Examining Difficulties in Mastering Oral Communication Abilities during classroom performance among Fourth year
(A case of study 4th year students at faculty of education in OMU, Al-Beida -Libya)

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Abstract:
The lack of using oral English language interactions outside the classroom introduces a significant challenge to improve EFL learners' abilities. Therefore, This paper discusses how it is vital for EFL learners to be aware of using speaking language skills and raising learners' attention of applying speaking skills in understandable and professional way . The main important objective of this study is to strength learners' attention on how they should use the productive language skills. The researcher evaluated and examined the 4th year learners oral abilities with underlining the main obstacles they literally face during oral communication. This paper is based on mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative methods) in the data collection process. According to the data analysis, learners of senior year are influenced by multiple factors "internal and external" a significant proportion of students (41.4%) described their performance as "bad". Whereas, (24.1%) considered learners' performance as "good" that show clearly a decline in their Oral Communication skills and how this reduce their interaction habits. Consequently, the present study spots out that English language department should concentrate on oral communication abilities in the coming years.

استكشاف التحديات التي يواجها طلاب السنة الرابعة في إتقان مهارات التواصل الشفوي أثناء أداؤهم اللغوي

(دراسة بكلية التربية – جامعة عمر المختار –البيضاء – ليبيا)

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الخلاصة

يُعد غياب التفاعل الشـــفهي باللغة الانجليزية خارج قاعة الدراســـة تحديًا كبيرًا يواجه متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تطوير قدراتهم اللغوية. ومن هذا المنطلق، تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية أهمية تنمية وعي المتعلمين بضرورة استخدام مهارات المحادثة بصورة فعالة واحترافية.

الهدف الأســـاســـي من هذه الدراســـة هو تعزيز انتباه طلاب الســـنة الرابعة نحو أهمية توظيف المهارات اللغوية الإنتاجية، وتطوير قدرتهم على التواصـــل الشـــفهي. قام الباحث بتقييم واختبار قدرات الطلاب الشـفهية، مع تسـليط الضـوء على أبرز الصـعوبات التي يوجهونها أثناء التواصل الشفهي.

اعتمد ت الدراســـة على المنهج المختلط الذي يجمع بين الأســـلوبين الكمي والنوعي في جمع البيانات، وذلك من خلال أدوات متعددة مثل الاختبار، والمقابلة والاستبيان.

أظهرت نتائج التحليل أن طلاب السنة الرابعة يتأثرون بعدة عوامل داخلية وخارجية تعيق مهارتهم في التواصـل الشـفهي وتحد من تفاعلهم اللغوي، كما ان النتائج تشـير الى أن (41.4 %) من اداء الطلاب غير جيد بينما (24.1%) جيدا جدا. وبناءً علي ذلك، تؤكد الدراســـة علي أهمية تركيز قســـم اللغة الانجليزية علي تطوير مهارات التواصـــل

الشفهي في السنوات القادمة، من خلال تكثيف الأنشطة و الجهود للحصول على نتائج أفضل ومخرجات تعليمية متميزة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التفاعل، التواصــل الشــفوي، المهارات، الإنتاجية، العوامل الداخلي، العوامل الخارجي.

1. Introduction

English becomes a magical key to connect and know the worldwide, it plays the main role to get a better chance at work field nowadays, which is known as the first global lingua franca. Although it is such an essential language to learn, but it is somehow difficult to acquire in Arabic countries. As we can see that every day students in the classroom tried to face many challenges to speak English specifically for their major in subjects, and sometimes they were not up to the challenge. Pupils who have so many difficulties in English not only academically , but also with English preforming " productive skills" may not work effectively . In Libya English language is a foreign language, for that; students may not have chance to expose to it. Where we expected from students of EL major who arrived at their last semester that they should have a full perceptive of how effective English language teachers supposed to be, since they were exposing to fairly enough of explicit and implicit knowledge. Learners of EFL should be learning how to use language skills to respond on situations by saying what is appropriate, to read and to write perfectly. Therefore; learners need to develop the four skills evenly: (speaking – listening- writing- reading) in order to create proficient members in ELT in educational environment. However, the learner's linguistic level is usually measure by their capacity to perform a conversation in the target language, Mouhoub (2016) pointed that the main reason behind learning a foreign language is to communicate appropriately.

