

**Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz**

**Faculty of Letters and Humanities**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**The Comparative Effect of the Speaking Strategies of Structured Discussion, Small Talk and Observer Ring on Iraqi EFL Learners’ Speaking Accuracy**

Supervisor:

**Mahmood Validi, PhD**

By:

**Mona Jabbar Shalish**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

**September 2021**

**Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Validi, for all his support, encouragement and academic advice which he expressed from the beginning through the completion of the entire thesis. I am also thankful to instructors and professors at this esteemed university, from whom I learned a lot. I am indebted to the faculty staff and officials for their administrative and logistic efforts. I would like to express deep thanks to Iraqi university professors for their purposeful academic contributions. I am also grateful to my classmates for the help and encouragement they offered throughout the study time. Last but not least, I offer my special gratitude and blessings to my husband and my children for emotional support, patience and endurance.

**Abstract**

|  |
| --- |
| **Name:**  Muna **Surname:** Jabbar Shalash |
| **Title:**  The Comparative Effect of the Speaking Strategies of Structured Discussion, Small Talk and Observer Ring on Iraqi EFL Learners’ Speaking Accuracy |
| **Supervisor:** Dr. Mahmood Validi  |
| **Degree:** MA **Field of Study:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language |
| **University:** Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Department of English Language and Literature  |
| **Number of Pages:** 85 |
| **Keywords:** Structured discussion, Observer ring, Small talk, Speaking accuracy |
| This study embarked on investigating the effectiveness of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring in enhancing the accuracy of EFL learners in speaking. In so doing, 60 Iraqi EFL learners were selected based on their performance on OPT. The selected participants were then randomly assigned to three equal groups of observer ring (*n =* 20), small talk (*n =* 20), and structured discussion (*n =* 20). In the observer ring group, the participants were required to sit in circle and take turns talking about the topic. The teacher observed them and made notes if necessary. In the structured discussion group, a topic for the conversation was chosen and the learners were required to make only one or two utterances at a time. In the small talk group, the teacher introduced a situation for each session and the participants had to speak in order to exchange information and to engage in casual talk similar to real life. In the small talk group, the learners talked to each other without intervention by the teacher and then they received feedback. The results of paired sample t-tests showed that all the three techniques were successful in enhancing the speaking accuracy of EFL learners. The results of one-way ANOVA showed that there were significant differences between structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk group learners in terms of their accuracy in speaking such that the observer ring was the most successful one in improving Iraqi EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. Using speaking accuracy learning strategies requires teachers who can arrange and grade the materials, motivate learners and provide feedback to them. The findings of this study may help EFL teachers to get insights to design and adapt language learning tasks for enhancing the speaking accuracy knowledge of learners. |

**Table of Contents**

[Acknowledgements II](#_Toc84207016)

[Abstract III](#_Toc84207017)

[Table of Contents IV](#_Toc84207018)

[List of Tables VI](#_Toc84207019)

[Chapter I](#_Toc84207020): [Introduction](#_Toc84207021)

[1.1 Preliminaries 2](#_Toc84207022)

[1.3Statement of the problem 5](#_Toc84207024)

[1.4 Statement of the Research Hypotheses 6](#_Toc84207025)

[1.5 Significance of the Study 7](#_Toc84207026)

[1.6 Definition of Key Terms 8](#_Toc84207027)

[Chapter II:](#_Toc84207028) [Review of the Related Literature](#_Toc84207029)

[2.1 Introduction 11](#_Toc84207030)

[2.2 Speaking 11](#_Toc84207031)

[2.2.1 Theoretical Basis 12](#_Toc84207032)

[2.2.2 Characteristics of Speech 18](#_Toc84207033)

[2.2.3 Characteristics of a Good Speaker 19](#_Toc84207034)

[2.2.4 Speaking Activities 21](#_Toc84207035)

[2.2.5 Assessing Speaking Accuracy 23](#_Toc84207036)

[2.3 The Role of Discussion in Speaking 27](#_Toc84207037)

[2.4 Empirical Studies 30](#_Toc84207038)

[Chapter III](#_Toc84207039): [Methodology](#_Toc84207040)

[3.1 Introduction 37](#_Toc84207041)

[3.2 Participants 37](#_Toc84207042)

[3.3 Instruments 37](#_Toc84207043)

[3.3.1 Oxford Placement Test (OPT) 38](#_Toc84207044)

[3.3.2 Pretest and Posttest 38](#_Toc84207045)

[3.4 Research Design and Procedure 39](#_Toc84207046)

[3.5 Data Analysis 41](#_Toc84207047)

[CHAPTER IV](#_Toc84207048): [RESULTS AND DISCUSSION](#_Toc84207049)

[4.1 Introduction 44](#_Toc84207050)

[4.2 Restatement of the Research Hypotheses 44](#_Toc84207051)

[4.3 Analysis of the Proficiency Test 44](#_Toc84207052)

[4.4 Analysis of the Pretest 46](#_Toc84207053)

[4.5 Analysis of the Posttest 48](#_Toc84207054)

[4.6 Testing the First Hypothesis of the Study 50](#_Toc84207055)

[4.7 Testing the Second Hypothesis of the Study 51](#_Toc84207056)

[4.8 Testing the Third Research Question 52](#_Toc84207057)

[4.9 Testing the Fourth Research Question 53](#_Toc84207058)

[CHAPTER V](#_Toc84207060): DISCUSSION, [CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS](#_Toc84207061)

[5.1 Overview 56](#_Toc84207062)

[5.2 Discussion 56](#_Toc84207063)

[5.3 Conclusion 61](#_Toc84207064)

[5.4 Implications 62](#_Toc84207065)

[5.5 Limitations and Delimitation 63](#_Toc84207066)

[5.6 Suggestions for Further Research 64](#_Toc84207067)

[References 66](#_Toc84207068)

[Appendix A](#_Toc84207069): [Oxford Placement Test (OPT) 77](#_Toc84207070)

[APPENDIX B](#_Toc84207071): [Pretest and Posttest 80](#_Toc84207072)

**List of Tables**

Table 4.1 The Frequency of scores obtained from the proficiency test……………….…….....45

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics of groups' performance on the pre-test………..…….…46

Table 4.3 Inter-rater reliability of all groups’ performances on the pretest…………….46

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of the groups on pretest…………………………….....47

Table 4.5 One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov of Pretest……………………………….47

Table 4.6 ANOVA on pretest scores of structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk groups…………………………...……………………………………….48

Table 4.7 Descriptive statistics of groups' performance on the posttest…...……………49

Table 4.8 Inter-rater reliability of all groups’ performances on the posttest…………..……..49

Table 4.9 Descriptive Statistics of small talk and experimental group on the posttest…50

Table 4.10 One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov of Posttest…………………………...….50

Table 4.11 The paired sample t-test between the pretest and posttest scores of the structured discussion group…………………………………………………..51

Table 4.12 The paired sample t-test between the pretest and posttest scores of the small talk group……………………………………………………………………..52

Table 4.13 The paired sample t-test between the pretest and posttest scores of the observer ring group…………………………………………………………….………52

Table 4.14 One-way ANOVA among the posttest scores of the groups…………………53

Table 4.15 Tukey post-hoc test among the groups' performance on the posttest………...54

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Preliminaries**

Nowadays, learning a foreign language plays an undeniable role in daily life, and with the continuous development of communications and technology, this role has become more prominent than ever. Among all the languages spoken ​​in the world, English is the most widely used. As for using this language to communicate, speaking is a productive skill which is considered to be the most difficult one in learning and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) because it is performed in real time (Nunan, 2003). In addition, the language includes productive oral expressions that express meaning. Speaking can be defined as the way people convey information to others. In the same line, the purpose of the dialogue is to help the recipient understand the topic being discussed (Florez, 1999).

As a language skill, speaking is a complex activity with considerable significance for EFL and ESL learners. It enables students with different proficiency levels to develop their cognitive and metacognitive strategy awareness (Trembley, 1993). Bygate (1987) and Brown (2001) believe that language can be defined as a means by which students can communicate with each other to achieve certain goals or to express their intentions, opinions, ideas, and hopes. Moreover, people who have a command of a language are known as the speakers of that language. Due to its importance, speaking has recently attracted the attention of scholars and become the subject of numerous studies (for example, Marashi & Dolatdoost, 2016; Wahyurianto, 2018; Yufrizal, 2018). According to Marashi and Dolatdoost (2016), speaking is a vital skill in teaching a second or foreign language since the learners use it to establish interconnections with others in that language. Speaking is, therefore, the core of foreign language learning.

On the other hand, language accuracy is defined as “the native-like use of different linguistic features, including pronunciation, grammatical morphemes, and maybe most prominently, adequate vocabulary choice” (Wulff & Gries, 2011, p. 1). Lindsay and Knight (2006) found that to become a successful public speaker, it is important to remember such things as the production of relevant speeches, communication skills, the ability to avoid differences in understanding, and the use of different languages ​​to talk about situations and make a balance between accuracy and fluency. Bygate (2001) pointed out that “people think that oral teaching only needs to design repetitive oral structures, aiming to cultivate the accuracy of grammar and pronunciation and combine fluency” (p. 15).

In line with the aforesaid, speaking accuracy is the development of correct speech forms. Inaccuracy, however, is a sign of error, which can lead to incorrect sentence structure, thereby jeopardizing the purpose of any language program; however, different studies have different measures of speech accuracy. For example, Crookes (1989) used the percentage of target-like use of plurals, Robinson (1995) used error-free T-units, Skehan and Foster (1997) used target-like use of vocabulary, Bygate (2001) used the number of errors per T-unit, and Lambert and Engler (2007) used error-free analysis of speech or AS-units. Still, there are other studies that have dealt with accuracy (e.g., Navidinia, Mobaraki & Malekzadeh, 2018; Pourdana & Bahram, 2017; Toni et al., 2017).

In recent years, the field of language learning has witnessed a shift in which a lot of emphases has been put on the learners and the learning process. Moreover, the learners are expected to be autonomous and responsible for their own learning. Learners acquire new data and the kinds of strategies they utilize in order to facilitate the entire process is an important consideration as far as second or foreign language learning is concerned. In addition, learners shine differently when they are mastering speaking in the second or the foreign language (Hall & Hewings, 2001).

As a strategy to improve one’s speaking ability, structured discussion refers to “spoken interaction between three or (ideally) four speakers, who are then given a particular topic or question to explore in the target language” (Sybing, 2016, p. 222). For Nunan (1991), structured discussion is the language that foreign language students usually use in class.

In structured discussions, language learners are usually shy and afraid to speak when they cannot understand other speakers. Teachers can help students solve this problem by assuring students that any type of interaction, no matter what language the participants use, may lead to misunderstandings. Teachers can also provide students with strategies and idiomatic expressions for clarification (Alber, 2014).

As another strategy, small talk has been developed as a technique emanated from the principles of learner-centered approach in order to help second language learners develop their speaking ability (Hunter, 2011). Hence, as a tool for promoting teaching plans and goals, small talk plays an important role in language learning. Small talk is an informative speech that does not involve any functional topics of the conversation or transaction to be discussed. It has two main functions: it helps to avoid awkward pauses in conversation. It helps assists to involve the other party in deeper conversations, just like when a moment of silence occurs between two people in many cultures (Longman English Language and Culture Dictionary, 2002).

According to Nunan (1991), small talk is not only necessary for classroom formation but also necessary for language acquisition. Short dialogue is a language often used by foreign language students in the learning process. Allright and Bailey (1991) found that “small chat is one of the most important ways for teachers to communicate with students, and one of the most important ways to control student behavior” (p. 139).

Another strategy, which can assist students in furthering their language skills, is the observation ring technique. It functions by providing oral peer feedback in a discussion. Richards and Renandya (2002) viewed the observer ring as a task in which teachers monitor and provide oral peer feedback to learners who are engaged in discussion.

The observer ring can be performed using the learners' acquired knowledge. This technique, as a conscious editor, actually provides opportunities for learners to activate their background knowledge in correcting both peers' and their own errors. The observer ring technique has been considered by Nikoopour, Amini Farsani, and Mahmoodi (2010), especially in the writing skill, since it makes a balance between peer evaluation and teachers' response.

