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**Exploring the Difficulties Facing EFL Learners in the Oral
Expression Course: Case of First Year Students of English at the
University of Ain-Temouchent**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Didactics and Applied Languages*

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Abstract

This research work tried to explore the difficulties facing first-year English foreign language students in the oral expression course and aimed to suggest some strategies that may help teachers to overcome these problems. This study attempted to examine the most common speaking difficulties encountered by the students, and proposed a list of recommendations to alleviate their problems and enhance their speaking competence. The investigation took place at the English department; Ain-Temouchent University and a randomized sampling composed of 36 students and five teachers of the oral expression subject was used. The data gathered from two distinct questionnaires confirmed that first-year students, actually, face linguistic, psychological and social difficulties while speaking English. The majority of them suffered from lack of grammar and vocabulary, fear of making mistakes and not being understood, in addition to anxiety and lack of communication and conversation. To reduce these hindrances, we suggested some techniques, strategies and oral activities that are suitable to the students' needs. Motivation and positive classroom interaction should be taken into consideration where learners tend to be motivated, active and more confident. Moreover, teachers should select appropriate and effective strategies to improve their students' speaking performance by providing them with positive feedback and avoiding negative feedback since this latter decreases their motivation to be less confident.