This research will spot the light on "Speaking skill" specifically, which is considered as the most significant skill among the four languages skills. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) demonstrated that speaking is one of the most important skills to develop and improve effective communication, additionally; it seems to be one of the most difficult skills for learners to achieve because it demands a lot of practice and exposure. Jamshidnejad (2020) explains that

communication is a systematic yet complex process involving communicators, symbolic meaning, and context. (Jamshidnejad,2020).

1.1 Statement of the problem:

Fourth year English major at faculty of education often face significant challenges in oral communication of linguistic and cultural factors. The problems of speaking skills encountered by senior EFL learners in OMU can be existed in many aspects such as pronunciation, confidence due to limited exposure of native speakers and practical conversational opportunities. this study will work out to find the factors that affect negatively on fourth students in speaking skills during their performance. May these problems of Fourth year learners caused of :

1. Do not have a realistic setting to interact through.
2. Do not find enough activities that considered appropriate to improve their speaking skills.
3. Do not practice EL to one another outside the classroom.
4. Do not know how it is necessary to master oral communication skills in their future careers.
5. do not interest in learning oral communication abilities.

1.2 Research questions

The current study is concerned with answering the following questions:

1. What are the factors that affect speaking skills proficiency of 4th year students?
2. What are the most element that fourth year learners do not have in oral communication?
3. How can 4th year learners improve oral communication abilities during classroom performance at faculty of education ?

1.3 Research objectives

The goal of this study is to identify the problems and difficulties that 4th year student's face while they are using EL speaking skills. And to explore suitable activities and strategies that affect positively to ward pushing them for being proficient teachers in their field , and to solve out the lack ability of speaking skills in teaching language and help students of 4th year to avoid any problems they may face when they become teachers, or even while using the target language in their daily life.

2.0 Literature Review
2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a review of literature pertinent to declare more about the main reasons behind oral skills difficulties in learning EFL , which indicate that oral communication need to be communicated and performed a new knowledge perfectly in order to help EFL learner to teach and give them opportunity to apply this skill effectively. Therefore, we can observe that speaking skills is the major skills which need to be developed in EL classroom overtime. This research paper will show numerous of papers have discussed the same issue which related to the main idea " oral communication difficulties" with dividing the term difficulties into several factors mastering the oral communication abilities and outline them to subheadings due to give a clarification of the present study.

Daflizran (2024) presented a study about the problems of speaking anxiety that surround Indonesian learners out - of - classroom, which investigated the levels of anxiety and the relationship between their self-perceived vocabulary and gender, by using a quantitative approach to collect data from 87 participants. From 3 different colleges through the online survey males and females ,their age were between (18-29) years with different English levels. The questionnaire has 21 items that assess critical situations. The result indicates that the student's level of anxiety is " moderately anxious" to point that 2.84 scored of worrying situations out of 21 while about 4 remaining fall under " slightly anxious".

Another researchers named Jaya, petrus and pitaloka (2022) reported a study about " speaking performance and problems faced by English major students at university of south Sumatera" survey and questionnaire used to examine learners. The participants were of (5ᵗʰ) semester students ,who given " SOLOM Test" ,which means "*speaking oral language observation matrix"* the scored of SOLOM rubric had pointed out five components (comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar . Whereas; questionnaire was divided into three aspects: affective –related difficulties that included attitude, self-confidence, motivation, anxiety, duration of the exposure to the language, etc. socially-related difficulties like using English outside the class. Lastly,

linguistically – related difficulties as vocabulary, fluency, grammar and pronunciation.