In EFL settings, language speakers have difficulties in sharing their ideas while speaking to each other. However, it is supposed that if providing feedback to the learners is taken into account seriously and if it is followed logically, a proper and full-fledged conversation is expected. This means that not only can the speakers understand each other thoroughly but also no misunderstanding will appear and, as a result, the quality of conversations will improve (Rianingsih, ‎2015).

This study aimed to compare the impacts of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring on improving speaking accuracy and to see whether there is a significant difference between theirimpacts on EFL learners’ speaking accuracy.

**1.2 Statement of the problem**

In countries like Iraq, where English is taught as a foreign language, it is normal to find that, through years of language schooling, most students are unable to communicate orally and properly (Al-Temeemey, 2016). While students have endeavored to learn English for years, many of them are still unable to use it orally. Even in Iraqi college classrooms, students usually have problems speaking in English. A significant number of college students who have attended many formal classes to learn English are often unable to communicate efficiently in the language (Al-Salihi, 2006). This can contribute to the rise of a condition called 'Mute English' or 'Dumb English,' which refers to a situation where people can read, write and understand the English language but cannot speak it well (Wang & Motteram, 2006).

Learners of English as a foreign language often fail to understand the actions and language patterns in textbooks (Arfaei Zarandi & Rahbar, 2016). They encounter the task of extracting meaning from content. In addition, language learners cannot create precise forms of interaction in the classroom. The learners’ unsuccessful interactions and discussions will have negative impacts on their self-confidence in language learning and school performance (Arfaei Zarandi and Rahbar, 2016). On the other hand, teachers are concerned about creating situations to reduce the dialogue with the teacher and improve the accuracy of the dialogue on the subject. Spoken language is the most difficult skill to teach in a language course (Bouzar, 2019). Some conventional language learning strategies are widely used to teach spoken language, but their impact seems to be negligible. Teachers are forced to take many classes because they are forced to stick to the curriculum. This will put pressure on students, reduce their enthusiasm, and hinder their progress. The current study is an attempt to elucidate the issue by addressing a few questions in the context of Iraq.

**1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Based on the objectives of this study, research questions can be drawn as follows:

1. Does structured discussion have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy?
2. Does small talk have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy?
3. Does observer ring have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy?
4. Are there any significant differences between the impact of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy?

Regarding the research question, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H01: Structured discussion does not have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.

H02: Small talk does not have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.

H03: Observer ring does not have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.

H04: There are not any significant differences between the impact of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.

**1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study can be of significance in solving the problems of Iraqi EFL teachers in providing instructional input to learners for speaking skills in class time. The research introduces three techniques in supporting language learners when they are working on specific tasks such as oral discussions. The assumption is that, using these techniques, students will acquire target language structures, and in this line, they are helped to develop their mastery of the speaking skill in English learning classes.

 The use of contextualized and learner-based classroom strategies for developing speaking would ensure EFL learners’ experience of the effective ways of improving L2 speaking skills. The findings of this study could help EFL teachers believe more in providing situations in language classes that encourage using speaking strategies. This is especially true for learners in Iraq where there are not many opportunities for practicing and improving the speaking skill in English.

This study can have pedagogical implications for both teachers and designers of coursebooks in that they can employ three types of speaking techniques, i.e., structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring to improve the learners’ speaking accuracy. In addition, learners can benefit from employing these three strategies in achieving their speaking accuracy.

**1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

**Speaking accuracy:** Speaking accuracy “accounts for the production of correct instances of language” (Toni, Hassaskhah, & Birjandi, 2017, p. 186). In the present study, speaking accuracy was measured through the scores obtained from the participants on the posttest, which is the speaking section of the Cambridge English Preliminary Exam (PET). To caluculate the speaking accuracy, Larsen-Freeman's (2006) guideline was used for computing the number of error-free t-units and their proportion to total t-units.

**Structured discussion:** Structured discussion is based on the assumption that EFL learners require time to generate new ideas and information before starting to speak. They also spend time with the community of learners participating in the same experience and journey to understand and verbally express their learning (Johnson & Mighten, 2005).

**Small talk** is used as an informal speech and does not involve the functional topics of the dialogue or the issues that need to be resolved. It has two main functions: it helps to avoid uncomfortable pauses during the conversation, and it helps to include the interlocutor in the conversation. A deeper dialogue, as in many cultures, is a moment of silence between two people (Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 2002).

**Observer ring** is a kind of group discussion in which “a group conducts its discussion about whatever it is, the observer evaluators sit with the discussion group and monitor the proceeding; it is a kind of oral peer feedback” (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 228).

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

**2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of different theoretical and empirical studies related to speaking. It begins with various theoretical definitions of speaking and then proceeds to study the role of accuracy in speaking. The chapter then briefly presents some of the significant strategies for teaching speaking with a particular focus on speaking activities which were the focuses of the present study. Finally, the chapter terminates with a brief review of some empirical studies related to the current research.

**2.2 Speaking**

Speaking is said to be the most vital skill for learners of English as a foreign language. According to Malmir and Shoorche (2012), “with the growing need for international communication in the information age, many language learners attend language classes to improve their speaking ability” (p. 610). Although many learners can master the basic levels of this oral skill, some students’ spoken English is more effective than others, and those who are good at communication with others do better both at school and in other aspects of life. Whether in the classroom or outside the classroom, there are usually more opportunities to become familiar with written language than with spoken language (Gu, 2003). With limited opportunities for oral communication outside the classroom, it is necessary to optimize the time available in the classroom and create opportunities to develop students' oral skills.

**2.2.1 Theoretical Basis**

According to Falls (2006), for most people, ability in a language is synonymous with knowledge of speaking that language because it is the most basic resource to communicate with others. Speaking is generally regarded as the most challenging of the four language skills. It is particularly demanding for learners of a foreign language to speak it since effective oral communication entails the ability to use the language correctly in social interactions. There are also other sublingual elements such as intonation, stress, and intonation which influence this ability (Seligson, 1997; Fulcher, 2003). Speaking in L2 occupies a special place in the entire history of language teaching. It was not until the last two decades that it began to develop into a separate branch of learning, teaching and testing, with its focus on the production of spoken words (Bygate, 2002).

Speaking is the embodiment of the speaker's ability to employ a wide range of rules. Accordingly, dialogue requires language learners to activate their knowledge to produce the message they have in mind. According to Thornbury (2007), oral communication involves creating a language and discussing in a language is completely different from what happens in the actual situation. The speaker and the listener participate in the generation and processing of voice interaction at the same time. They have a time limit, which means they have to process the incoming language without having to go back and make changes. Within this limited time, the learners have to communicate with others, adapt their language to the meaning they want to convey, and respond to verbal or non-verbal cues from the members of the audience. Many dialogue interactions include comments on instant actions or events, or random transitions between topics (Celce Murcia, 2001; Richards & Renandia, 2002).

Speaking is a process by which we construct and convey meaning through the use of linguistic and non-verbal signs in different contexts (Chaney, 1998). As Ur (2000) has put it, spoken language seems to be the most important of the four skills, and the speakers of a language are said to be the native speakers of that language. Moreover, dialogue is one of the most important aspects of communication. According to Haley and Austin (2004), in order to increase the efficiency of oral expression, students must be able to better respond to other people's communication in a relevant and socially acceptable way. Richards (2008) found that for many foreign language learners, proficiency in English is the most important thing. Therefore, EFL and ESL teachers should provide students with strategies for developing their conversational skills.

Based on Graham Marr (2004), there are several reasons to focus on listening and speaking in the entire process of learning and teaching a language the most important of which is the fact that we, as human beings, have been learning languages ​​through our ears and mouths for thousands of years. Although speaking is not an established course in most schools, it turns out that the speaking ability is a basic skill a child needs to succeed in life.

Shumin (2002) believes that language skills include more than merely understanding the linguistic components of information and developing language skills; in fact, we need to do more than just understanding the grammar and memorizing the vocabulary. Chastain (1988) found that, similar to any other language skill, learners of the speaking skill need clear instructions to speak. Language learners need to learn to speak with others in order to be able to communicate with them. Dialogue allows you to change the rhythm of the classroom. He went on to say that the ability to speak a language motivates students to learn the language elements they may need for future communication while listening and speaking.

Lindsay and Knight (2006) found that to be a good speaker, you need to consider certain points including the ability to create a coherent language, to interact, to talk about knowledge gaps, to speak in different contexts, and to balance accuracy and fluidity. Bigate (2001) believed that teaching oral English only needs to design repetitive oral structures, with the focus on improving the accuracy and fluency of grammar and pronunciation.

Brown and Yule (1983) started their argument on the nature of spoken language by making a distinction between the spoken and written language. They argued that language teaching has been related to written language teaching for most of its history. Well-structured sentences are broken down into well-structured paragraphs. On the other hand, spoken language is composed of short, usually fragmented, and differently pronounced sentences. Oftentimes, there are repetitions and overlaps between a speaker and the others. Brown and Yule also mentioned that a poorly organized syntax, employing ambiguous words and phrases, and using wildcards such as "good" and "ahha" make spoken language not so sensitive. It is conceptually more intensive than other types of language such as explanatory prose. Their suggestion is that teachers interested in teaching the spoken code rather than the written language should be able to answer the following questions:

* “What is the appropriate form of spoken language to teach?
* From the point of view of pronunciation, what is a reasonable model?
* How important is pronunciation?
* Is it any more important than teaching appropriate handwriting in a foreign language?
* If so, why?
* From the point of view of the structures taught, is it all right to teach the spoken language as if it were exactly like the written language, but with a few 'spoken expressions' thrown in?
* Is it appropriate to teach the same structures to all foreign language students, no matter what their age is or their intentions in learning the spoken language?
* Are those structures which are described in standard grammar, the structures which our students should be expected to produce when they speak English?
* How is it possible to give students any sort of meaningful practice in producing spoken English?” (p. 3)

Brown and Yule (1983) also believed in a meaningful distinction between the two main functions of language: the transactional function and the interactive function. The former is mainly related to information transmission. The latter, however, is the function by which we maintain public relations. Brown and Yule (1983) described the interactive voice as a dialogue and a social function. The focus is on the speakers and how they want to present themselves to each other, while transactive language focuses attention on what is said or done and understanding is the most important thing. While interactive language is the language that maintains social relations, transactional language is message-oriented.

Brown and Yule (1983) asserted that language learning is mostly focused on developing skills through short interactive communication, in which learners only need to use one or two phrases at a time.

Nunan (1992) mentioned another important difference when studying language development: the difference between dialogue and monologue. The ability to speak continuously is very different from interacting with one or more speakers for trading and interaction purposes. Native speakers can use the language interactively, and not all native speakers have the opportunity to improvise specific topics in front of a group of listeners.

Bygate (1996) studied the interactivity of language. Bygate distinguishes between perceptual-motor skills and interaction skills related to the correct use of sound and language structure, including the use of perceptual-motor skills for communication. Through demonstration dialogue, model development, oral practice, and other activities, skills are cultivated in language learners. Bygate suggests that students should develop interaction management skills and the ability to discuss meaning in particular. Interaction management includes such things as when and how to speak, when to introduce or change the topic, how to invite others to speak, and how to conduct a conversation.

According to Nunan (1996), the bottom-up/top-down distinction can be applied to speaking. Whereas in the bottom-up approach to speaking, speakers are supposed to start with the smallest unit of language, i.e. individual sounds, and develop their mastery over words and then sentences and finally the discourse, speakers in the top-down approach begin with the larger chunks of language embedded in meaningful contexts. Their knowledge of these contexts should later help them comprehend and employ the smaller elements of language correctly. The elements of successful oral communication are claimed to be as listed in the following section:

* the ability to articulate phonological features of the language comprehensibly;
* mastery of stress, rhythm, intonation patterns; an acceptable degree of fluency;
* transactional and interpersonal skills;
* skills in taking short and long speaking turns;
* skills in the management of the interaction;
* skills in negotiating meaning;
* conversational listening skills (successful conversations require good listeners as well as good speakers);
* skills in knowing about and negotiating purposes for conversations;
* using appropriate conversational formulae and fillers. (Nunan, 1989, p. 32)

Brown (2001) declared that a review of the current issues in teaching oral communication provides us with some outlook to moral practical considerations. He claimed that by asking someone "Do you speak English?" we usually imply “Are you able to carry on a reasonably fluent conversation?” Successful language acquisition is almost always marked by showing our ability to achieve pragmatic goals with other speakers via interactive discourse. The objectives and the procedures which are deployed to teach conversation are enormously varied; they depend on who the students and the teachers are and what the overall context of the class is. Current research on the pedagogy of teaching conversation has introduced some parameters which can assist develop our own objectives and techniques.

