression subject?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   *If **YES**, why?

   …………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………..

   *If **NO**, why?

   …………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………...
   ....

4. Have you tried to speak English publically (outside the lesson frame)?

   YES ☐   NO ☐

5. Do you feel confident when you speak English?

      Yes ☐   No ☐

6. How do you feel when you speak English in front of your classmates?

    Anxious (nervous) ☐   Relaxed ☐

7. As a foreign language learner (EFL learner), what do you prefer?

a) To prepare yourself before doing an oral expression exam.   ☐

b) To do the exam directly without preparation.   ☐

C) The quality of the teacher:

1. Do you like the teaching method used by your teacher of oral expression?

      Yes ☐   No ☐

2. Does the teacher's way of teaching impact your oral performance?

      Yes ☐   No ☐

3. How do want your oral expression teacher to be? (Give five characteristics)

    a)……………………………………………………………………

    b)……………………………………………………………………

    c)……………………………………………………………………

    d)……………………………………………………………………

    e)……………………………………………………………………

Questionnaire

We would like you to participate in our research work to find out the impact of teachers' sociability on EFL students' oral expression abilities. We would like you to answer the questions below:

A) Personal information:

1. Sex: Male [＿＿＿]   Female [＿＿＿]

2. Is this your first experience as a teacher in the university?

   Yes [＿＿＿]   No [＿＿＿]

B) Teaching Oral Expression:

1. Have you taught oral expression earlier?

   Yes [＿＿＿]   No [＿＿＿]

2. Do you find difficulties in teaching the subject of Oral Expression?

   Yes [＿＿＿]   No [＿＿＿]

   If yes, what kind of difficulties do you encounter?

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………………………..

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…………………………….

3. Describe your relationship with your students.

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…………………………………………………………………………………………..

……

4. Are you sociable with your students?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

If Yes, why?

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…………………….

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……………………..

If No, why?

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5. As a teacher of Oral Expression, which strategies do you usually use to help your students not being anxious while speaking English publically?

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6. In what ways does your 'sociability' help in improving your students' Oral Expression capacities?

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…………………………..