2.2 Theoretical framework :

The interaction hypothesis (IH) plays a central role in this study. It is considered one of the most influential theories in the field of SLA, as it contributes significantly to developing speaking skills and improve English as a foreign language. The IH encourages teachers to focus on the classroom environment, as it provides a realistic context where learners can communicate in the target language- something that does not typically exist in Libyan social life. The IH is based on communication through the target language, such as teacher- interaction inside the classroom, or student – to- student interaction inside or outside the classroom. It is a type of theory that employed practical strategy of learning a new language which is required verbal interaction and direct communication. IH integrates input and output, suggesting that language learning involves not only how to interact, but also what and how learners acquire knowledge. By combining and utilizing input, interaction and output learners can achieve the ultimate objective of learning a second language to a great extent. The hypothesis was first proposed by Michael long in (1981) in the field of SLA, who stated that learners are able to acquire new linguistic forms by actively attending to them , furthermore: Long supports the thought of face –to – face communication between learners and teachers, as well as learners themselves. Long emphasized that the native speaker or expert is an important part to facilitate contacting, and declares that interaction enable learners to acquire language more effectively. He also gave a clear definition about IH that meant the functions served by those form such as expansion, repetition, and clarification. IH is unavoidable related to the names of Michael Long and Teresa Pic, who exploratory think about emphasized on which social connections between members might have to deliver collaborations adjustment, and he illustrated that to continuous discussion may offer assistance securing, in spite of the fact maybe analyst keeps up that conversational trades may facilitate dialect procurement.

On the other hands, Stephen Krashen (1982) was a critic of IH theory . He argued that the international process takes place as a result of having comprehensible input, which is a crucial factor in

facilitating meaningful interaction and ultimately leading to successful processes in L2 learning. He argued that IH is not only important role in acquire L2 ; unless it aims to provide clear input which is assisting the learners to understand much better. He commented that IH is standing on negotiation of meaning ,and that might lead learners to raise anxiety thus the opportunity of acquisition can lost. According to Jamshidnejad (2020) communication breakdowns are a common phenomenon in SL interaction and this referred to misunderstandings, misinterpretations or pragmatic failures.(Jamshidnejad,2020).

In summary, the interaction hypothesis provides a strong theoretical foundation for this study, as it emphasizes the importance of active communication, negotiation of meaning, and the integration of input and output in promoting successful second language learning particularly in contexts like Libya, where opportunities for authentic language use are limited.

2.3 The importance of Oral communication

Oral communication is defined as a dynamic interactive operation which included transmission of human mentality of thought, ideas, emotions, etc. It is the reflection of how learners are powerful and studiously in learning foreign language. scholar declared that oral communication is essential but it is not easy to achieve. Naturally all human beings stand much more on oral interaction rather than written form, therefore; learners have to acquire enough knowledge to communicate effectively and easily, for that recognize many substantial elements such as : *(pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension*) considered necessary. As Wahyuningsih & Afandi (2020) state that pronunciation is one of the meaningful factors contributing on speaking fluency it is learned in the study of phonology. Whereas, "Grammar is needed to be combined into any skills".[Sabina,2018]. Teaching grammar in classroom always face real obstacles " grammatical knowledge" made all learners feel confuse since tenses change, inflectional structure, passive and many other rules. On the other hand, vocabulary is an essential part of oral communication, and the lack of vocabulary may retard to the fluency of learners.

2.4 Factors that affect students' performance

Students of English classrooms often remain silent because they either have nothing to say or not able to speak. Consequently; they neither practice nor progress in their FLL. Which represents a real obstacles, therefore; Learners need to identify the factors that affect their performance, and how they can overcome on these issues to communicate fluently and accurately. These gaps have negative impacts on English language learners and these commons problems which prevent learners' improvement of their oral communication abilities. Afshar and Asakereh (2016) underline that the main speaking problems of English learners' as can be divided into three categorize:

- "affective- related problems" which points to psychological factors by means of low confidence, anxiety, and nervousness.
- "Socially- related problems" which relate to the pragmatic aspects of linguistics it deals with less comprehensible input, misinterpretations and lack of realistic interaction
- "Linguistically- related problems" which deal with language functions difficulties ,which may cause leaners to lose their desire to learn, or having a low passion to practice English.

2.5 Strategies and techniques used to improve oral communication :

Oxford (1990) explained a strategy as it is a specific action or system that learners follow up to make learning process easier, faster, effective and more enjoyable. Also researcher named Mokhtari (2023) mentioned several strategies that can enhance learners to learn oral communication for a far long such as :

- "self-monitoring":
  It refers to the way of paying attention in how students' performance and reaction , and check if they can assess their own speaking as how accuracy , fluency and appropriate they were.
- "self- correction" :
  It is encouraging learning technique which aims to modify or adjust their own performance and achieve better outcome.
- "seeking feedback" :
  This kind of strategy involves asking a qualified person to evaluate and correct their performance.