This dilemma – whether one should speak a lot and simply ignore the fact that they make mistakes, or whether one should chew over every structure they are about to say and speak only when they are perfectly sure that the structure is correct – is an evergreen issue among learners of foreign languages (Hemerka, 2011). Undoubtedly, learners who want to work abroad, in particular, will very often experience a situation in which they will not know how to say something, but still will have to express themselves somehow. This premise could lead to an oversimplification that fluency should always be paramount. It is, of course, better to say something than never say anything because one does not know how. That is why we must help our learners develop their confidence as speakers and appreciate every effort they make to express themselves, share their ideas, or perform a certain language function. If the class often remains silent rather than say something potentially wrong, the teacher has very probably not succeeded in their task to “untie their learners´ tongues“ and teach English for communication. However, we must not either forget that one of the most important tasks of the teacher is to constantly develop their learners´ knowledge of the language and supervise their performance so that they learn the correct language. The learners want to and do their best to speak well, while still rely on the teacher to monitor their production and correct them or help where necessary.

**2.2.2 Characteristics of Speech**

It is helpful to consider the nature and conditions of speech. Levelt’s model of speaking (1999) aimed at describing the process of language production for communicative interaction to the articulation of sound. For this complex process, there are some sub-components.

Conceptualization

Formulation

Articulation

Syntactic Planning

Lexicalization

Figure 2.1

*The Processes of Speech Production*

The three main areas of speech production are:

* Conceptualization: The speaker must decide the message he wants to convey. Little is known about this stage. The end is the stage where a decision is made on the message itself but there is no verbal form. It is also called prelingual information. Or the presentation layer of the message. This stage is usually represented by a thought bubble.
* Presentation: The speaker must translate his information into language form. This step includes:
* Lexicalization: choose the correct words
* Syntactic planning: arrange the words in the correct order and add grammatical elements
* Pronunciation/execution
* The speaker must plan the movements needed to convey the message.

**2.2.3 Characteristics of a Good Speaker**

The learner’s speaking skills and habits will affect the success of any communication he or she has (Ur, 1996). The speaker should be able to predict the expected patterns of a particular discourse situation and then reproduce them. They also need to deal with discrete elements, such as rotations, paraphrases, etc., to provide or redirect feedback (Carter & Nunan, 2002). For example, students participating in communication with the above-mentioned dealers should know the general pattern that this interaction follows, acquire this knowledge as the communication progresses, and choose the correct vocabulary to describe the item he or she is looking for. If the secretary does not understand the description, they should rephrase or highlight words to help clarify the description, and use appropriate facial expressions to show that they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the service. Other skills and types of knowledge that may be affected by teaching are:

* Voice, percussion, rhythmic structure, and language intonation;
* Precise use of grammatical structure;
* Assess the characteristics of the target audience, including general knowledge or common standards, participants’ Status and power, degree of interest or disagreement;
* Choose vocabulary that suits the audience, discussion topic, and speech environment;
* Use strategies to improve comprehension, such as highlighting, paraphrase, or checking the listener’s understanding;
* Use gestures or body language; and
* Pay attention to the success of the interaction and adjust language components, such as vocabulary, speaking speed, and grammatical complexity, to maximize audience understanding and participation (Brown, 2005).

Language instructors should screen students’ language to specify what skills and knowledge areas they already possess and which areas they are in dire need to develop. Many students equate the ability to speak a language with proficiency in a language, so they regard language learning as the ability to speak the language, or, as Nunan (1991) said, success is measured by the ability to maintain dialogues in the target language. Therefore, if students cannot learn to speak or cannot speak in the language class, they will soon lose motivation and enthusiasm in learning. However, when an appropriate course is taught in the correct way, the classroom performance can be very interesting, leading to an increase of the overall motivation of the students.

Spoken language requires learners not only to be able to express certain elements of the language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (language ability) but also to understand when, why, and how language is produced (social language ability). A good speaker combines various skills and knowledge in order to be successful in a particular speech.

**2.2.4 Speaking Activities**

Ur (1996) found that good speech performance has certain characteristics; in these courses, people say a lot to students; everyone has the opportunity to speak, and the degree of participation is fairly even among the students. The students are also very active and interested in their learning; they use relevant, understandable, and sufficiently precise language. The ensuing question is which activities tend to exhibit these characteristics and seem to be useful in promoting collaborative group practice.

Ur (1996) divides the development of language communication activities into two categories: subject-related and task-related. Thematic activities are usually "divergent" or open because the focus is on the discussion. There are usually no specific goals or achievable results. The goal is for students to talk about the topic being discussed. These actions include things like discussions and debates. These measures do not seem to be conducive to negotiations. On the other hand, task-based activities are essentially "convergent", requiring students to utilize the target language to achieve a specific result or consensus. In the classroom, more emphasis is placed on ensuring that students express their meaning in all the languages ​​they understand, leading to understanding, rather than using specific language features or discussing specific topics for example.

Florez (1999) gives an example of an oral course that includes topics and specific tasks. The course entails the followings:

1. Preparation: It shows students a picture of the two talking in an informal home environment (the adjustment is determined by preliminary demand analysis). Invite them to brainstorm on what people might be discussing (for example,
2. Presentation: Show some small chat video clips in a casual situation. Have students fill out a worksheet explaining the topics covered, the background of the speech, and all the sentence descriptions or lists Typical small talk, and then discuss topics suitable for small talk, in some cases factors that affect topic selection (for example, participant's attitude, physical environment) and typical idioms used in small talk. Write down this information.
3. Practice: Provide students with specific information about the participants and the environment in which the small talk takes place. List the paired topics that the participants may discuss and the simple sentences they may use, and end with these simple sentences based on impromptu dialogue.
4. Evaluation: Based on their situation, provide the couple with a teacher-prepared dialogue. Ask them to compare the impromptu dialogue with the prepared dialogue and discuss the similarities and differences between the two and why.
5. Extension. Invite students individually or in groups to different locations in the community (work, school, church, bus stop) and record the conversations they hear. The whole class discusses the results.

Teachers can use and apply many types of lectures in the classroom. The first type of speech is that of teachers and students. In this case, the teacher controls the discussion and the students participate in the discussion. A dialogue to explain the new grammar rules is presented on the blackboard. The teacher delves into the issue and puts questions on the students. The second type of speech is student speech (AlZahrani, 2014).

Coulthard (1977) pointed out that this type of speech has received great attention in recent years due to the emphasis on teaching staff in various disciplines. It also happens between the teacher and the student or many other students and the teacher participating in this discussion (AlZahrani, 2014). He discusses the content of the course with the students, asks questions, uses the students' ideas, gives lectures, gives instructions, and criticizes or approves the answers of the students in the discussion. On the other hand, students benefit from the teacher’s experience. Al-Zahrani (2014) believes that the main focus of this lecture is between the teachers and the students who are usually initiated and directed by the teachers. The language of students can be extended to authentic and sincere communication or languages in which teachers play a less important role (AlZahrani, 2014).

According to Harmer (2009), teachers should consider three points when talking with them. The first thing is the kind of the language the students are able to understand, so that it is understandable for all students from different levels. The second consideration is the teachers’ commitment to thinking about what they will say to their students because their speech is a resource for learners knowledge. Finally, teachers have to identify the ways in which they will speak such as the voice, tone and intonation.

**2.2.5 Assessing Speaking Accuracy**

Regarding language assessment, Joiner and Jones (2003) believe that among macro-language skills, people generally believe that spoken language, especially that of a second language or foreign language, is the most difficult language skill to achieve. The language skills used to assess communication skills depend on the objectives of the assessment.

According to Luoma (2004), there are two methods for assessing language ability: the observation and the structures methods. Whereas in the observation method, students’ behavior is unknowingly observed and evaluated; in the structured method, students are required to solve one or more specific oral communication tasks and then evaluated for their performance on the task. Homework can be done by the test administrator and students individually, or in a group or classroom.

As Luoma has described, oral assessments are divided into three common types, namely:

• The overall assessment is the general assessment of the student's progress.

• The core feature assessment assesses the ability of students to achieve specific communication goals, such as persuading the audience to accept a specific point of view.

• The analytical scale measures student performance in various aspects of communication, such as mediation, organization, content, and language.

Luoma went on to say that a rating system can describe different language skills on a scale, or indicate the presence or absence of a feature. Thornbury (2000) established the following criteria for assessing fluency:

1. Students are fluent in natural language. They will not hesitate and it is easy to understand what they are talking about.
2. Students can combine ideas to form information or arguments. In addition to the simplest, you can also create complex proposal templates to complete the work.
3. Students can express their thoughts in different ways, continue to talk, ask questions, and the like to keep the conversation going.

Accuracy is usually defined as the natural use of various language features, including pronunciation, grammatical morphemes, and perhaps most notably vocabulary choice (Wulff & Gries, 2011). In this regard, fluency is considered a pragmatic counterpart.

 According to Srivastava (2014), accuracy refers to the ability of students to form grammatically correct sentences. Students must not only know the correct grammatical rules of the language but also be able to speak and write accurately.

Skehan and Foster (1999) have defined accuracy as the ability to avoid errors, which may reflect the learner’s greater control over language, and a conservative approach to avoiding complex structures that may lead to errors. Hausen and Kuikken (2009) believe that accuracy is error-free. The researchers distinguish between two types of accuracy measures: specific measures of accuracy and general measures of accuracy (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005)

As a specific measure of accuracy (Crookes, 1989; Kawauchi, 2005; Wigglesworth, 1997), researchers tried to measure learners’ ability and specific ways of development. In contrast to specific accuracy measures, overall accuracy is a more realistic and sensitive measure (Skehan & Foster, 1999) and reflects more general changes in accuracy (Skehan & Foster, 1997). Generally speaking, accuracy can be defined by the percentage of error-free language (Foster & Skehan, 1996), error-free T-units (Ortega, 1999; Robinson, 1995), error-free AS (Lambert & Engler, 2007), number of errors per every 100 words (Kuiken, Vedder, 2007; WolfeQuintero, Inagaki & Kim, 1998), number of errors per T-units (Bygate, 2001), number of errors per a hundred words (Mehnert, 1998); percentage of plural form use in the target language (Crooks, 1989); and target vocabulary (Skehan & Foster, 1997).

In order to enhance speaking accuracy, the students need more speaking practice so activities like public speaking, role-play and group interaction should be encouraged. When students reach the intermediate level, they become ‘reasonably independent’ language users where they have a good command of accuracy in the language. Speakers who are in the advanced level will have perfect fluency and this is when the focus is shifted again to accuracy. Some fluent speakers may make mistakes even though they are at the advanced level so it is important to help them correct their mistakes in order for them to learn better. By correcting students’ mistakes, teachers not only provide feedback but also make it clear that accuracy is important (Thornbury, 2000). As such, this shows just how equally important fluency and accuracy are, especially in second language acquisition.

It seems that EFL learners tend to be divided by nature into two groups. Learners from the first group value accuracy more than fluency, and vice-versa. Of course, the boundaries between the two groups are not clear cut and we cannot say of anybody that they are, for instance, perfectly fluent, but speak totally incorrectly (Hemerka, 2011). Nonetheless, if we imagine two extreme examples of learners from each of the two groups, we can see how the two factors – accuracy and fluency – often collide and act somehow antagonistically.

Accurate speakers fear saying something wrong and concentrate on producing correct language in all circumstances. They show much better command of language structures, but their reluctance to speak and the fact that they are too tied by the grammar rules and restrictions are the causes of their considerably lower fluency.

Harmer (2001) suggests providing feedback to students. When accuracy is emphasized in performances, teachers must identify and correct students’ mistakes. Therefore, there are several ways to provide feedback when accuracy is reduced:

1. Mistakes or mistakes made

2. Confirmation or question

3. Finding a quick way to help students activate the rules they already know

4. Facial expressions that indicate a problematic expression or gesture

5. Repeating this sentence

Harmer also said that a distinction should be made between communicative activities and non-communicative activities. In non-communicative activities, it is very important to correct mistakes. At the same time, communicative activities aim to improve language fluency.

Pinter (2006) found that one of the challenges faced by language learners is to accurately reproduce the language as a native speaker. This has become a problem because language learners must practice a lot and think and speak together in the target language. Speaking practice starts with practice, study, and pattern repetition.

Obviously, speaking ability includes the ability to maintain language accurately and fluently. In a communicative environment, grammatical accuracy may rank second in understanding information. Yet, students need a grammatical foundation to develop their own language rather than copy other people’s established phrases (Pachler & Field, 2001).

**2.3 The Role of Discussion in Speaking**

Richards (2008) believes that for many foreign language learners, the most important consideration is proficiency in English. The success of students in language learning is based on their assessment of the progress of their language ability. In order to achieve this goal, teachers and language teaching materials must provide the strategies or supplementary skills needed to develop good oral skills.

Researchers have proposed various methods to activate learners' existing knowledge, such as using images, movies, and even role-playing games (CelceMurcia, 2001).

Preparing learners for the concepts they follow in a speaking classroom is the only thing that activities do and make the speaking comprehension task more tangible; they also connect the new concepts to the already existing ones in the learners’ mind. Ringler and Weber (1984) have postulated that speaking activities are those enabling activities that provide a learner with the necessary background to organize activities and to comprehend materials. Such experiences involve learners in dealing with the purposes followed by speaking and constructing the knowledge base essential for comprehending the content and the structure of the materials. According to them, such activities activate prior knowledge, construct background knowledge, and focus learners’ attention on the speaking context.

Research also shows that discussion can activate students’ knowledge and improve their understanding of the subject through information exchange. The discussion can start with simple questions about the subject, or it can start with an "expectation guide", a series of often provocative statements designed to challenge the learner's knowledge and beliefs (CelceMurcia, 2001).

Class discussion is called the main method of collaborative learning methods. Olsen and Kagen (1992) defined cooperative learning as “group learning activities, in which learning relies on socially structured group communication between learners, in which each learner is responsible for his own learning and has the motivation to improve learning” (p. 65). Kagan (1989) defines collaborative learning as a structured method of collaborative learning based on the creation, analysis, and system application of structured or free-form content to organize social interaction in the classroom. The structure usually involves a series of steps, and each step is prohibited. An important cornerstone of this approach is the distinction between "structure" and "action." You can design many great collaborative activities, such as creating team walls or patchwork quilts. Such activities are almost always specific content; therefore, they cannot be used to provide a variety of academic content. The structure can be reused in almost any subject, across different learning levels, and at different points in the curriculum plan.

According to Johnson, Johnson, and Golubek (2008), the purpose of the discussion is to make students pay attention to the materials they have learned, promote learning, ensure that students process and rehearse the materials cognitively, and summarize what they have learned. After learning, they get prepared for the next meeting. We should make sure the important aspect is clear, and that the assignments and instructions are accurate. Finally, we shoild encourage the group to provide specific products (such as written responses).

In this line, three discussion types are described below:

1. Introductory focused discussion: The teacher assigns learners to two or three groups and explains the task of answering questions and the positive interaction to reach consensus goals in four to five minutes. Homework should promote the preparation and organization of students' knowledge of the topic to be presented, and set expectations for the content of the lecture. The small group size guarantees individual responsibility. Reasons and consensus are needed.
2. Targeted and regular discussions: The teacher divides the speech into 10-15 minute parts to keep active adults focused on the information presented at the time. After each section, they ask students to talk to the person next to them and jointly answer a question (specific enough, students can answer in about three minutes). The question requires cognitive processing of the material just presented on the part of students. The program is:
	* 1. Each student formulates his or her answer.
		2. Students share their answers with their partners.
		3. Students listen carefully to the reactions of their partners.
		4. By combining the two reactions, referring to the other's ideas, and synthesizing them, peers create a new reaction that goes beyond the original expression of each member.

A question may involve students in:

1. Summarizing the material just introduced.
2. Responding to presented theories, concepts, or information.
3. Predicting what will happen next and making an assumption.
4. Solving the problem.
5. Putting the materials connected with the previous studies into a conceptual framework.
6. Resolving conceptual conflicts caused by the presentation.
7. Final discussion: The teacher gives the students a final discussion task, which lasts for about four to five minutes. The homework necessitates students to recapitulate what they have learned from the lecture and integrate it into the existing conceptual framework conditions. The homework can also tell students what the homework includes or what will be introduced in the next lesson.

**2.4 Empirical Studies**

This section reviews some of the related empirical studies on the main tenets of this study in language pedagogy. A number of empirical studies in Iraq and abroad were reviewed as to investigate the role of different types of teaching techniques, and especially discussions, in the speaking ability of L2 learners.

Jasmine (2004) measured a small extended classroom conversation at an ESL high school in Hong Kong and compared it with a typical institutional conversation conducted by teachers. The results show that teachers and students show more dynamic and less asymmetrical roles when conducting clear small talks. The study illustrates that students actively participate in exchanges in terms of theme setting, sequence beginning, sequence development, and coordination of meaning.

Nikopur, Amini Farsani, and Mahmoudi (2010) measured the effect of the observer's ring technique on the writing ability of participants. In order to achieve the research goals, a quasi-experimental research method was developed. The participants in the experimental group were 18 years of age. The research tools used written pamphlets, Oxford tests, and writing scoring scales. The participants in the experimental group were asked to write an essay as homework. Students’s works were brought into the classroom and corrected by their classmates; the teacher only provided feedback as an observer-evaluator and the teachers in the control group corrected their homework. The results of the study showed that the writing skills of the participants in the experimental group improved significantly during the research process. In other words, the observer ring technique showed a positive and significant impact on the writing ability of Iranian students learning English as a foreign language. This finding can provide a new model for interactive feedback in ESL writing courses.

Regarding the discussion on role of improving oral skills, Zahedi and Tabatabai (2012) attempted to examine the impact of co-education on oral performance and the motivation of Iranian foreigners to learn English. Seventy-two adult students participated in the competition, of whom 50 were selected based on the results of their exchange goal placement test at the Intermediate Level of the School of Arts and Culture. They used a post-test control plan prior to the start of treatment. Participants were divided into two groups; the experimental group received a semester of co-education for men and women by studying and talking together; the control group was trained in accordance with generally accepted methods. The data includes 1) the results of two oral assignments and 2) the results of the motivation questionnaire. The results show that co-education can significantly improve the oral skills of adult English learners as foreign language learners and their motivation to learn English.

Menggo, Ketut, and Made (2013) studied the differences in oral skills between students who are taught using discussion techniques and those who are trained using traditional techniques; it was found that the interaction between the spoken skills used and the motivation to learn English has a great impact on students’ language ability. They also tried to find out the differences in oral skills between English learners who are highly motivated by the discussion method and those who use traditional methods as well as the role of motivation in the language abilities of these students. The results of the two-way analysis of variance showed that the discussion method is more effective in cultivating students' ability. This method has also proved to be very effective in helping EFL students to be motivated to speak in English.

Argawati (2014) measured the impact of group discussions on improving students' oral skills. The researcher also tried to describe how group discussions can improve students’ oral skills. Classroom action research was employed as the method for conducting this research. The study was conducted in two cycles with each cycle including three sessions. Each meeting entailed a welcome event, the main event, and the closing ceremony. The findings show that students’ performance and achievement have been improved. The students' ability to speak in terms of quantity and quality was slightly improved.

Keong, Ali, and Hamid (2015) studied the difficulties faced by Iraqi ESL students when communicating in English. A questionnaire was distributed to 36 students and a series of interviews with 8 of the 36 Gamiana University students were used to collect data and analyze three main issues; (1) English for EFL students in Iraq (Difficulties in oral English), (2) the reasons for the difficulties, and (3) differences in students' English proficiency. The results show that the poor English proficiency of Iraqi EFL students is the main reason for many of their language difficulties. These difficulties are found in freshmen and fourth-graders, but they are observed more among freshmen.

DaifAllah and Imran Khan (2016) studied the needs of English learners for English proficiency and studied the impact of open discussions as an extracurricular dialogue activity on the development of students' oral communication skills. Use questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and oral preliminary tests to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The needs and benefits are clearly identified, and the methods to meet these needs are more innovative. Subsequent oral English results show that through the use of public seminars, students’ language skills have been significantly developed, which provides a relaxed, carefree learning environment and improves students’ skills. They gain self-confidence by actively participating in real communication with other students and teachers.

Sotudehnama and Hashamdar (2016) measured the effectiveness of two different speech acts, namely oral presentation and free discussion. To this end, 44 middle school students were invited to participate in the research. Half of the participants received an oral report, while the other half (22 in the other two classes) received eight classes of free discussion. After the quantitative phase of the study was completed, these two activities were conducted in another eight meetings between the two groups. Independent sample t-test results showed that students who experienced oral presentations were significantly better than students who discussed freely, although both exercises were significantly beneficial. After passing the second phase (the last 8 phases), targeted random inspections were conducted. Thematic analysis showed that free discussion and oral reporting had their own advantages and disadvantages. According to the results, it makes sense to additionally include these two activities.

Farabi, Hassanvand, and Gorjian (2017) conducted language training through free oral presentations. They wanted to measure the impact of guided oral reports and fluent oral reports on the development of Iranian students’ English conversation skills as a foreign language. When free and supervised oral presentations differed significantly in teaching oral skills to below-average ESL students, 60 homogeneous participants were selected in Ahwaz. Then they were deliberately divided into two experimental (i.e. controlled groups of oral report and free oral report), with 30 participants in each group. Subsequently, the two groups of participants received the researcher's initial oral expression test. The researcher used a guided oral report to teach the oral group, while the participants in the free oral group learned in the form of the free oral report. At the end of the treatment, the researchers conducted a final test to determine the effect of the treatment on improving the students’ speech. According to the post-test results, this group performed better than the free group. Finally, it outlines the significance of the research and suggests that teachers of English as a foreign language should use guided oral reports to develop the oral skills of language learners until they reach the intermediate level.

Khalil (2018) studied the impact of English as a foreign language teaching strategy on college students in Iraq. Sixty Iraqi students who learned English as a foreign language participated in the study. The results of this study show that the use of language strategies such as moderate interaction strategies, social interaction strategies, reduction strategies, and performance strategies improves the oral skills of English learners.

Rini, Arifin, and Susilavati (2018) conducted a study to see whether discussion tasks are effective in language teaching based on analytical presentation text. In addition, they aimed to know how important the effectiveness of using discussion tasks is in conveying analytical dialogue with explanatory text. The participants were 21 students and the results showed that the discussion task could be effectively used to teach speech from the analysis of the presentation text. The use of discussion tasks was found to be more effective in conveying analytical presentation text to eleventh-grade students.

As can be seen, some Iraqi and non-Iraqi researchers have made an attempt to improve EFL learners' speaking ability, and to reach this aim, they have used a variety of activities and strategies such as the focus on form, negotiated feedback, interactive strategies, and structured discussion. However, few studies have compared the impact of structured discussion and observer ring on EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. Because speaking accuracy is crucial for many EFL learners and language teachers are interested in using a variety of strategies to help learners, it seems that the present study could fill the gap in the literature by providing a more comprehensive picture of the impacts of two types of strategies for speaking improvement.