- "Team work":

  Another strategy known as "team work" which is also introduced by Mokhtari, this process can help learners to practice and cooperate English language in supportive setting .[2023,p.58].

3.0 Methodology

The current research is designed as a case of study at faculty of education, focusing particularly on fourth- year learners and how their interaction phenomenon during classroom activities. The purpose of this study is to explore the EFL senior students' oral performance difficulties. A mixed- methods approach will be employed which contents on both quantitative methods and qualitative methods in collecting full information. "Quantitative method" to collect numerical data via questionnaire, with dividing the objectives into three stages to examine learners difficulties (ELP, subject- matter knowledge, opinions). Whereas, qualitative research method will collect the data through describing learners experiences. Baxter (2008) defined qualitative method as a research approach that facilitates reconnoitering of an issue within introducing a different of data sources and gathering information about the main issue. The qualitative method will be collected through an "oral test ", and "Semi-structure interview" with number of teaching staff.

4.0 Data Analysis

The findings of "Quantitative data" will be analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures through *SPSS version 22* (statistical package for social sciences). Meanwhile, " Qualitative data" will be will be interpreted thematically and organized using Microsoft Excel 2010. The questionnaire data include the demographic and educational background distribution of participants, as well as an examination the factors that related to learners' challenges in oral communication, learners' interaction, and comprehension skills. The oral test assesses the participants performance during oral interaction in term of fluency, which examines learners' difficulties in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and comprehension. Lastly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with numbers of teaching stuff at faculty

of education who were asked several questions about students' levels, factors that affect students, and recommending techniques to improve oral communication abilities.

4.1 Questionnaire
4.1.1 Demographic and Educational Background

Understanding the demographic and educational background of participants provides a foundation for analyzing the factors that influence their oral communication skills. This section presents an overview of key demographic variables such as gender, age, and nationality, as well as the participants' prior experience in learning English. Figure (1) illustrates the distribution of participants' nationalities, showing that the majority 93% are Libyan, while 7% belong to other nationalities.
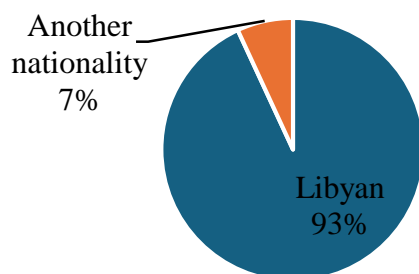

Fig.1 nationalities Frequency

Figure (2) shows that females percentage represent in EL major as the largest proportion of the sample, which accounting for 72% .
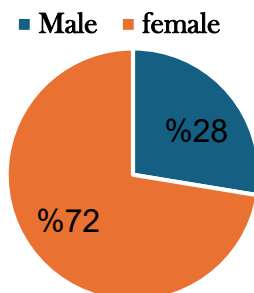

Fig.2. Gender Frequency

Figure (3) demonstrates the age distribution of the participants, indicating that most students fall within the 26- 30 age group79% , while 21% are within the 22-25 age group.
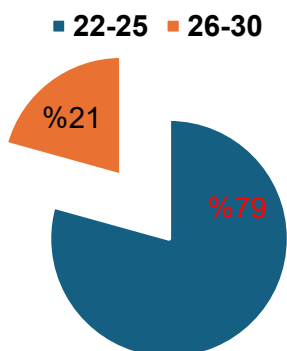
■ **22-25** ■ **26-30**

%21

%79

Fig.3. Age distribution of the participants

Figure 4 shows more than half of the participant (55.2%).reported that they having learned English before entering university,
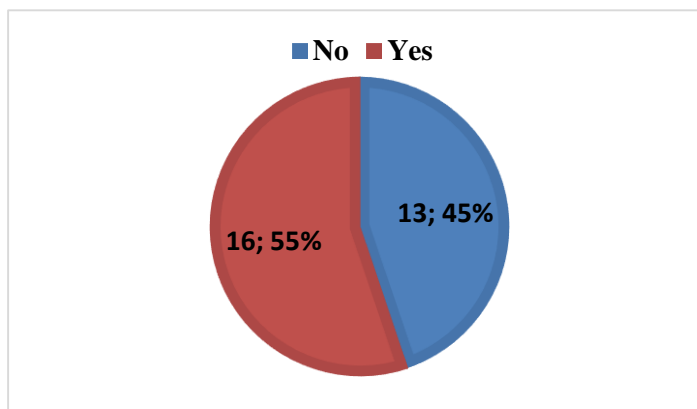