The review of the literature was presented in chapter two and it attempted to clarify the important variables used in the thesis. The chapter initially introduced the theoretical background of speaking in English language learning. Besides, a number of related studies regarding the role of speaking in developing L2 learners’ language ability were presented. The chapter then proceeded to provide characteristics of speaking along with the critical analysis of the conditions and facilities required for the use of speaking activities in the classroom. The review concluded with a brief summary of the empirical studies and their implications for the use of speaking techniques, especially the structured discussion and the observer ring, in language classes.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, a comprehensive description of the design and the participants of the study, the instruments for data collection, the procedure of data collection, and the data analysis are provided. The section on participants introduces the number, age, sex, level, first language, and location of the participants. The instruments section introduces the details of instruments used in this study for collecting data. The procedure section describes what was done for collecting the data and how the data was collected in the course of the research. Finally, in the data analysis section, a brief introduction to statistical methods of data analysis is provided.

**3.2 Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of 60 female language learners who were at the intermediate level. They were studying English in English language institutes located in the city of Al-Amarah, Iraq. The age range of the participants was between 22 and 32, and their native language was Arabic. The participants of the main study were primarily selected based on a language proficiency test, i.e., Oxford Placement Test (OPT). They were selected according to cut-off scores for obtaining the intermediate level of language proficiency. Those who obtained 47 (out of 70) and above were regarded as the participants of the study. Then, they were randomly assigned to three equal groups of structured discussion (*n =* 20), small talk (*n =* 20), and observer ring (*n* = 20). The details are described in the procedure section.

**3.3 Instruments**

The instruments in the current study are the oral part of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT, 2007) and the Preliminary English Test (PET, 2004). T he following is a detailed description of the tools.

**3.3.1 Oxford Placement Test (OPT)**

 The OPT was used to determine the participants’ current language skills; the test enabled the researcher to select students who were suitable for the research conditions; the Oxford level test was used to assess students’ grammar and vocabulary skills as well as reading and writing; it also enabled the researcher to better understand the level of participants. This test consists of 5 multiple-choice questions and 5 true/false questions in the reading part (10 points) and the writing part (10 points). It also includes 50 multiple-choice questions of grammar and vocabulary (50 points) (Appendix A). The time limit for the 50 multiple-choice questions and the reading task is 45 minutes, and the time to do the writing task is about 20 minutes.

**3.3.2 Pretest and Posttest**

In order to measure the speech accuracy of students before and after treatment, the spoken part of English prediction was selected as the prediction (PET, 2004). The oral part consisted of four parts and each candidate interacted with the interlocutor. The Interlocutors asked candidates one by one. The questions included facts and personal information. The participants answered questions about their status regarding their education, job and so on, the past experiences, and the future plans. In the second task, the candidates communicated with each other. The candidates received visual stimuli to solve the discussion problem. The interlocutors used standardized rubrics to set up the activities. In the third task, each candidate received a color photo in turn and was asked to talk about it. Both photos deal with the same subject. The fourth task was a general dialogue. The candidates communicated with each other and the conversation theme is developed around the theme defined in the third task. The interlocutors used standardized rubrics to set up the activities.

The posttest was a similar version of pretest which was used at the end of the study.

**3.4 Research Design and Procedure**

This study had a quasi-experimental (with three groups and both the pre-test and the post-test) design. The independent variables of this study were structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring and the dependent variable of this study was accuracy in speaking English as a foreign language. The age, gender, and proficiency level of the participants were assumed as the control variables.

This study was conducted on an online platform (i.e., Zoom) because of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the study, OPT was used to prove the consistency of participants in their general English proficiency. Then the participants were divided into three groups at random and equal in size. The PET parameter test was performed on the voice accuracy of the participants before treatment. In this study, the percentage between the error-free setting and the overall setting was used to measure accuracy. Error-free sentences are the sentences with no errors in syntax, morphology, or word order. Vocabulary errors will only be considered when the words used do not exist in English or are clearly inappropriate (Skehan & Foster, 1997).

Afterwards, the groups received treatment. The difference between the groups lies in the type of discussion and the feedback which they receive. In the structured discussion group, the participants went through a framework to discuss a topic (selected by the teacher from their textbook by O'Neill and Snow, 2017) and they received no feedback. On the other hand, the participants of the observer ring group freely discussed the proposed topics but they received a type of feedback technique which is called the observer ring in this study. In the small talk group, the learners talked to each other without intervention by the teacher, and then they received feedback.

Concerning the structured discussion group who received structured discussion (introductory-focused discussions), the researcher selected a topic and gave the students five minutes to think about this topic and brainstorm. They discussed the topic together. Furthermore, the researcher was available to help them where it was necessary. In each session, the learners were asked to speak and do some activities simultaneously such as classifying the issues, judging them, and sequencing the events. These activities required learners to get into different degrees of cognitive involvement and different degrees of wait-time strategies in their conversations. The researcher allowed the participants to select the next speaker in the classroom discussions. It could help them to raise their confidence in using turn-taking in their conversations. Teachers gave students the opportunity to use their knowledge, skills, and strategies in different contexts and for different purposes.

For the small talk group and in each session, the teacher introduced a situation in which the participants had to speak in order to exchange information and to engage in casual talk similar to real life. In the small talk group, the learners talked to each other without intervention by the teacher and then they received feedback. During this practice, a topic for the conversation was chosen from their textbook and the learners were required to make only one or two utterances at a time.

With regard to the observer ring group, general topics from the book were introduced to the learners as the topics of conversation. As suggested by Nikoopour, Amini Farsani, and Mahmoodi (2010), in each session, the participants were required to sit in a circle and take turns to talk about the topic. The teacher observed them and made notes if necessary. The participants were asked to participate actively in the speaking activities and take longer turns to discuss the topic. After the discussion, based on the participants’ performance, the teacher provided essential corrective group feedback in a way that the students’ errors were detected by asking questions or taking a break to give students the opportunity to complete the teacher’s printout. After each session, based on the participants’ performance, the teacher provided essential feedback. For all groups of the study, each of the 10 sessions took 90 minutes. Finally, the groups' performances were measured by the speaking section of a similar version of PET.

Each group was compared based on the test results. The candidates were tested in pairs by two examiners. One of the examiners acted as a dialogue partner, and the other examiner acted as an evaluator. If the evaluator did not take the test, the interviewer took the test. The examiner switched roles during the exam but did not switch during the colleague's exam. The test lasted ten to twelve minutes and consisted of four parts to ensure the accuracy of the candidates’ speech. All oral reports of the participants were recorded for evaluation.

**3.5 Data Analysis**

The data were collected and fed to SPSS software version 26.0 to perform statistical analysis. In this study, accuracy was measured by “the percentage of the ratio of error-free T-units to total T-units. An error-free clause is one in which there is no error in syntax, morphology, or word order. Errors in lexis are counted only if the word used is nonexistent in English or indisputably inappropriate” (Skehan & Foster, 1997, p. 195).

 A one-way ANOVA was conducted in order to show whether there is any significant difference among the three groups regarding their performance on the pretest. Inter-rater reliability analysis was performed using Pearson correlation in order to see the extent to which two sets of participants' scores on pretest and posttest rated by two raters were correlated. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to prove the normality of the scores of the pretest and the posttest among the three groups of the study. In order to find the participants’ improvement in speaking accuracy, three paired sample t-tests between their performance on pretest and posttest were performed. In order to ensure that there is no significant difference between the three groups regarding their speaking accuracy, a one-way ANOVA on their performance on posttests was performed.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the present study was to explore the comparative impact of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring on achieving accuracy in speaking skill. The data was collected carefully and submitted to SPSS (version 26.0) in order to compute the required statistical analyses and address the research question and hypotheses of the study. This chapter presents the detailed statistical analyses of the collected data. Every step which was taken in analyzing the obtained data is presented in the form of tables, figures, and graphs in this chapter.

**4.2** **Restatement of the Research Hypotheses**

The data were analyzed using different statistical procedures in order to test the hypotheses of the study given below:

* H01: Structured discussion does not have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.
* H02: Small talk does not have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.
* H03: Observer ring does not have any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.
* H04: There are not any significant differences between the impact of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy.

**4.3 Analysis of the Proficiency Test**

The Oxford Placement Test was given to all participants of this study (*n =* 74). The objective behind giving the proficiency test was to show the participants’ homogeneity or to illustrate whether they have almost the same knowledge of English. Table 4.1 presents the detailed descriptive statistics related to the proficiency test.

Table 4.1*The Frequency of scores obtained from the proficiency test*

|  |
| --- |
| OPT |
|  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 22.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| 28.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 2.7 |
| 29.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 4.1 |
| 30.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 5.4 |
| 33.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 6.8 |
| 35.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 8.1 |
| 40.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 9.5 |
| 41.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 10.8 |
| 42.00 | 2 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 13.5 |
| 43.00 | 2 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 16.2 |
| 46.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 17.6 |
| 48.00 | 5 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 24.3 |
| 49.00 | 2 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 27.0 |
| 50.00 | 4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 32.4 |
| 51.00 | 3 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 36.5 |
| 52.00 | 2 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 39.2 |
| 53.00 | 1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 40.5 |
| 54.00 | 3 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 44.6 |
| 55.00 | 4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 50.0 |
| 56.00 | 7 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 59.5 |
| 57.00 | 4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 64.9 |
| 58.00 | 4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 70.3 |
| 59.00 | 4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 75.7 |
| 60.00 | 4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 81.1 |
| 61.00 | 5 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 87.8 |
| 62.00 | 3 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 91.9 |
| 63.00 | 2 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 94.6 |
| 64.00 | 2 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 97.3 |
| 65.00 | 2 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 74 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

According to the Oxford Placement Test (2007), intermediate learners are those who attain 47 and more. In other words, the total score should not be less than 47. Needless to say, the OPT scores are out of 70. As seen in Table 4.2, fourteen participants did not manage to attain the intended scores for the intermediate level of language proficiency. As a result, they were excluded from the sample.

**4.4 Analysis of the Pretest**

A pre-test (i.e., the speaking section of PET) was administered to the members of all three groups so that their speaking ability could be checked at the beginning of the study. Two experienced teachers scored the pretest independently using the PET rating scale. The scores are out of 25. Table 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics of the pretest.

Table 4.2 *Descriptive statistics of groups' performance on the pre-test*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Pretest | Structured Discussion | Rater 1 | 20 | 0 | 13 | 6.17 | 3.202 |
| Rater 2 | 20 | 1 | 13 | 6.13 | 3.371 |
| Observer Ring | Rater 1 | 20 | 1 | 11 | 5.70 | 2.891 |
| Rater 2 | 20 | 1 | 12 | 5.87 | 3.014 |
| Small talk | Rater 1 | 20 | 1 | 13 | 6.45 | 3.120 |
| Rater 2 | 20 | 1 | 12 | 6.20 | 3.562 |

Since two raters obtained the pretest scores, a Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was performed to test the inter-rater reliability of these scores in the three groups of the study. The findings are given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 *Inter-rater reliability of all groups’ performances on the pretest*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pretest structured discussion (Rater1) | Pretest structured discussion (Rater2) |
| Pretest structured discussion (Rater1) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .985\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | Pretest observer ring (Rater 1) | Pretest observer ring (Rater 2) |
| Pretest observer ring (Rater 1) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .986\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | Pretest Small talk(Rater 1) | Pretest Small talk (Rater 2) |
| Pretest Small talk (Rater 1) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .981\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
| N | 20 | 20 |
| \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |

The results of Pearson correlation for all three groups showed that there was a significant relationship (*r =* 0.98, *p* < 0.05) between the pretest scores obtained by the two raters. consequently, a highly significant inter-rater reliability of scores for all groups was obtained.

The mean of two sets of pretest speaking scores obtained by the two raters for structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk groups was calculated (see Table 4.4.)

Table 4.4 *Descriptive Statistics of the groups on pretest*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Pretest structured discussion (Mean) | 20 | .50 | 13 | 6.15 | 3.325 |
| Pretest observer ring (Mean) | 20 | 1 | 11.5 | 5.78 | 2.941 |
| Pretest small talk (Mean) | 20 | 1 | 12.5 | 6.32 | 3.341 |

The mean of the two raters' scores obtained for the pretest scores of each group was taken into consideration for further analysis. To prove the normality of pretest scores, a one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was initially performed the results of which are illustrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov of Pretest*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pretest structured discussion (Mean) | Pretest observer ring (Mean) | Pretest small talk (Mean) |
| N | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Normal Parametersa,b | Mean | 6.1500 | 5.7833 | 6.32 |
| Std. Deviation | 2.94104 | 3.32480 | 3.341 |
| Most Extreme Differences | Absolute | .105 | .078 | .091 |
| Positive | .105 | .069 | .091 |
| Negative | -.074 | -.078 | -.059 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | .575 | .426 | .496 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .895 | .994 | .966 |
| a. Test distribution is Normal. |  |
| b. Calculated from data. |  |

As is clear in Table 4.5, the measured significance levels for structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk groups were 0.89, 0.99, and 0.96, respectively, which were all higher than the assumed level of significance (i.e., 0.05); Therefore, we can conclude that there was no significant difference between the observed distribution of the selected pretest scores and that the scores were normally distributed. Thus, the legitimacy of using parametric statistics was confirmed.

To make sure there was no significant difference among the three groups with regard to their speaking abilities before the beginning of the study, a one-way ANOVA was performed. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 *ANOVA on pretest scores of structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk groups*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pretest | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 6.648 | 2 | 3.324 | .985 | .377 |
| Within Groups | 344.343 | 88 | 3.376 |  |  |
| Total | 350.990 | 90 |  |  |  |

The results, as indicated in Table 4.6, show that there is not any significant difference (*F* = 0.98, *p* > 05) among the pretest scores of the three groups of participants, implying that the three groups had similar speaking proficiency before the commencement of the study.

**4.5 Analysis of the Posttest**

To observe the impact of the three types of instruction on the learners, each group was given a posttest. The descriptive statistics of the posttest scores for the three groups are given in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 *Descriptive statistics of the groups' performance on the posttest*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Posttest | structured discussion | Rater 1 | 20 | 9.00 | 20.00 | 15.56 | 3.71 |
| Rater 2 | 20 | 9.00 | 21.00 | 15.73 | 3.72 |
| observer ring | Rater 1 | 20 | 11.00 | 23.00 | 19.70 | 2.80 |
| Rater 2 | 20 | 11.00 | 23.00 | 19.46 | 2.92 |
| small talk | Rater 1 | 20 | 8.00 | 15.00 | 9.33 | 4.373 |
| Rater 2 | 20 | 8.00 | 16.00 | 9.80 | 4.536 |

Again, Pearson correlation was conducted to calculate the inter-rater reliability of the performances of the three groups on the posttest. Table 4.8 shows the results of the statistical analysis.

Table 4.8 *Inter-rater reliability of all groups’ performances on the posttest*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Posttest structured discussion (Rater1) | Posttest structured discussion (Rater1) |
| Posttest structured discussion (Rater1) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .99\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .00 |
|  | Posttest observer ring (Rater 1) | Posttest observer ring (Rater 2) |
| Posttest observer ring (Rater 1) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .99\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .00 |
|  | Posttest Small talk(Rater 1) | Posttest Small talk(Rater 2) |
| Posttest Small talk (Rater 1) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .98\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .00 |
| N | 20 | 20 |
| \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |

The findings revealed a strong and significant inter-rater reliability of posttest speaking scores obtained by the two raters of the study in the structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk groups.

The mean of the two raters' scores on the posttest scores of each group was considered for final analysis. The details are illustrated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 *Descriptive Statistics of small talk and experimental group on the posttest*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Posttest structured discussion (Mean) | 20 | 9 | 20.5 | 15.65 | 3.71 |
| Posttest observer ring (Mean) | 20 | 11 | 23 | 19.58 | 2.85 |
| Posttest small talk (Mean) | 20 | 8 | 15.5 | 9.56 | 4.44 |

A one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted to prove the normality of the scores of the posttest. Table 4.10 illustrates the results.

Table 4.10 *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov of Posttest*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | structured discussion | observer ring | small talk |
| N | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Normal Parametersa,b | Mean | 15.6500 | 19.5833 | 9.5667 |
| Std. Deviation | 3.71193 | 2.85598 | 4.44261 |
| Most Extreme Differences | Absolute | .170 | .190 | .185 |
| Positive | .105 | .132 | .185 |
| Negative | -.170 | -.190 | -.168 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | .931 | 1.041 | 1.013 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .351 | .229 | .256 |
| a. Test distribution is Normal. |
| b. Calculated from data. |

As is observed in Table 4.10, the measured significance levels for structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk groups were 0.35, 0.22, and 0.25 respectively, illustrating that their values were all greater than the assumed level of significance (i.e., 0.05); As a result, two conclusions can be made: (a) that there was no significant difference between the observed distribution of the selected scores of posttest, and (b) that the scores were normally distributed.

**4.6 Testing the First Hypothesis of the Study**

To test the first null hypothesis of the study as to see whether structured discussion has any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy, a paired sample t-test was performed between the pretest and posttest scores of the structured discussion group. The findings are shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 *The paired sample t-test between the pretest and posttest scores of the structured discussion group*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Paired Differences | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
| Lower | Upper |
| Pair 1 | Posttest structured discussion - Pretest  | 3.24124 | .36635 | .08192 | 1.97854 | 2.32146 | 26.246 | 19 | .000 |

As seen in Table 4.11, the difference between the learners’ speaking scores in the pretest and posttest is significant, (*t* = 26.24, *p* < .001). The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the pretest and posttest speaking accuracy scores of the participants in the structured discussion group in such a way that the speaking accuracy of the learners was enhanced through the use of structured discussion in the classroom. Therefore, the use of structured discussion significantly influenced Iraqi EFL learners’ speaking accuracy, thereby rejecting the first null hypothesis of the study.

**4.7 Testing the Second Hypothesis of the Study**

To verify the second null hypothesis of the study as to whether small talk has any significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy, a paired sample t-test was conducted between the pretest and posttest speaking scores of the learners. Table 4.12 presents the results.

Table 4.12 *The paired sample t-test between the pretest and posttest scores of the small talk group*

|  |
| --- |
| Paired Samples Test |
|  | Paired Differences | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
| Lower | Upper |
| Pair 1 | Posttest small talk - Pretest  | 1.45000 | .51042 | .11413 | 1.21112 | 1.68888 | 12.704 | 19 | .033 |

As represented in Table 4.12, the difference between the learners’ pretest and posttest speaking scores was significant, (*t* = 12.70, *p* < .05). The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the pretest and posttest speaking scores of the participants in the small talk group in such a way that the speaking accuracy of the learners was enhanced through the use of small talk in the classroom. Therefore, we can claim that small talk significantly impacts Iraqi EFL learners’ speaking accuracy, and the second research null hypothesis of the study is not accepted.

**4.8 Testing the Third Research Question**

To verify the third research question of the study regarding the effect of the observer ring technique on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy, a paired sample t-test was conducted between the pretest and posttest speaking scores of the learners. The results are shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 *The paired sample t-test between the pretest and posttest scores of the observer ring group*

|  |
| --- |
| Paired Samples Test |
|  | Paired Differences | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
| Lower | Upper |
| Pair 1 | Posttest observer ring - Pretest | 13.8000 | .68825 | .15390 | 1.17789 | 1.82211 | 19.747 | 19 | .000 |

The results reveal that the difference between the learners’ pretest and posttest speaking scores is significant, (*t* = 19.74, *p* <.001). The findings show that there is a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest speaking scores of the participants in the observer ring group in such a way that the speaking accuracy of the learners has been enhanced through the use of the observer ring technique in the classroom. Thus, utilizing this technique is said to have a significant impact on Iraqi EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. Again, the third null hypothesis of the study is not accepted.

**4.9 Testing the Fourth Research Question**

In order to verify the fourth null hypothesis of the study in finding whether there are any significant differences between the impacts of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking accuracy, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results are provided in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 *One-way ANOVA among the posttest scores of the groups*

|  |
| --- |
| Total Scores  |
|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 999.452 | 2 | 499.726 | 21.138 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 1820.348 | 57 | 23.641 |  |  |
| Total | 2819.800 | 59 |  |  |  |

The results of one-way ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference between the performance of structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk groups (*F =* 21.13, *p* < .05) on the posttest. A Tukey post-hoc test was performed in order to show the location of differences. The results are shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 *Tukey post-hoc test among the groups' performance on the posttest*

|  |
| --- |
| Dependent Variable: posttest |
| Tukey HSD  |
| (I) Groups | (J) Groups | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval |
| Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| structured discussion | observer ring | -3.9300\*\* | .72393 | .000 | -6.4936 | -3.0564 |
| small talk | 6.0900\*\* | .72393 | .000 | -2.7436 | .6936 |
| observer ring | structured discussion | 3.9300\*\* | .72393 | .000 | 3.0564 | 6.4936 |
| small talk | 10.0200\*\* | .72393 | .000 | 2.0314 | 5.4686 |
| small talk | structured discussion | -6.0900\*\* | .72393 | .000 | -.6936 | 2.7436 |
| observer ring | -10.0200\*\* | .72393 | .000 | -5.4686 | -2.0314 |
| \*\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level. |

The results revealed that there was a significant difference between the performance of the three groups in such a way that the observer ring group outperformed structured discussion and small talk groups in the posttest, hence rejecting the fourth null hypothesis of the study.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS**

**5.1 Overview**

In this concluding chapter, final thoughts on the results of the study are provided. The first section is devoted to a summary of major findings and the discussion of the findings in light of the relevant previous studies. Then, the conclusion section is provided. Theoretical and pedagogical implications of the study are described in this chapter and based on the limitations, a number of suggestions and recommendations are given for future research.

**5.2 Discussion**

The present study was carried out to reveal the comparative impacts of structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk on Iraqi intermediate EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. In so doing, 60 Iraqi EFL learners were selected based on their performance on OPT. The selected participants were then randomly assigned to three equal groups of observer ring (*n =* 20), small talk (*n =* 20), and structured discussion (*n =* 20). In the observer ring group, general topics from the book were introduced to the learners as the topics of conversation. In each session, the participants were required to sit in a circle and take turns to talk about the topic. The teacher observed them and made notes if necessary. The participants were required to participate actively in the speaking activities and to take longer turns to discuss the topic. After each session, based on the participant's performance, the teacher provided essential corrective group feedback in a way that the students’ errors were detected by asking questions or by pausing to allow students to complete the teacher's utterances.

In each session of treatment with the small talk group, the teacher introduced a situation in which participants had to speak in order to exchange information and to engage in casual talk similar to real life. In the small talk group, the learners talked to each other without intervention by the teacher and then they received feedback. During this practice, a topic for the conversation was chosen from their textbook and the learners were required to make only one or two utterances at a time.

In the structured discussion group, a topic for the conversation was chosen and the learners were required to make only one or two utterances at a time. The difference between the two groups lies in the teacher supervision of the communication process. Concerning the structured discussion group who received structured discussion, the researcher selected a topic from the book *Interchange* (Richards, 2015) and gave students five minutes to think about the topic and brainstorm. The students' seats were arranged in a U-shape form. It was done to create a good and comfortable atmosphere in the class which facilitated the movement of the learners around the classroom and made their conversations more interactive. They discussed the topic together. Furthermore, the researcher was near to most of the learners, so she could help them where and when it was necessary. Inter-rater reliability analysis was performed using Pearson correlation in order to see the extent to which the two sets of participants' scores on pretest and posttest rated by two raters were correlated. The results showed that in all tests, the inter-rater reliability was highly significant. The normality of the scores of the pretest and posttest between the two groups of the study was also shown to be significant.

The results of one-way ANOVA showed that there is a significant difference among small talk, observer ring, and structured discussion in developing EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. It was also found that the observer ring group outperformed the other two groups in terms of improving EFL learners’ speaking accuracy.

The reason behind the superiority of the observer ring technique over structured discussion tasks might be their nature. The observer ring asked learners to freely take part in the discussion and they were free from supervision. Therefore, it made EFL learners utilize deeper cognitive information processing, and, as a result, they could expand their learning and deepen their speaking ability. In fact, a cognitive structure for new information is provided by the observer ring technique and this can establish a connection between the learners’ prior knowledge and the newly acquired information. Learners can also encounter a cognitive load by such tasks when they are kept in the working memory of the learners thereby leading to a “less available working memory capacity to comprehend and store in long-term memory” (Kreiner, 1996, p. 354).