■**No** ■**Yes**

13; 45%

16; 55%

Fig.4. Prior English Learning Experience Before University

4.1.2 Factors that Affect Oral Communication
The most effective factors of language learning   is how to pronounce(44.8%) These findings suggest that a significant number of students in 4th grade struggle with pronunciation, which may negatively impact their oral communication skills in memorizing

vocabularies. As well as Mother tongue factor about (37.7%) of these results suggest that many students view their mother tongue as a useful tool to facilitate communication, although this reliance may hinder their fluency in English and their accuracy, too.

4.1.3 Learners' Interaction
These findings is about learners' interaction factors which suggested that usually 27.6% is motivating to practice English through classmate interaction outside the classroom and also indicating that (31.0%) a mixed attitude of students displaying either strong disinterest or a lack of engagement in learning English speaking skills. While half of the participants experienced difficulties using English in context beyond the classroom.

4.1.4 Learners' Comprehension
These results indicate that most students do not consistently feel confident in ending conversation , as shown by (34.7%) selecting sometimes. And (37.9%) of participants reported significantly not engage in pre-performance preparation' which potentially increasing the likelihood of errors and reduce their ability to understand complicated ideas.

4.1.5 Perceived Self-Assessment of Oral Communication Skills During Interactive Activities
The results reflect students' self-assessment of their oral communication skills during interactive activities, in table (1) illustrates a significant proportion of students (41.4%) described their performance as "bad," while (20.7%) rated it as "not bad." Additionally, (24.1%) considered their performance "good enough," and (13.8%) viewed it as "extremely good." These findings suggest that a considerable number of students lack confidence in their oral communication abilities, with less than (40%) perceiving their skills as satisfactory or better. This underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve students' oral communication skills and build their confidence in interactive activities.

Table 1: Students' Self-Description of Oral Communication Performance

Performance Levels	Frequency	Percent
Bad	12	41.4%
Not bad	6	20.7%
Good enough	7	24.1%
Extremely good	4	13.8%
Total	29	100.0%

4.2 oral test

The oral test involved total 18 participants, including 4 males and 14 females. Their responses recorded by using a recording device. Figure (6) presents the objectives of this task :

1. To assess the proficiency levels of 4th grade students, which is ranging from beginner to upper intermediate.

2. To identify factors that hinder learners oral abilities of the English language and determine the specific areas where language learners most face challenges through, such as lack of vocabulary, grammar errors, pronunciation errors, and lack of fluency.
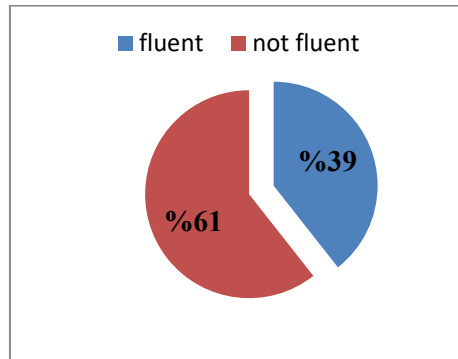

Fig.6. oral performance

The results presented figure (6) that shows the students' self-assessment of their oral communication skills during interactive activities. A significant proportion of students (61%) described their performance as not appropriate " not fluent". These findings suggest that a considerable number of students are lack of confidence in their

oral communication abilities, with less than 40% perceiving their skills as satisfactory or better. This underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve students' oral communication skills and build their confidence in interactive activities.

4.6 Teachers' interview

The semi- structured interviews administrated with three teachers, who were very welcome to be participants at English department faculty of education in OMU, the interview consists of 6 questions in each section of these questions the researcher surveys the oral abilities of senior learners, these questions based on the instructors' perspectives. The teachers' experiences provide the researcher with an identical opportunity to assess learners meticulously.

1. From your point of view, how can you describe 4th year students' oral performance?

2. Secondly, do you believe that 4th year students face difficulties when involving in oral communicative classroom situations? If yes, what do you think is the main cause?

3. Based on your experience, what are the most difficulties you think Libyan EFL learners face when using oral communication?