The results of the current study are not consistent with Farabi, Hassanvand, and Gorjian (2017) who instructed speaking skills by deploying guided and free oral presentations. Their results revealed that the group which revived guided oral presentations outperformed the free oral presentation group on the post-test. The supremacy of guided oral presentation activities was attributed to several factors including geographical, biological, psychological and pedagogical, aspects. According to Farabi, et al., (2017), “one reason that can justify the poor performance of the free oral presentation group may be the students' dependence on teachers” (p. 22).

With such an ideal condition provided for the learners, cognitive activities result in better performance and language learning happens. Justification for this finding can be traced in the main features of tasks which revolve around focus-on-meaning. These features are depth of processing hypothesis, discovery learning, pushed output, noticing hypothesis, awareness-raising, negotiation, collaboration, and motivation, to name a few. On the other hand, in the structured discussion group, the participants could benefit from the teacher’s help whenever necessary and had limited time (5 minutes) for their oral production, which could narrow down their independence in using their cognitive abilities.

This study acknowledges the results of a study conducted by Daif-Allah and Imran Khan (2016). They studied the speaking skill needs of English language majors and explored the effectof utilizing Open Discussion Sessions, as extracurricular speaking activities, on improving oralcommunicative abilities among students. The findings pointed to a significant development in students’ speaking abilities as a result of employing open discussionsessions. These sessions were found to have provided a relaxed learning environment free from worry enhancing the learners’ self-confidenceby actively involving the learners in real communicative situations in the company of other students and the instructor.

The findings of this study also revealed that it might be the time to forget the stereotypical methods of teaching speaking which rarely engage the learners’ mind in the learning process, and instead, focus their attention on utilizing innovative methods in the instruction of speaking. The results of the current study showed that teaching speaking without teacher intervention in the process of learning would lead to better performance among EFL learners. Despite the fact that structured discussion was also innovative for the participants of the study, the observer ring provided better opportunities for successful speaking accuracy.

Based on the results of the current study, we can infer that learners’ speaking accuracy can differentially be influenced by the use of different instructional techniques. This implies the necessity of providing the learners with carefully designed instructional programs in which speaking is presented using the most suitable type of instruction. However, we should not be misled by the results and conclude that one type of instruction is definitely better than the other type or types. Moreover, the most effective type should not be generally preferred over the other ones. Perhaps the most suitable technique of instruction may be an eclectic one depending on the aspects of speaking to be developed.

The findings of the present study are also in line with the results of Nikoopour, Amini Farsani, and Mahmoodi (2010) who measured the impact of the observer ring technique on the writing achievement of participants and found that this technique had significantly enhanced EFL learners’ writing ability.

The findings of this study support those of Bugler and Hunt (2002) who investigated the use of tasks as a basis for teaching, and they provided a twelve-week-long task-based learning project called student-generated action research. A number of 340 first-year university students in a private university were asked to participate in a second-semester speaking course. The students worked in groups of two to four and chose a topic they were interested in. The groups were asked to design a questionnaire consisting of the items that were used to ask the learners’ opinions about the chosen topic. The results showed that the task-based project provided learners with highly rewarding, intrinsically interesting context and higher levels of speaking ability.

The results of this study are in not line with those of Sotoudehnama and Hashamdar (2016) who measured the effectiveness of oral presentation and free discussion as two different speaking activities. Their findings revealed a better performance of the learners who experienced oral presentation as compared with those who experienced free discussion. As Sotoudehnama and Hashamdar (2016) mentioned, “in free discussion activity, the talkative and high self-confident learners were the learners’ and the teacher’s center of attention, and they always won the turns and did not pass the floor to others. Many of the shy learners had no or very little speaking opportunity which decreased their self-confidence” (p. 225)

The findings of this study corroborate those of Derakhshan, Khalili, and Beheshti (2016) who provided learners with empowering activities such as imitation, interesting materials, responsive, intensive extensive performance, transactional dialogues, and structured discussion to enhance their speaking abilities. The results showed a significant improvement in the speaking accuracy and fluency of the learners.

**5.3 Conclusion**

Improving speaking accuracy has always been a major concern of EFL learners. Recently, substantial, but not sufficient, efforts have been put into enhancing speaking accuracy knowledge through different methods. The present study was designed to explore the impact of structured discussion, small talk, and observer ring tasks on EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. This study embarked on investigating the effectiveness of structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk in enhancing the accuracy of EFL learners in speaking. The results of different statistical analyses showed that all three techniques were successful in enhancing the speaking accuracy of EFL learners. It was also found that there were significant differences between structured discussion, observer ring, and small talk group learners in terms of their accuracy in speaking in a way that observer ring was the most successful one in improving Iraqi EFL learners’ speaking accuracy.

The findings revealed that teaching speaking through the observer ring technique would bring about better results among intermediate EFL learners. Based on the results of the current study, it can be concluded that foreign language speaking accuracy is differentially influenced by the use of structured discussion and observer ring tasks. This implies that a carefully designed task in which speaking instruction is presented using the most suitable type of instruction would lead to success in developing EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. It was found that in the process of conducting discussions in the classroom, the observer ring task was more successful in achieving the goals than the small talk and the structured discussion. The observer ring technique created a confident learning situation which declined the learners’ barriers in doing communicative activities, increased their confidence, and removed their embarrassment.

**5.4 Implications**

From a theoretical point of view, this study confirmed that observer ring tasks constitute one of the most effective and interesting ways to improve intermediate EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. Therefore, the existing knowledge regarding the role of observer ring and structured discussion tasks in acquiring speaking accuracy was extended.

Using speaking accuracy learning strategies requires teachers who can arrange and grade the materials, motivate learners and provide feedback to them. The findings of this study may help EFL teachers to get insights to design and adapt language learning tasks for enhancing the speaking accuracy knowledge of learners. Speaking instruction could be integrated with other language skills and be presented through speaking accuracy learning tasks. A sense of variety can lead to less boring classes. Structured discussion tasks might be able to bring this diversity; hence, EFL teachers are recommended to use speaking accuracy learning tasks in their classrooms.

For teachers of English as a foreign language, the results of this research can provide a valuable opportunity to encourage students to teach correct spoken English. Since there are few opportunities to introduce students to languages ​​outside the classroom in the context of English as a foreign language, it seems necessary to create conditions so that students can make full use of their study time. Structured discussion and observer ring tasks enable students to actively participate in conversational activities. Compared with the boring traditional classroom practices and strategies, students can easily understand the importance of this learning situation. Most Iraqi adult students rely on teachers; they expect their teachers to guide them in every step of the way.

By the use of observer ring tasks, students can enjoy the learning process effortlessly. The higher achiever ones can have the opportunity to assume responsibility for their lower achiever partners or teammates. Therefore, they can prepare for the correct execution of the main task; they can also learn to study the problem carefully, find the solution to the problem, choose the best solution, cooperate with other group members, share their knowledge and responsibilities, and tell the teacher to develop the habit of working hard when they are doing well.

The results of this research are also useful for course designers, as they can design materials according to the needs and abilities of students. When activities are relevant to the learners' real life as well as their needs and interests, learners can be actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge. This is possible by designing materials and activities that contribute to the integration of classroom practices into speaking accuracy learning strategies. Materials should be prepared in such a way that motivates students for promoting their speaking accuracy. They should allow students who are shyer to participate in classroom activities. Syllabus designers can integrate innovative and attractive strategies like those created and used in this research, provide diversity in its materials, create multi-purpose works, and create textbooks that do not require teachers and can be used by students for self-learning.

**5.5 Limitations and Delimitation**

The main limitation of this study is that the researchers could not randomly select the participants, so the results of the study should be promoted cautiously. Since the main researcher is a female teacher, she was not allowed to teach male students; hence, the findings of the study may not be generalizable to male learners.

Moreover, the influence of some moderator variables such as the learners’ intelligence, language learning aptitude, working memory, and other individual differences should not be disregarded. These variables might have affected the results of this study.

Regarding the conditions of the study, the researcher imposed a delimitation. The participants of the study were intermediate Iraqi EFL learners because it was assumed that intermediate learners may be more capable to take part in oral discussion activities in contrast with elementary learners. Moreover, the advanced learners might be less dependent on peers or teachers in doing the speaking tasks and the findings may vary if applied to other groups of participants.

**5.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

With regard to the limitations of the study as well as the problems in doing this research, the upcoming issues along with the already existing controversial issues surrounding the matter may warrant more research in an area waiting to be further explored. In this section, some suggestions are provided for further research.

More extended research can be devoted to studying the impact of another type of discussion task, as the independent variable of the study, on EFL learners’ speaking accuracy. Future studies could be longitudinal and investigate the effect of speaking accuracy learning strategies over a longer period of time.

It is recommended to repeat this study with more participants in the same training. It will be interesting to compare the results between students of different ages. In addition, it is recommended to repeat this study for various variables such as intelligence. Individual factors such as language learning ability, working memory, etc. may have affected the results of this study. Finally, another study can include the learners of both genders in order to detect the influence of co-educational classrooms on learners’ performance in speaking accuracy.

**REFERENCES**

Alber, R. (2014). 6 Scaffolding Strategies to Use with Your Students. *Edutopia.* Retrieved from: http://www.edutopia.org/blog/scaffolding-lessons-six-strategies-rebecca-alber

*Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Arfaei Zarandi, Z., & Rahbar, B. (2014). The Impact of Interactive Scaffolding on Iranian EFL Learners' Speaking Ability, *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 7(2), 344-353.

Arfaei Zarandi, Z., & Rahbar, B. (2016). Enhancing speaking ability through intervening scaffolding strategies. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *6*(11), 2191-2195.

 Argawati, N. O. (2014). Improving Students’ speaking Skill Using Group Discussion (Experimental study on the First Grade Students of Senior High School). *ELTIN JOURNAL, Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, *2*(2), 41-47.

Becker, C., & Roos, J. (2016). An approach to creative speaking activities in the young learners’ classroom. *Education Inquiry*, *7*(1), 27613.

Bouzar, S. (2019). Issues in teaching speaking to EFL learners. *Education and Linguistics* *Research*, *5*(1), 70-79. doi: 10.5296/elr.v5i1.14705

Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by Principles.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Regents Englewood Cliffs.

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

Brown, J. D. (2005). *Testing in Language Programs: A Comprehensive Guide to English Language Assessment*. McGraw-Hill College.

Bygate, M. (1987). *Speaking*. Oxford University Press.

Bygate, M. (1996). Effects of task repetition: appraising the developing language of learners. In J. Williams and D. Willis (Eds), *Challenge and Change in language teaching* (pp.134-146). London: Heinemann.

Bygate, M. (2001). Speaking. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 14–20). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bygate, M. (2002). Speaking. In C., Roland & D., Nunan (Eds).*Teaching English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carter, R & Nunan, D. (2002). *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). Language teaching approaches: An overview. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, *2*, 3-10.

Chaney, A. L., & T. L. Burk. (1998). *Teaching Oral Communication in Grades K-8*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing Second-Language Skills, Theory and Practice (Third Edition).* Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

Cohen, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language.* Essex, U.K.: College Students. *TESOL Quarterly*, *22*, 455-472.

Crookes, G. (1989). Planning and interlanguage variation. *Studies in second language acquisition*, *11*(04), 367-383.

Daif-Allah, A. S., & Khan, M. I. (2016). The Impact of Open Discussion Sessions on Enhancing the Oral Communicative Abilities of Saudi English Language Majors at Buraydah Community College. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(6), 108-122.

Dunlosky, J., & Tauber, S. K. (2013). Understanding People’s Metacognitive Judgments: An Iso-mechanism Framework and Its Implications for Applied and Theoretical Research. *The Sage handbook of applied memory*.

Ellis, R. (1993). The structural syllabus and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly, 27,* 91-113.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2009). The differential effects of three types of task planning on the fluency, complexity, and accuracy in L2 oral production. *Applied linguistics*, *30*(4), 474-509.

Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. P. (2005). *Analyzing learner language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

 Farabi, M., Hassanvand, S., & Gorjian, B. (2017). Using guided oral presentation in teaching English language learners’ speaking skills. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Learning*, *3*(1), 17-24.

Ferris, D., & Tagg, T. (1996). Academic oral communication needs of EAP learners: What subject-matter instructors actually require. *TESOL Quarterly, 30,* 31- 58.

Florez, M. A. C. (1999). *Improving adult English language learners’ speaking skills.* Washington, DC: Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.

Folse, K. (2006). *The art of teaching speaking.* Michigan: Michigan University Press.

Fulcher, G. (2003). *Testing second language speaking.* New York: Pearson Longman.

Gebhard, J. G. (2009). *The practicum.* *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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

Graham-Marr, A. (2004). Teaching skills for listening and speaking. Retrieved, April, 9, 2016, from, http://www AbaxCo.jp/downloads/ extension/ETJ 2004

Haley, M., & Austin, T. (2004). *Content-based second language teaching and learning: An interactive approach*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.

Harmer, J. (2009). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Harlow: Longman.

Hawkins, M. R., & Mori, J. (2018). Considering ‘trans-’perspectives in language theories and practices. *Applied Linguistics*, *39*(1), 1-8.

Hemerka, B. V. (2011). The Effectiveness of Preparation of Grammar School Learners for Working in an English Speaking Country. Diploma Thesis, Masaryk University Brno.

Housen, A., & Kuiken, F. (2009). Complexity, accuracy, and fluency in second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics, 30*(4), 461-473. DOI: 10.1093/applin/amp048

Hunter, J. (2011). Small Talk: developing fluency, accuracy, and complexity in speaking. *ELT Journal*, *66* (1), 30-41.

Jasmine, L. (2004). The Dynamics of Classroom Small Talk. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 14(2). Retrieved from: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1z69d6wm

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. & Holubec, E. (2008) *Circles of Learning: Cooperation in the classroom* (fourthedition). Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Johnson, K. E. (1995), *Understanding* *communication in second language classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Joiner, R., & Jones, S. (2003). The effects of communication medium on argumentation and the development of critical thinking. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 23 (4), pp. 39 861–871.

Kagan, S. (1998) New Cooperative Learning, Multiple Intelligences, and Inclusion. In J. W. Putman (ed.) *Cooperative Learning and Strategies for Inclusion* (105-136). London: Brookes.

Kaplan, R. B. (1997). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. In R. Cole, J. Mariani, H. Uszkoreit, G. B. Varile, A. Zaenen, A. Zampolli, V. Zue (Eds.), *Survey of the State of the Art in Human Language Technology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 294-309). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kawauchi, C. (2005). The effects of strategic planning on the oral narratives of learners with low and high intermediate L2 proficiency. In Ellis, R. (Eds.). *Planning and task performance in a second language* (pp. 143-164). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Kuiken, F., & Vedder, I. (2007). Cognitive task complexity and linguistic performance in French L2 writing. In M.P. García Mayo (Ed.), *Investigating tasks in formal language learning* (pp.117–135). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Lambert, C.P., & Engler, S. (2007). Information distribution and goal orientation in second language task design. In M.P.G. Mayo (Ed.), Investigating *Tasks in formal language learning*, (pp. 25-43). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Leong, L. M., & Ahmadi, S. M. (2017). An analysis of factors influencing learners’ English speaking skills. *International Journal of Research in English Education, 2*(1), 34-41.

Lindsay, C. & Knight, P. (2006). *Learning and Teaching English: A Course for Teachers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Long, M., & Crooks, G. (1992). Three approaches to task-based syllabus design. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26(1), 27-56.

Luoma, S. (2004). Developing speaking tasks. In *assessing speaking* (pp. 139-169). Cambridge: CUP.

Malmir, A., & Shoorcheh, S. (2012). An investigation of the impact of teaching critical thinking on the Iranian EFL learners' speaking skills. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *3*(4), 608-617.

Mehnert, U. (1998). The effects of different lengths of time for planning on second language performance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 20*, 83-108.

 Menggo, S., Ketut, S., & Made, R. (2013). The effect of discussion techniques and English learning motivation toward students speaking ability. E-Journal Program. Retrieved from:https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/117772-EN-the-effect-of-discussion-technique-and-e.pdf.

Nikoopour, J., Farsani, M. A., & Mahmoodi, F. (2010). The Impact of Observer Ring Technique on the Writing Achievement: A case of Iranian EFL Learners. *The Journal of Applied Linguistics, 3*(2),166-184.

Nunan, D. (1991). Methods in second language classroom-oriented research. *Studies in second language acquisition*, *13*(02), 249-274.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Second Language Teaching and Learning.* U.S.: Heinle & Heinle

Nunan, D. (1996). Hidden voices: insiders’ perspectives on classroom interaction. In K. Bailey & D. Nunan (eds.). *Voices from the Language Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (2003). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Olsen, R. E. W. B., & Kagan, S. (1992). About cooperative learning. *Cooperative language learning: A teacher’s resource book*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Ortega, L. (1999). Planning and Focus on Form in L2 Oral Performance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 21*, 109-148.

Pachler, N., & Field, K. (2001). *Learning to teach modern foreign languages in the secondary school, a companion to school experience (2nd ed.).* Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group.

Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching Young Language Learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press,

Rianingsih, R. (2015). *The Teacher Strategies in Overcoming Students’ difficulties In Speaking at English Intensive Program of Ma An-Nur Cirebon* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon).

 Richards, J. C. (1987). The dilemma of teacher education in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(2), 209-226.

Richards, J. C. (2006). Materials development and research—making the connection. *RELC Journal*, *37*(1), 5-26.

Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J., & Renandya, W. (Eds.), (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice.* Cambridge: CambridgeUniversity Press.

Ringler, L. H. & Weber, C. K. (1984). *A language –Thinking Approach to Reading*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Ink.

Rini, I. W., Arifin, Z., & Susilawati, E. (2018). The Effectiveness of Using Discussion Task in Teaching Speaking of Analytical Exposition Text. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa*, *7*(2), 55-64.

Rivers, W. (1981). Teaching Foreign Language Skills (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robinson, P. (1995). Task complexity and second language narrative discourse*. Language Learning, 45*, 99-140.

Rubin, J. (1987). Learner strategies: Theoretical assumptions, research history, and typology. In Wenden, A. and J. Rubin (eds.). *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 87-96)*.* Prentice-Hall International.

Saadillah, S., Kadariyah, N. L., & Hidayah, N. (2015). The Implementation of Small Talk Strategy in Speaking at Languages Development Center Class. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Putra Malaysia.

Seligson, P. (1997). *Helping students to speak.* Richmond Publishing.

Shumin, K. (2002). Factors to consider: Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities. In Richards, J. C. & Renandya, W. A. (eds.), Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practices (201–211). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skehan, P. & Foster, P. (1999). The influence of task structure and processing conditions on narrative retellings. *Language Learning 49.* 1. 93-120

Skehan, P. (1996). Second-language acquisition research and task-based instruction, in J. Willis and D. Willis (Eds.): *Challenge and Change in Language Teaching* (pp. 17-30). Oxford: Heinemann,

Sotoudehnama, E., & Hashamdar, M. (2016). Oral presentation vs. free discussion: Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ speaking proficiency and perception. *Applied Research on the English Language*, *5*(2), 211-236.

Srivastava, S. R. (2014). Accuracy vs fluency in English classroom. *New man international journal of multidisciplinary studies*, *1*(4), 55-58.

Sybing, R. (2016). Structure for fostering discussion skills in the EFL classroom. *Journal of the Nanzan Academic Society*, (99), 221-229.

Thornbury, S. (2000). Accuracy, fluency, and complexity. *Readings in Methodology*, 139-143.

Thornbury, S. (2007). *How to teach speaking.* Pearson Longman.

Toni, A., Hassaskhah, J., & Birjandi, P. (2017). The Impressibility of Speaking Accuracy/Fluency among EFL Undergraduates: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of English Language Pedagogy and Practice*, *10*(21), 184-225.

Trembley, D. (1993). Guidelines for teaching writing to ABE and ASE learners. *Paper presented at the Annual Midwest Regional Conference on English in the Two-year College, Madison.* ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 361-741.

Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ur, P. (2000). *A course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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

Wigglesworth, G. (1997). An investigation of planning time and proficiency level on oral test discourse. *Language Testing*, 14, 85–106.

Wolfe-Quintero, K., S. Inagaki, & H. Y. Kim. (1998). *Second Language Development in Writing: Measures of Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.

Wulff, S., & Gries, S. T. (2011). Corpus-driven methods for assessing accuracy in learner production. In G. Radden, K.-M. Kopcke, Th. Berg & P. Siemund (Eds.), *Aspects of meaning construction in lexicon and grammar (pp. 68-72).* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Zahedi, M., & Tabatabaei, O. (2012).The effect of collaborative learning on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ oral skills and motivation. *Advances in English Linguistics (AEL)* *1*(3), 56-60.

**Appendix A**

**Oxford Placement Test (OPT)**





**APPENDIX B**

**Pretest and Posttest**



















|  |
| --- |
| **نام خانوادگی:** جبار شلش **نام:** منی  |
| **عنوان :** **مقایسه تأثیر سه راهبرد متفاوت گفتاری بحث ساختارمند ، گفتگوی کوتاه و حلقه مشاهده گر بر دقت صحبت کردن زبان آموزان عراقی زبان انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی** |
| **استاد راهنما:** دکتر محمود ولیدی |
| **درجه تحصیلی:** کارشناسی ارشد **رشته:** زبان انگلیسی **گرایش:** آموزش زبان انگلیسی |
| **دانشگاه:** شهید چمران اهواز  |
| **دانشکده:** ادبیات و علوم انسانی **گروه:** زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی |
|  **تعداد صفحات:** 85  |
| **کلید واژه ها:**  بحث ساختارمند ، حلقه مشاهده گر ، گفتگوی کوتاه ، دقت در مهارت گفتاری |
| در این تحقیق، به بررسی اثربخشی سه روش شامل بحث ساختارمند، گفتگوی کوتاه و حلقه مشاهده گر بر میزان افزایش دقت مهارت زبان آموزان انگلسی به عنوان زبان خارجی در صحبت کردن پرداخته شده است. برای انجام این کار، 60 زبان آموز عراقی که انگلیسی را به عنوان زبان خارجی فرا میگیرند بر اساس عملکرد آنها در آزمون OPT انتخاب شدند. سپس شرکت کنندگان انتخاب شده به طور تصادفی به سه گروه مساوی با عنوان حلقه مشاهده گر (20 نفر) ، گفتگوی کوتاه (20 نفر) و بحث ساختارمند (20 نفر) تقسیم شدند. در گروه حلقه مشاهده گر ، شرکت کنندگان ملزم به نشستن دور هم بوده و به نوبت در مورد موضوع صحبت می کردند. معلم آنها را مشاهده میکرد و در صورت لزوم یادداشت برمیداشت. در گروه بحث ساختارمند ، موضوعی برای گفتگو انتخاب می شد و فراگیران موظف بودند در یک زمان فقط یک یا دو عبارت را بیان کنند. در گروه گفتگوی کوتاه ، معلم موقعیتی را برای هر جلسه معرفی می کرد و شرکت کنندگان باید به تبادل اطلاعات پرداخته و درگیر صحبت های متدوال عامیانه ای می شدند که شبیه آن ها را در زندگی واقعی تجربه می کنند. در گروه گفتگوی کوتاه ، فراگیران بدون دخالت معلم با یکدیگر صحبت می کردند و سپس بازخورد دریافت می کردند. نتایج تجزیه و تحلیل های آماری مختلف نشان داد که هر سه روش در افزایش دقت صحبت کردن زبان آموزان EFL موفقیت آمیز بود. همچنین مشخص شد که تفاوت های قابل ملاحظه ای بین بحث ساختارمند ، حلقه مشاهده گر و گفتگوی کوتاه از نظر دقت در صحبت کردن وجود دارد به طوری که حلقه مشاهده گر موفق ترین روش در بهبود دقت صحبت کردن زبان آموزان عراقی بود. |