4. To what extent do these difficulties impact Libyan EFL University students?

5. Please, feel free to add any other observations you have about Libyan EFL learners' ability in English oral performance?

6. At the end, would you like to leave any recommendation for EFL learners about how can they approve the oral communication abilities?

Teachers provide clear descriptions and modifications of all these points about the 4th-grade oral performance

a) Their performance often depends on their exposure to spoken English, individual motivation, and the teaching approaches they have experienced throughout their studies.

b) The main difficulties of 4th grade can be included in:

▪ Lack of exposure to authentic English communication outside the classroom.

▪ Fear of making mistakes, which can lower their confidence.

▪ Limited opportunities to practice speaking due to large class sizes and teacher- centred approaches.

- Weak foundation in pronunciation and vocabulary, which hinders their ability to express themselves fluently.

c) Based on Teachers' experience, the most difficulties that Libyan EFL learners face when using oral communication are:
- Pronunciation issues due to the differences between Arabic and English sounds.
- Limited vocabulary to express complex ideas.
- Grammatical mistakes, which affect sentence structure.
- Fluency problems, as they pause frequently to find the correct words.
- Cultural barriers, where learners may not be familiar with English-speaking communication styles or idiomatic expressions.

d) Teachers extremely believed that the difficulties of oral communication impacted learners knowledge performance, these difficulties could significantly affect students' academic and professional growth. Poor oral communication skills may prevent them from participating actively in classroom discussions, engaging in debates, or delivering presentations effectively. On a professional level, it limits their ability to excel in interviews, collaborate with international colleagues, or pursue careers that require strong English-speaking skills.

e) The most notable observation from staff of teaching is that many Libyan EFL learners tend to rely heavily on written English and grammar-based learning, neglecting speaking and listening skills. More focus should be placed on interactive learning methods such as: group discussions, role-playing, and real-life speaking activities to improve oral proficiency. Additionally, integrating technology and encouraging exposure to English media (like podcasts, videos, and conversations with native speakers) can help bridge this gap.

f) Teachers recommend several oral communication strategies to improve learners' performance such as: Expanding vocabulary and idiomatic, listening to authentic English media, using different application to practice speaking skills, surrounding themselves in

English environment. They mentioned that stuff of teaching can be one of causes that effect on how learners act during speaking skills, teachers can enroll the weakness of learners by giving them opportunity and progressing their confident to overcome on speaking problem through creating health and safe environment to practice. They also noted that EFL learners have to learn not only about "*linguistic competence*", but also about " *communicative competence*" which is included (Sociolinguistic competence, Discourse competence, Strategic competence) to help them how to handle different situation and accept cultural interacting to become professional and good users.

5.0 **Conclusion**

This investigation set out to scour of difficulties found by fourth-year students at the faculty of Education in subjugating oral communication skills during classroom execution. The spotting of this study indicated that a factual numeral of 4th-year students wrangles with both fluency and accuracy in oral communication. Fluency issues are made up of hesitation, repetition, and a lack of spontaneity when they come to speak, whereas; accuracy challenges are often attached to grammatical errors, mispronunciation, and inappropriate word usage. The average of fluent problematic EFL students is 61.10% which is still far from the standard of speaking skills. The score of their attitude description in questionnaire was 41.4% bad EL users, these weaknesses suggest that the learners have not yet developed the main role of communicative competence to express themselves clearly and confidently in English.

5.1 suggestions for further studies

Through this research matter different studies can be accomplished such as: comparative studies between various educational institution, psychological instruction problems, socio-cultural factors, enhancing EFL vocabulary acquisition and developing listening comprehension skills strategic.

5.2 Limitations

Despite the value of this study, several issues were faced, one of these limitations is the limited number of participants via the questionnaire were a small number of 4th year agreed to be a part of collecting data. Secondly, a few numbers of the teaching staff were unwilling to engage in the interview, as for questionnaire some

responses were randomly chosen by samples. Additionally, some participants showed reluctance to be implicated and it was hard to gather a sufficient number of fourth- year students to do the oral-test. Furthermore, there were real obstacles to give direct and clear instructions due to the limited time and the lack of scheduled opportunities to interact with EFL learners. These aspects may impede the capacity and profoundness of the study findings.

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